

Valuable Book Group, LLC
Specialists in Rare and Antiquarian Golf Books
Newsletter and Book Review for the Serious Collector

The Golfer's Alphabet by William G. VanTassel Sutphen

The Golfer's Alphabet by William G. VanTassel Sutphen was published by Harper & Brothers in 1898. Officially, only one edition of the book was printed, however copies with an 1899 publication date are also in circulation, indicating more than one printing. Our check of the Harper & Brothers archives shed no light on how many books were produced in each printing. The book is one of the unique collectables in the world of golf books and certainly has one of the most interesting covers. The book contains twenty-seven little rhymes, one for each letter of the alphabet, plus one additional rhyme at the end.



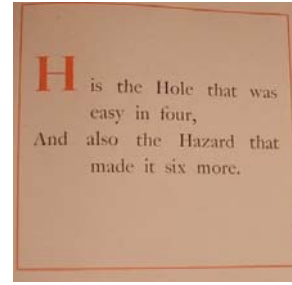
Front Cover

The poems/rhymes were written by Sutphen and each is accompanied by an illustration done by A.B. Frost, one of the leading illustrators of his day. Each little vignette is amusing to read. A few examples are below:

- A** is Arithmetic, handy to know, When the score figures up to a hundred or so.
B is the Bogey, whose luck is infernal, And happy is he who can win from the "Colonel".
C is the Card, that began with a three, And was torn into bits at the seventeenth hole.
D is the Duffer, the Drive that he cuts, And the something he says when he misses short putts.
E is the Eye, and its least little quiver, Spells ruin. The moral: Look after your liver.
F is the Folly that leads us to Force, And the Foozle that follows in regular course.
G is the Game we expected to play, But which didn't come off on the tournament day.
H is the Hole that was easy in four, And also the Hazard that made it six more.
I is the Iron that we play to perfection, So long as no bunker is in that direction.
J is the Jerk that would drive in a pile, But the ball, as you can see, wears a cynical smile.



Title Page



Sample Alphabet Page

The color cover of *The Golfer's Alphabet* wears easily and thus is difficult to find in very good condition without fading or chipping. The Donovan & Jerris reference number for the book is S42250. A facsimile edition of *The Golfer's Alphabet* was published in 1967 by Charles E. Tuttle and is widely available on-line.

Other works by Van Tassel Sutphen

Van Tassel Sutphen, his picture seen below, was a Victorian-era fiction writer, who published an extensive amount of non-golf fiction. He contributed several books to the golf library: *The Golficide and other Tales of the Fair Green* (1898), *The Nineteenth Hole: being tales of the fair green* (1901) and *The Peripatetic Hazard* (1921). All are works of fiction. The rarest of these works is *The Peripatetic Hazard* which was privately reprinted from *The Golficide*.

Sutphen was a graduate of Princeton and also served as editor of the original *Golf* magazine.



Van Tassel Sutphen

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