



"NIBBIE"

Ask the Egyptians

A Fascinating Golf Story With an Unexpected Ending. It Will Hold Your Interest to the Last Paragraph

By REX T. STOUT

"DORMIE," said Tom Innes cheerfully, standing on the thirteenth tee. He took his driver from the caddie, addressed the ball with a professional waggle, and with a clean, well-timed swing sent it soaring through the air over the brook a hundred and seventy yards away.

"Nice drive."

This came from his opponent, Mr. Aloysius Jellie, who had in turn taken his driver in hand. In place of the other's athletic build and graceful, easy motion, Mr. Jellie was the possessor of an angular, every-which-way figure and his movements were awkward and inelegant. His lips tightened grimly as he waved the wooden club back and forth over the ball. A sudden jerk of his body, a mighty swish, and the ball hopped crazily from the tee and trickled over the turf some sixty yards away.

"Topped it," observed Mr. Innes sympathetically. "Too bad."

But the last two words were drowned by another sound, a yelp of mingled pain and dismay that came from the third spectator of Mr. Jellie's fizzle. Caddies, being dumb by tradition as well as from self-interest, are not counted. The yelp issued from the throat of a dog, a white, middle-sized dog of heterogeneous pedigree who had sat on his haunches regarding Mr. Jellie with anxious eyes as he addressed the ball. As the ball hopped from the tee the dog had commenced to whine, and when the profound ineptitude of the shot became apparent, the whine increased to a long-drawn-out, unearthly howl.

Mr. Jellie did not reply to his opponent's sympathetic remark, nor did the howl appear to either surprise or bother him.

"Come on, Nibbie," he said without turning his head, and off he went towards the ball, with the dog trotting along at his heels and the caddie bringing up the rear.

"Brassie," said Mr. Jellie grimly, stopping beside the ball and holding out his hand.

The caddie hesitated. "Bad lie, sir. I think an iron—"

"Brassie," repeated Mr. Jellie, "I want to reach the green."

Then as the caddie pulled the brassie from the bag his employer suddenly changed his mind.

"Alright, midiron," he agreed.

A moment later the iron head whistled through the air, the ball rose high—too high—and dropped in the middle of the brook.

"Too much turf, sir," observed the caddie.

Again Mr. Jellie did not reply, and again he started off with the dog at his heels. Arrived at the brook, he stood on the bank and pointed at the spot where the ball had seemed to drop.

"Get it, Nibbie," he commanded.

The dog looked up at his master with an expression of amazed reproach. "Good heavens," his eyes seemed to say, "didn't you get over this?" Then he scurried down the bank, nosed about among the bushes at the water's edge, and presently set up a plaintive whine. Mr. Jellie took his niblick from the caddie and scrambled down. There the ball lay, buried in the weeds. The next few seconds were full of action. Mr. Jellie swung savagely with the niblick once, twice, three times; the caddie held his hand tightly over his mouth; the dog let loose a series of fearful howls. Finally the ball, gouged from its nesting-place,

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came to rest at the top of the further bank.

From there it was an easy mashie approach to the green, on which Mr. Innes's ball was already lying eight feet from the pin. Mr. Jellie holed out in two putts, and his opponent did the same.

"Eight," said Mr. Jellie.

"Four," said Mr. Innes.

"That's the match," the other returned. "Better than I did with Tom Hudson yesterday. He ended it on the twelfth green. Come on, Nibbie."

Fifteen minutes later, as the two golfers passed down the piazza of the Grassview Country Club house on their way to the nineteenth hole, Mr. Jellie called out to Mac Donaldson, the club professional, who was loitering about:

"Oh, Mac! Give Mr. Innes a box of balls and charge it to me."

Which explains why so poor a golfer as Aloysius Jellie never experienced any difficulty in getting a match. There was every reason why he should have been the most unpopular member of the Grassview Country Club. His average score for the eighteen holes was 121; he had once made a 98 and had framed the score card and hung it in the room which he kept at the club house the year round. He cut up turf frightfully; he was a strong man and his divots always flew so far away that no caddie could ever find them again. He refused to play in foursomes, and he was outspoken in his criticism of a bad shot, whenever and by whomsoever made.

Worst of all, he was the owner of Nibbie. Where the dog got the name of Nibbie was Mr. Jellie's secret, but it was openly asserted by other members of the club that it was a nickname, or term of endearment, derived from "niblick." Whoever took Mr. Jellie on for a match was forced to deduct beforehand a considerable amount of the pleasure and profit of the encounter by discounting the presence of Nibbie. He was always at his master's heels, and he was the only serious critic of his master's play. If Mr. Jellie topped his drive or missed a two-

footer Nibbie howled his disapproval and dismay. A long iron or brassie over a hazard, or a soaring recovery from a sandpit, or the holing of a 30 foot putt, was the signal for joyous barks and caperings. But he was always careful to indulge in none of these noisy demonstrations while his master's opponent was addressing the ball; he appeared to know the etiquette as well as the science of the game. It was wonderful the way his actions and feelings responded to the movements of the little white sphere.

"That dog," said Mac Donaldson, the club pro, one day, "is Scotch. I don't know what kinds of a dog it is, but it's Scotch for sure. I never saw such an understanding of the game in any animal whatever, unless it was Tom Ferguson's cow who lay down on Sandy MacRae's ball so he couldn't find it, and Tom won the hole. It's a great dog, and I could name some humans he could give lessons to."

But it is certain that the other club members would never have stood for the ubiquitous Nibbie, with his eternal howlings and barkings, if they had not been so desirous to avoid offending Mr. Jellie; for Mr. Jellie, score 121, was always willing to play anyone on even terms for a box of balls or a set of clubs or a ten spot. He never won. The numbers of balls and mashies and drivers and putters he paid for every month was appalling. But he always refused to take a handicap.

"I am a strong and fairly intelligent man," he would say, "and I ought to be able to play golf as well as anyone. I refuse to baby myself with a handicap. Make it a ball a hole."

