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THE SCRUTINIES OF SIMON IFF

By EDWARD KELLY

No. 3—Outside the Bank's Routine

"He thought he saw a banker's clerk
 Descending from a bus;
 He looked again, and saw it was
 A hippopotamus."

I.

It was a sunny Saturday in April at Prince's Golf Club at Mitcham, and Macpherson, London manager of the Midlothian and Ayrshire Bank, had the honor at the seventeenth tee. Unfortunately, he was one down. His opponent had been playing wonderful golf; and the Scotsman thought his best chance was to scare him with an extra long drive. It came off brilliantly; the ball flew low, far, and true, up the fairway. Normally, he calculated to outdrive his opponent twenty yards; but this time it looked as if it might be fifty. The other stepped to the tee. "No!" he said to the caddy, "I'll just take a cleck." Macpherson looked round. This was sheer insanity. What in Colonel Bogey's name possessed the man? Was he trying to lose the game?

The cleck shot lay fully eighty yards behind the drive. They walked after their balls, Macpherson still wondering what was in the wind. His opponent might still have reached the green with a brassie for his second, though it would have been a wonderful shot. Instead, he took a mashie and played a long way short. "What ails the man?" thought Macpherson. "He's fair daft." He came up with his ball. Should he take an iron or a spoon? "Never up, never in!" he decided at last, still wondering at his opponent's actions, and took the spoon. "I must spare it," he thought. And so well did he spare it that he topped it badly! Thoroughly rattled, he took his iron for the third. The ball went clear over the green into a most obnoxious clump of whins. The other man chipped his third to the green, and Macpherson gave up the hole and

the match; also a half-crown ball, which hurt him.

By the time they had played the bye, he had recovered his temper. "Man!" he said, "but you're a winner. An auld man like ye—an' ye keep your caird under your years, A'm thinking." "Yes," said his opponent, "I'm round in eighty-one." "It's juist a meeracle! Tell me noo, for why did ye tak' your cleck to the seventeenth?"

"That's a long story, Mr. Macpherson."

"Ye'll tell me o'er a sup o' the bairley bree."

They sat down on the porch of the club, and began to talk. "When we stood on that tee," said the old man, "I didn't watch your ball; I watched your mind. I saw you were set on breaking my heart with your drive; so I just let you have it your own way, and took a cleck. As we walked, I still watched your thinking; I saw that you were not attending to your own play, how to make sure of a four, but to mine, which didn't concern you at all. When it came to your second, your thoughts were all over the place; you were in doubt about your club, took the wrong one, doubted again about how to play the shot—then you fluffed it. But I had won the hole before we ever left the tee."

"I see."

"If you want to win your matches, play as if it were a medal round. You have all the keenness; and the disasters don't hurt you, which gives confidence. But of course, if you can read a man's psychology, there are even surer ways of winning. Only be sure not to let your opponent get the psychology on you, as happened this afternoon."

"Ye're a gran' thinker, sir. I didn't quite get your name; I wish ye'd dine wi' me the nicht."

"Iff," said the old man, "Simon Iff."