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THE SCRUTINIES OF SIMON IFF

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No. V. — Not Good Enough.

"It seems a very interesting case," interrupted Simon Iff. "Well, sir," replied the Assistant Commissioner, "not at all, from your standpoint; there's no psychology in it. There seems little doubt that Haramzada Swamy killed the girl; he may have had one of fifty reasons, though robbery was evidently one of them. There are certainly some curious features in the affair, but none that would be of any interest to you." "You make me feel so fiery and martial," returned Iff, "that I shall certainly order some brandy. I hope you will join me. I originally interrupted your remarks in the hope that you would tell me all about the case. I have theories of my own." "If I may adopt your theory of drinking — which it gave me much pleasure to hear at the Hemlock Club — I am feeling narrative, and a pot of beer and a church-warden is about my style."

It was a summer afternoon. The place was the lawn of Skindle's at Maidenhead. The Assistant Commissioner of Police, Roger Broughton, had motored over to lunch with a friend, Jack Flynn, Editor of the "Emerald Tablet," an advanced high-class review. They had found "Simple Simon," who had rowed up the river in a skiff outrigger from his summer cottage at Henley, lurching on the lawn in a peculiarly naive, yet sumptuous, manner. "In summer," he explained to them, after the first greetings, "meat heats the blood. I am therefore compelled to restrict my diet to foie gras and peaches."

"But Foie Gras is meat."

"The animal kingdom," said the mystic, "is distinguished, roughly speaking, from the vegetable, by the fact that animals have power to move freely in all directions. When therefore a goose is nailed to a board, as I understand is necessary to the production of foie gras, it becomes ipso facto a vegetable; as a strict vegetarian, I will therefore have some more." And he heaped his plate.

The new-comers laughed; no one ever knew when to take

the magician seriously. "What's the drink?" asked Flynn; "it's a new one on me." "This is a Crowley Cup No. 3," he said. "So named after its discoverer. Take a large jug, the larger the better; half fill with selected strawberries; cover the fruit with Grand Marnier Cordon Rouge; ice carefully, fill up with iced champagne, the best obtainable. Stir the mixture; drink it; order more, and repeat. A simple, harmless, and wholesome beverage."

"A temperance drink, I suppose?" queried Broughton, laughingly.

"Certainly," replied the magician, "in my recent journey to America I was careful to obtain an exact definition of what was and what was not alcoholic. Drinks which contain less than 40 per cent. alcohol come under the general heading of the Demon Rum; their sale is restricted in every possible way, and in many States prohibited altogether. Drinks containing more than 40 per cent. of alcohol are medicines, and are sold in the drug stores without restriction of any kind."

"But that champagne reduces the percentage, surely?"

"Champagne forms no part of the drink; it is used merely to dilute the medicine itself."

Broughton, who knew Iff but slightly, looked bewildered, and appealed mutely to Flynn, who knew him well. "You mustn't laugh or cry," said he; "you must just let your brain expand, and try to get the point of view."

"You mustn't think I'm laughing at you, Mr. Iff," apologized Broughton; "we don't forget your masterly work in the case of Professor Briggs."

So lunch proceeded; it was only at the end, as it were by accident, that Broughton had mentioned the murder which had stirred London a few days earlier.

Broughton, having been accommodated with the primitive refreshment indicated as harmonious to narrative, began his