Then he would make the first in 9, and would probably be 61 at the turn. He usually took his defeats gracefully, but now and then after an unusually bad round he would become morose and refuse absolutely to utter a word. He was also known to lose his temper occasionally; once he had taken his bag of clubs and thrown them into the lake—the water hazard on the eleventh hole—and was prevented just in time from throwing his caddie in after them. It was truly pitiful, the earnest

and determined manner in which he strove day after day to improve his game, and the sustained horror of his score.

Then came Nibbie's tragic end. Late one Saturday afternoon in May, there was gathered at the nineteenth hole a representative group of the members of the Grassview Country Club. Marsfield, the Egyptologist, was there, with his soft beard and sleepy, studious eyes; Innes and Fraser, lawyers; Huntington, Princeton professor; and several New York bankers and business men. They had just come in from the links; the day was hot and dry and they were emptying many tall glasses in which the cracked ice clinked.

They were talking, of course, of Scores and Reasons Why, otherwise known as Alibis. Fraser was explaining that the bite of a mosquito while he was addressing the ball had cost him the fourteenth hole and probably the match (though he had finished four down); Marsfield, the Egyptologist, was telling of a 20 foot putt that went absolutely in the hole and then bounced out again; Innes was making sarcastic and pointed remarks concerning the incredible luck of Huntington, who had beaten him 2 and 1.

"Ah," exclaimed Marsfield suddenly, interrupting himself, "here comes Rogers. Lucky dog! He got Jellie today. He was out Wednesday too and had him then."

"A bit thick, I call it," observed Penfield, who had once spent a month in England.

"He takes poor old Jellie for too much of a good thing," put in Huntington, glancing at the two men as they approached down the corridor.

"But I say, look at Jellie's face!" went on Penfield. "Must be one of his bad days. Just look at him!"

It was indeed evident from the expression on Mr. Jellie's face that he was far from happy. His eyes were drawn half shut, as if in pain, his lips were quivering with emotion and his face was very white. Mr. Rogers, his companion, appeared on the contrary to be making an attempt to conceal some secret inner pleasure. A scarcely

repressed smile twisted his lips and a twinkle of delight shone from his eyes. As he reached the corner where the others were seated he greeted them with familiar heartiness and beckoned to the waiter for a glass of something. Mr. Jellie sank into a chair with the briefest of nods in reply to the others' greetings, thrust his hands deep in his pockets and gazed straight ahead at nothing with his eyes still half closed as though to shut out some painful sight.

It was Huntington who noticed at once an unusual vacancy in the atmosphere. He turned to Rogers to ask:

"Where's Nibbie?"

Rogers grinned, glanced apprehensively at Mr. Jellie, and replied in one word:

"Dead."

There was a chorus of astonished inquiry.

"Yes, dead," Rogers reiterated. "Dead as a dead dog. Jellie killed him."

"What!" There was unbelief in ten voices.

Another broke in, Mr. Jellie himself. They all turned to him.

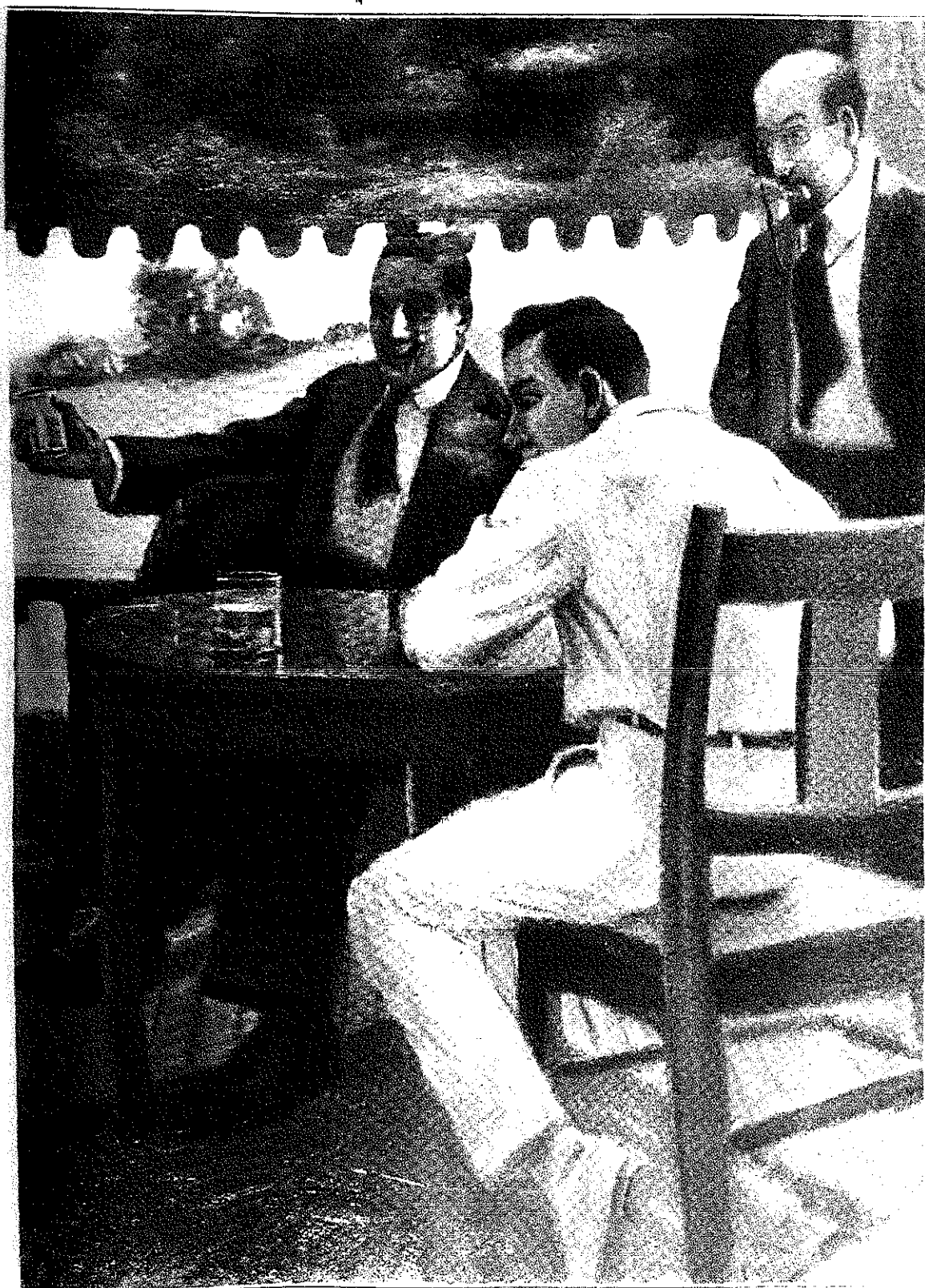
"I suppose you're glad of it," he observed in a voice of mingled grief and indignation. "Well I'm not. I didn't mean to do it. It was at the tenth hole. Rogers had me four down. Nibbie—" Mr. Jellie hesitated and gulped a little—"Nibbie had been very demonstrative all the way. I was 64 at the turn. I'd made a lot of rotten shots, and Nibbie was right after me all the time. You know how he feels—how he felt when I made a bad shot. Well, on the tenth I got a beauty from the tee, right down the aisle about 220 yards. On the second I took a brassie and carried the brook. It sure was a fine shot, I'll leave it to Rogers."

Mr. Rogers nodded in confirmation. "I always have to play short there myself," he confessed.

"But Nibbie must have thought I didn't carry it," Mr. Jellie went on. "He must have thought I made the brook. Anyway, he evidenced disapproval. It made me mad, that's all there is to it. He'd been howling at



"YES, DEAD," ROGERS REITERATED. "DEAD AS A DEAD



DOG. JELLIE KILLED HIM." "ASK THE EGYPTIANS," PAGE 19.

me all day for my rotten shots, which he had a right to do, but that was the best brassie I've had for a month, and when he set up that yelp I turned before I thought and threw the club at him. Of course I didn't mean to hit him, or at least didn't mean to hurt him—"

Mr. Jellie paused to control the tremble in his voice.

"It must have caught him right in the temple," he finished.

It is not surprising that this recital of Nibbie's death caused no demonstration of grief on the part of those who heard it. Call it heartlessness if you will; the reply is that these men were golfers with golfers' nerves and that Nibbie had more than once made them miss a stroke. They did not even feign regret. They grinned openly; their remarks were for the most part facetious and satirical; one or two were openly exultant. There were ironic expressions of sympathy and advice.

"One trouble is," observed Rogers to the grief-stricken Jellie, "that now you'll have no way of knowing when you make a bad shot."

"And probably," added Huntington, "your game will suffer in consequence."

"Why not have the body stuffed and set it up on wheels?" suggested another. "The caddie could pull it around for you."

"Or have the hide cured and have a caddie bag made of it."

"Or use the hide for leather grips on your clubs."

"Anyway, you're safe for awhile," put in Marshfield, the Orientalist. "According to the old Egyptians, a dog's soul roams the earth for three moons after his death. For that long, at least, Nibbie will be with you in spirit if not in body."

Mr. Jellie got up abruptly and removed his hands from his pockets.

"You fellows think you're funny," he said quietly, looking from one to the other, "but it's no joke to me. Nibbie was the best friend I've ever had. He always found my ball in the rough, and he was a good sound critic."

"He was sound alright," observed Tom Innes, "if you mean noisy."

"Oh, I know he was a nuisance to the rest of you," Mr. Jellie agreed. "I don't blame you any, but I can't sit here and have a good time with Nibbie dead. I'm going up to my room."

And he did so.

He remained in his room all evening without eating any dinner. He was in fact a very unhappy man. A bachelor without home ties, the possessor of an inherited fortune and therefore spared the worries of the business of making a living, golf had for three years been the absorbing interest of his life. And what, he asked himself, what would golf be without Nibbie? What—for instance—what if he did carry the bunker from the eighth tee? There would be no joyful bark from Nibbie to acclaim the performance. What if a thousand things? Nibbie was gone.

His thoughts were dreary and melancholy as he crept between the sheets, and it was an hour before he slept.

Perhaps it was during that hour that a certain fantastic idea first entered his brain. He had thought during the evening of many ways of paying tribute to Nibbie's memory. He would give up golf. He would ask the club governors for permission to bury his dead at some appropriate spot on the links, say under the first tee. He would have the body stuffed and set up in his room. But finally he rejected all these plans in favor of one that had been suggested in a spirit of jocosity by someone downstairs. The more he considered it the better he liked it as a fitting and poetic method of expressing his sentiment for poor dead Nibbie.

About noon of the following Monday accordingly, Mr. Jellie took a train to Jersey City, accompanied by two men carrying a large wooden box with rope handles. At the Jersey terminus they took a taxi and were driven to a remote part of the town where the streets were dirty, the dwellings poor and dingy, and the atmosphere tainted with the smoke odors of numerous factories. Before a door of one of the latter, marked "Office of the Darnton Tanning Company," the taxi halted and Mr. Jel-

lie sprang out, followed by the two men with the wooden box. Five minutes later they were ushered, box and all, into the office of the president of the company. This was a dapper little man with eyeglasses and an engaging smile who got up from his chair to greet Mr. Jellie with outstretched hand in an enthusiastic welcome.

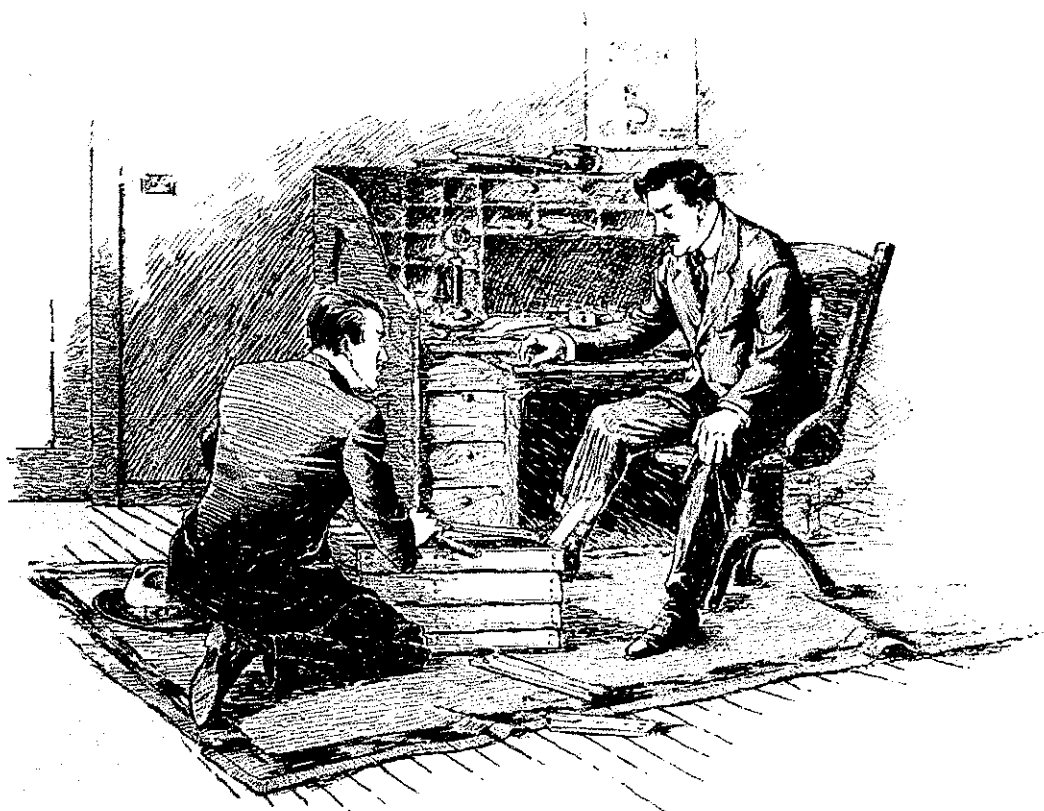
"Ah, Jellie, my boy," said he, "what a surprise! Glad to see you again."

box, disclosing to the other's astonished view the carcass of a white dog.

"There he is, Bill," said Mr. Jellie sadly.

"But what—what is it?" gasped Bill.

"Nibbie," replied Mr. Jellie. "My dog Nibbie. He died—he was killed Saturday on the links. I tell you what, Bill, he was an intelligent dog. He knew more about golf than I do. I want to pay proper respect to his mem-



"THERE HE IS, BILL," SAID MR. JELLIE, SADLY

The visitor returned the greeting, then turned to the two men, who had deposited the box in the middle of the floor, gave them each a five dollar bill and dismissed them.

"It's been four years since we've met," observed the president when they were alone.

"All of that," agreed Mr. Jellie, and there followed thirty minutes of reminiscences. After which Mr. Jellie came to the point of his visit. He first asked for a hammer, and when it arrived he removed the lid of the wooden

ory. What I want to know is this, could you have the body skinned and cure the hide?"

"Why—I suppose so—"

"Then do so as a favor to me. I want the hide made as soft as possible. I want to use it for a particular purpose. I know it will be a lot of trouble, but I'll pay well for it. You'll do it, won't you, Bill?"

It appeared that Bill would. The details were discussed and it was decided that after being skinned Nibbie's body should be sent to a nearby crematory.

Then Bill wanted his old friend Jellie to go home with him to dinner, but Jellie managed somehow to get out of that, and by four o'clock he was again on a train headed for the Jersey hills and the Grassview Country Club.

He played no golf that week. He had decided that so much was due to the memory of Nibbie. Those of the others who managed to get out for a day on the links tormented him without mercy, and when the Saturday weekend crowd arrived poor Jellie was forced to take to his room. Through the window he could see the smooth turf stretching away through the hills and woods, with here and there a spot of lighter hue that marked the putting-greens, and he heard continually the sweet, seductive sound of the impact of wood on gutta percha. But he gritted his teeth and stuck to his decision, even throughout Sunday, when the putts trickle from dawn to dark and the tees grow hot.

Tuesday morning a package arrived from Jersey City. Mr. Jellie opened it in feverish haste, and there in his hand lay the skin of poor Nibbie, dark, wrinkled, hairless, certainly unrecognizable. But it seemed to the bereft master that the thing was alive; he fancied that he felt in its soft texture a spirit, a sentient thrill, and he remembered what Marsfield had said of the old Egyptian belief concerning the soul of a dog.

He took the skin down to the club professional, together with his bag of clubs, and said:

"Mac, here's a new kind of leather I got from a friend of mine. I think it ought to make a good grip. I've got eleven clubs here altogether. Do you think there's enough in this piece to make grips for all of them?"

The Scotchman took the skin and measured it, then made some calculations on a piece of paper.

"Plenty, Mr. Jellie," he replied. "What kind of leather is it?"

"Why—why—" Mr. Jellie stammered. "It's a sort of Egyptian leather," he said finally. "I'd like to have the clubs tomorrow morning if possible."

The following day was Wednesday. Mr. Jellie was up early, as usual. After breakfast he went for a stroll in the woods back of the club house, but he was uncomfortable. He hadn't swung at a ball for ten days, and his hands itched. Any golfer can sympathize with him; who has not experienced that irresistible yearning to feel the ping of the wood, the sturdy impact of the iron? Mr. Jellie returned to the club house, and there, on the piazza, saw Monty Fraser gazing around him on every side as though in search of something.

"Ah, how are you, Jellie," exclaimed Fraser, his face suddenly brightening. "Thought I wouldn't go in to the office today and ran over for a little fun. But I couldn't find—"

He stopped suddenly, his face falling.

"But I forgot," he continued. "You're in mourning and won't play."

"No; that's all over," returned Mr. Jellie, eagerly.

"Then are you on for a match?"

"Just waiting for one."

Whereupon Fraser repaired to the locker room and Mr. Jellie went upstairs to don their fighting clothes. On his way back down the latter stopped to get his clubs from the professional. They were all ready, with pieces of poor Nibbie's skin wrapped neatly around the shafts.

"That's good leather, all right," remarked Mac.

"Want to put anything up?" asked Fraser as the other joined him at the caddie house.

"Sure. Anything," responded Mr. Jellie.

"Box of balls?"

"Sure."

"All right," the other agreed; "but really, Jellie, you've got to take a handicap. It's absurd. I go around in 85 to 90 and you average 115 or more. Take at least a stroke a hole. That'll make the match interesting."

"No, I won't," said Mr. Jellie, stubbornly.

And he wouldn't, though Fraser argued with him clear to the tee. They tossed a coin, and Fraser won the

honor. He was a good driver, and he got a ball 220 yards down the center. Mr. Jellie teed up and took his driver from the caddie.

It is amazing the number of extraneous and impertinent thoughts that can occupy a man's mind when he is trying to hit a golf ball. Though skies tumble and the earth shakes on its foundations he is supposed to keep his eye and mind directed on the ball and nothing but the ball; but such is the perversity and levity of the human brain that at the most critical instant it is apt to be concerning itself with mere trifles, such as the latest quotation on C. & O. or the price of your wife's last hat. Mr. Jellie found himself considering the curious feel of the new grip on his driver. An inexplicable sensation seemed to communicate itself from the shaft into every part of his body, even to the tips of his toes; a sense of confidence, elation, mastery. Always before, when preparing to make a shot, he had been nervous, stiff, uncomfortable, and painfully doubtful of his ability to hit the ball at all; now he felt as though he could walk up carelessly and knock the thing a million miles.

"It's because I haven't played for so long," he was saying to himself. "It's because—but I must keep my eye on the ball—I haven't played—but I must—for so long—"

He swung savagely. To Fraser's eye it appeared to be the same old Jellie swing, stiff, ungraceful, jerky, ill-timed; and his astonishment was therefore the greater when he saw the ball sailing true and straight far down the course. Midway in its flight it appeared to gain new momentum, lifting gently upward, and in direction it was absolutely dead.

"Some drive," said Fraser, encouragingly, as the two men started down the fairway.

"Yes," agreed Mr. Jellie, who was intensely surprised. But what he was surprised at was the fact that he was not surprised. It was unquestionably the longest and straightest drive he had ever made. Two weeks ago that shot would have left him electrified

with astonishment, and now he actually seemed inclined to take it as a matter of course.

"Well," he thought, "it's been ten days since I've played. Wait till I flub a couple."

The first hole at Grassview is 475 yards. The fairway is narrow, with hazards on one side and out of bounds on the other, and just in front of the green is a deep sand pit. On his second Fraser took a driving mashie and played a little short of the sand pit. Mr. Jellie, who had outdriven him by thirty yards, used a brassie and carried over the hazard to the green.

"By Jove, you're putting it up to me," said Fraser, in some surprise.

Mr. Jellie nodded. His face was a little flushed. Never before had he been on that green in two; more often he had made the sand pit on his third or fourth. He felt vaguely that something was the matter, and the curious thing about it was that he experienced no surprise. He had taken the brassie for the purpose of making the green, and as he addressed the ball he had felt absurdly confident that it would go there.

Fraser, who had played short, had only an easy mashie pitch left. He played it perfectly; the ball dropped on the edge of the green, rolled over the smooth turf straight for the pin and stopped six inches away, dead for a four. Mr. Jellie was twenty feet from the hole. He took his putter from the caddie, walked up to the ball and tapped it. It started straight, seemed to waver for an instant, then went on and dropped in the cup with a gentle thud.

"Three," said Mr. Jellie in a voice that trembled.

"Your hole," observed Fraser. "Good Lord, Jellie, what's the matter with you? Two under par! Some three! I got one under myself."

"Oh, I've sunk twenty-footers before," replied Mr. Jellie, with an effort at calmness. But the flush on his face deepened and there was a queer look in his eye.

On the second, a hole for a long and short shot, they got good drives and

were on in two. Fraser's putt was strong by four feet, but he holed it coming back. Jellie's thirty-footer hung on the lip of the cup. It was a half in four.

The third is 320 yards. Mr. Jellie, retaining the honor, made his first poor shot from the tee. It was a long ball, but a bad slice carried it into the rough, in the midst of thick underbrush. "Ah," Fraser smiled to himself, "old Jellie's getting back on his game;" and, swinging easily, he got a straight one well out of trouble.

Mr. Jellie, kicking through the underbrush with his caddie, suffered from mingled emotions. Was it possible that he was going to return so soon to his eights and nines? This slice looked like it. At length the ball was found, buried in deep grass, with bushes and trees on every side; it was all but unplayable. One hundred yards away the green glimmered in the sunshine.

"Better play off to one side and make sure of getting out," counselled Fraser.

Without replying, Mr. Jellie took his niblick and planted his feet firmly in the grass. His eyes glittered and his jaw was clamped tight. The heavy iron swung back and came down with tremendous force, plowing through the grass and weeds like a young hurricane. Up came the ball, literally torn out by the brutal force of the blow, up through the underbrush it sailed, up over the tops of the trees, farther, still farther, and dropped squarely in the middle of the green a hundred yards away.

"My God!" said Fraser.

"Nice recovery, sir," said the caddie, in a tone of awe.

Mr. Jellie was smiling, but his face was pale and his hands trembled. He knew very well that he had made a wonderful shot. But what was this strange feeling that was growing stronger within him every minute, this feeling of absolute assurance that he could make a hundred such shots if necessary? He tried to reply to his companion's appreciative remarks, but his voice wouldn't work. He made his

way out of the underbrush like a man dazed.

Fraser approached nicely and took two putts, but Mr. Jellie, whose ball was stopped eight feet from the pin, holed out for a three. The fourth, a little over 500 yards, was halved in five. By this time Fraser was beginning to wobble a little, unnerved by pure astonishment. Was this Jellie, the dub, the duffer, the clod? Was this thing possible? Can eyes be believed? Aloysius Jellie one under 4s! No wonder Fraser was upset with amazement.

The fifth is a short hole over a lake. Mr. Jellie stood on the tee, mashie in hand. He remembered how many hundreds of balls he had caused to hop feebly over the grass and dribble into that lake. Again his jaw set tight. Would the marvel continue? It did. He swung his mashie. The ball rose true and fair over the water and dropped on the green. Fraser, completely unnerved, got too far under his ball. It barely cleared the hazard, falling far short, and he lost the hole.

At the turn Mr. Jellie was six up. The cards were as follows:

Jellie	3 4 3 5 3 3 5 4 4	—34
Fraser	4 4 4 5 4 6 5 7 7	—46

From there on it was a farce. Mr. Jellie, it is true, appeared to be laboring under a great strain. His face was pale as death and his hands trembled nervously as he reached for his driver or knelt to tee up his ball. But his shots went straight and far, and his putts found the cup. He made a recovery from a sand pit on the eleventh that was only less marvelous than the one from the underbrush on the third. Fraser was shot to pieces, and the match ended on the eleventh green.

"I'm going to play it out," said Mr. Jellie in a husky voice, "and see if I can break 70."

Fraser could only stare at him speechlessly.

"All right," he managed finally to utter.

Very few men find in a lifetime the ineffable sweetness, the poignant, intense delight that the following days held for Mr. Aloysius Jellie. For one awful, sleepless night he feared a fluke.

He had made a 69. Great gods, could it have been a fluke? He sweated and tossed and slept not. As soon as dawn broke he took his clubs and flew to the first tee. A 240-yard drive, straight as an arrow—ah, thank heaven!

He made the first nine holes in 36, and, drunk with happiness, returned to the club house for breakfast.

Tom Innes arrived on the nine o'clock train, and Mr. Jellie took him out and beat him 6 and 5 in the morning and 8 and 7 in the afternoon. On the following day Silas Penfield was the victim, also for two matches. By that time Mac Donaldson had heard of the miracle that was taking place on the fashionable links of the Grassview Country Club, and Friday morning he took Mr. Jellie on for a match, and was badly beaten.

On Saturday nothing was heard at Grassview but talk of Jellie. His caddie had acquired an air of insolent arrogance. Mac Donaldson spoke of him in low, mysterious tones. But for the most part there was doubt, especially on the part of those men who had been winning innumerable boxes of balls from him for the past three years with ridiculous ease.

"Yes," said Marsfield, the Egyptologist, employing a formula of golf wit that is older than St. Andrews; "yes, Jellie might make a 69—for nine holes."

"I'll tell you what I'll do," retorted Mr. Jellie, turning on him. "I'll take you and Rogers and Huntington and play your best ball for five hundred dollars a side."

There ensued a clamor of discussion. Fraser took Marsfield to one side and advised him strongly to "stay off." Rogers was scornful, but cautious. Huntington, a good sport, decided it by declaring that it would be worth the price to see old Jellie do it.

Old Jellie did it, but not without a tussle. News of the match had spread over the links and through the club house, and by the time they reached the turn they were trailed by a gallery of some fifty persons. Mr. Jellie gave them all they were looking for. He

went around 3 under par and won by 4 and 3. They forced him to make a speech in the dining room that evening, and in a toast he was referred to as "our next club champion."

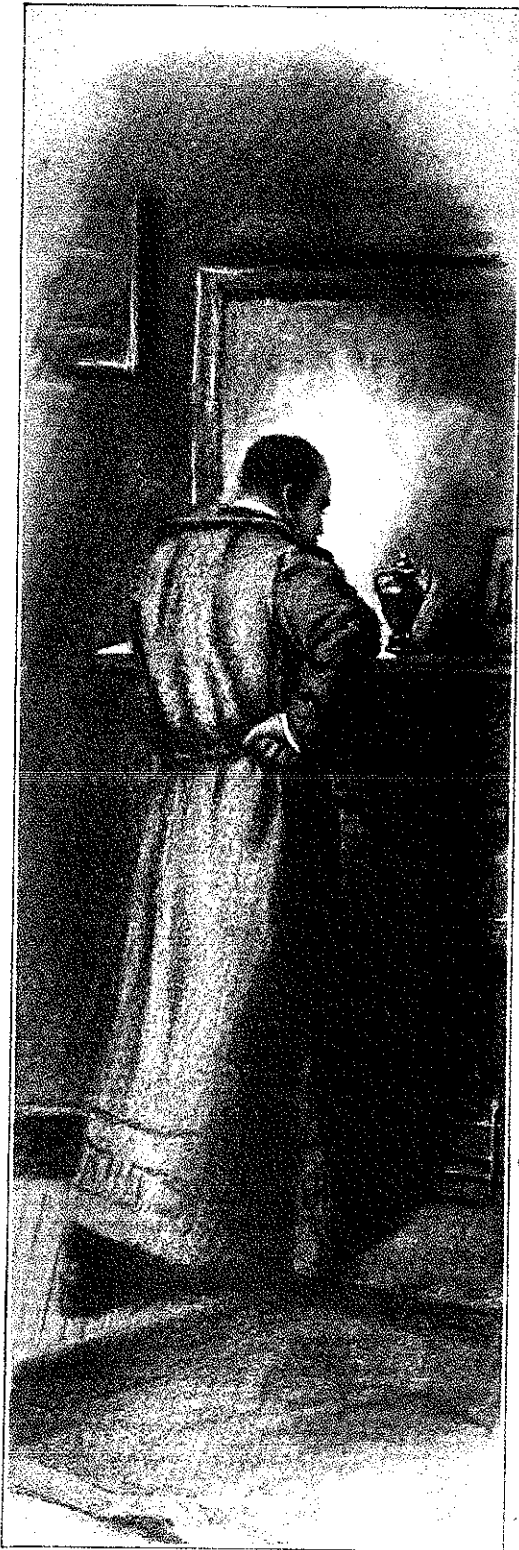
And this Aloysius Jellie, who had been the sucker, the easy thing, the object of much amused contempt, became the glory and pride of Grassview. The months of June and July were one continuous succession of triumphs. Middleton, who had met Francis Ouimet in the semi-finals at Ekwanok the year before, was the only member of the club who dared to play him on even terms, and Middleton suffered ignominious defeat. The greatest day of all occurred in mid-July. Tom McNamara and Mike Brady had appeared at Grassview on a visit to their old friend Donaldson, and about the first thing Mac had spoken of was Jellie and his miraculous reversal of form. The two visitors expressed a desire to see the marvel in action.

And Mr. Jellie took on McNamara, Brady and Donaldson and beat them one up, playing their best ball.

He played exhibition matches with various visiting amateurs and pros, and suffered no defeats. On July 28 he won the New Jersey, and on July 12 the Metropolitan amateur championship. He lowered the course records from one to four strokes at Englewood, Baltusrol, Garden City, Wykagyl, Piping Rock and Upper Montclair. The whole golfing world was ablaze with his fame, and countless duffers tried to imitate his ungainly, bizarre swing, with disastrous results. The newspapers ran columns about him, and the sport writers unanimously predicted that with Jellie to lead the attack the next American assault on Vardon, Taylor and Braid would bring England's cup across the water. There was printed again and again the amusing tale of the dog Nibbie, and the story of his untimely death.

Mr. Jellie himself was far from forgetting Nibbie. Often, when at Grassview, he would stand for some time in his room gazing at a small bronze urn which occupied the place of honor on the mantel. It was inscribed:

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MR. JELLIE WOULD STAND AND GAZE AT THIS URN, NOT IN SORROWFUL MEMORY OF THE PAST, BUT IN PERPLEXED AND PAINFUL CONSIDERATION OF THE PRESENT.

Herein Repose the Ashes of
NIBBIE,
Faithful Companion and Critic of
Aloysius Jellie.
He Died on the 17th Day of May, 19—,
A Martyr to
The Angry Passion of His Master.

Mr. Jellie would stand and gaze at this urn, not in sorrowful memory of the past, but in perplexed and painful consideration of the present. Mr. Jellie was not a superstitious man. But what had happened could be accounted for only by admitting the supernatural, and one miracle is as likely to happen as another. Was it Aloysius Jellie who had astounded the golfing world by averaging under 4s for 342 consecutive holes? Or was it in fact, in some mysterious manner—was it Nibbie?

But it was another query, a corollary of this, that caused the frequent frown of worried perplexity on Mr. Jellie's brow. Finally, one evening in early August, he got Marsfield, the Orientalist, into a corner and asked him point-blank:

"How long does a dog's soul stay on earth?"

The other gazed at him in astonishment.

"Why, bless me," he responded, "I didn't know a dog had any soul."

"Of course not, of course not," Mr. Jellie agreed hastily. "What I mean is, I remember once you spoke about some ancient belief—"

"Did I? Perhaps so. There are many interesting ancient ceremonies and beliefs connected with the canine family. The Moslems, like the old Hebrews, hold them to be unclean. They were worshipped by the Asgans, and the Egyptians honored them. The latter held a belief that the soul of a dog remains on earth after death, either to console or torment his master, according to the treatment he received in life."

"Yes, that's it," said Mr. Jellie, eagerly. "And how long does—did—how long did they think the soul stayed around?"

"Three moons. That is equivalent to three months, or more accurately,

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eighty-eight days in our calendar." After a moment's pause Marsfield added: "Still thinking of the lost Nibbie, eh, Jellie? By Jove, old man, I should think the past two months would have driven him out of your mind."

"No, I haven't forgotten him," replied the other, thoughtfully. Then he shook himself. "Much obliged, Marsfield. Come on, let's join the others."

Late that evening, in his room, Mr. Jellie took a piece of paper and made a calculation. It appeared simple enough, though cryptic, consisting merely of a sum of four figures:

$$\begin{array}{r} 14 \\ 30 \\ 31 \\ 13 \\ \hline 88 \end{array}$$

He sat gazing at the figures on the paper until the minutes dragged into hours.

Ever since Mr. Jellie's startling leap into the sphere of the masters all Grassview, members, caddies and pros, had been looking forward to an event which was now drawing near. It was discussed in the locker room, the caddie house, the library and the nineteenth hole. The opinion in all these places was the same, though expressed differently. In the caddie house: "Gee, Mr. Jellie kin lick them guys with nothin' but a putter." In the library: "Jellie'll win sure. Hurrah for Jellie!"

The approaching event was the annual tournament for the amateur golf championship of the United States, to be held on the Baltusrol links, August 8 to 13.

But though the opinion at Grassview was unanimous, elsewhere it was divided. The papers of the Middle West said that Chick Evans was due to win the great prize that should have been his long before. Down East could see no one but Ouimet. In the Metropolitan district some picked Travers, saying that despite Jellie's brilliancy he would probably falter under the gruelling strain of the National; but others, who had seen Jellie in action, favored his chances.



"NIBBIE." HE GROANED, STRETCHING OUT HIS HANDS TO THE URN. "OH, NIBBIE, WHY DIDN'T I KILL YOU JUST ONE DAY LATER?"—"ASK THE EGYPTIANS." PAGE 32.

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Two or three days before the tournament was to begin a delegation of Grassview members called Mr. Jellie into council to register a solemn protest.

"Mr. Jellie," said Clifford Huntington—he always called him simply Jellie, but this was a grave occasion—"Mr. Jellie, we have heard that you do not intend going to Baltusrol to familiarize yourself with the course by practise before the tournament. Without any desire to appear presumptuous, we must say that we question the wisdom of this. No champion thinks it beneath his dignity to study the ground on which he is to fight his battles. Mr. Evans arrived at Baltusrol yesterday. Mr. Travers and Mr. Ouimet will be there today. The perpetual honor and glory of yourself and Grassview are at stake. Mr. Jellie, we beg you to reconsider your decision."

The speaker sat down amid applause, and Aloysius Jellie arose.

"Mr. Huntington and the rest of you fellows," he said, "I appreciate your interest and kindness. But I see no necessity of reconsidering my decision. I don't need any practise."

And with those sublime words he sat down again, while cries arose on every side:

"But, Jellie, it's absurd!"

"They all do it!"

"Man, we want you to win this championship!"

"For the Lord's sake, Jellie—"

And Tom Innes put in:

"You know, you've only played Baltusrol once."

"Yes," replied Jellie calmly, "and I broke the course record by three strokes."

So they gave it up, but there were shakings of the head and doleful mutterings. Later in the day Monty Fraser approached him and said anxiously:

"You know, Jellie, old man, I don't want to seem officious about this, but we've got eight thousand dollars up on you. You really think you'll win, don't you?"

Jellie looked at him a moment and replied:

"Ask the Egyptians."

Then he strode off.

"Now what the devil—" muttered Fraser, gazing after him in bewilderment. "'Ask the Egyptians!' I've half a mind to hedge."

On the morning of August 8 the golfing world gathered at Baltusrol. It was a busy and animated scene. Buses, taxis, and private cars were constantly arriving from all directions, especially from that of the Short Hills railway station. The broad piazza of the club house, overlooking the 18th green, was crowded with men and women of all ages and appearances, walking, talking and drinking, and there were even more on the lawns. Tents had been improvised to cater to the wants of the overflow of visitors. Gay expectancy was the keynote. Here and there you would see a face, usually with a permanent coat of tan, which wore the set, tense expression of a busy lawyer in his office or a statesman considering some delicate and difficult complication. That would be one of the contestants—one of the master golfers.

At five minutes past eight the first pair started off on the qualifying round. All day the wood and iron heads whistled and the putts rolled. The links, a bright green paradise in the Jersey hills, with clusters of trees here and there and occasionally a glimmering ribbon of water, stretched forth a lovely panorama for the eye. Some noticed and praised it, but for the most part the thousands of visitors were too busy following and applauding their chosen idols to pay any attention to the beauties of nature.

The best five scores of the qualifying round of 36 holes were as follows:

Jellie 70 - 71—141

Evans 72 - 76—148

Marston 75 - 73—148

Lewis 78 - 71—149

Gardner 73 - 77—150

That evening a crowd of Grassview members remained at Baltusrol for dinner. Aloysius Jellie occupied the seat of honor at their table, and his slouching form was the focus on which all eyes were centered. He had won

the gold medal for the qualifying round by playing 36 holes 7 under par—an unprecedented score. At that pace there was no man in the world who could even make it interesting for him. The draw had come out as evenly as could be expected from that haphazard proceeding. Chick Evans, Gardner and Marston were among the lower sixteen; Travers, Ouimet and Jellie in the upper.

"Your man hasn't a chance to reach the finals," said a Mr. Higginbotham of Upper Montclair, stopping beside the Grassview table. He was glad to get away from there immediately after.

Jellie came through his first two matches with flying colors. To be sure, his opponents were not in his class—young Anderson of Clinton Valley and McBride of Oakdale. They were smothered.

For his third match he drew Ouimet, and the match drew the gallery. The great conqueror of Ray and Vardon had not been playing up to his best form in the tournament, but his prestige is great, and that, linked with the notoriety of his opponent, drew two thousand spectators. They saw some masterly golf, but the match was a farce. At the end of the first nine holes Jellie, out in 36, was 4 up, and he finally won 6 and 5. In the meantime, Jerry Travers had beaten John Anderson, and it was Jellie against Travers in the semifinals, with Bob Gardner and Chick Evans in the other half.

"Only two more to beat, old man," said Tom Innes that night to the hope of Grassview.

Mr. Jellie nodded, but did not reply. It did indeed appear, as the sport writers had predicted, that the strain of the great tournament was telling on him. His face was drawn a little and his eyes had the reddish hollow look of a man who is not getting enough sleep. He was getting morose, too, and touchy. That same evening at Grassview, when Huntington had asked him why he didn't try the jerk stroke on full mashies, he had responded in ironic terms more heated than elegant.

"It's getting old Jellie's goat," de-

clared Monty Fraser, anxiously. "We must make him go to bed early tonight."

The following day was one that Jerry Travers and four thousand spectators will never forget.

Travers and Jellie teed off at nine o'clock, and the gallery followed. Jellie, who appeared haggard and nervous, was expected by everyone to crack. As he took the driver from the caddie and addressed the ball the trembling of his hands could be perceived by those fifty feet away.

"It's a shame to take the money," whispered Grantland Rice to a friend. "Why, the man's a nervous wreck."

And yet the nervous wreck won the first hole, a par 5, with a 3. Travers, who had been on his game all week, merely smiled. The second was halved in 4. The third, a short hole at Baltusrol, Jellie won by sinking a 30-footer for a two. Again Travers smiled. But when Jellie reached the green on the fourth in 2, a long tricky hole with an immense sand pit just in front of the green, an amazed murmur went up from the great gallery, and Travers was observed to bestow a thoughtful and serious look on his opponent.

From there on it was a heart-breaking, merciless struggle between perfection and transcendence. Never before had Travers, the king of match play, gotten balls so straight and far with the wood, never had he laid his irons to the pin with such deadly accuracy, and he putted as only Travers can putt. How he was beaten on that day he cannot yet understand. Jellie was unsteady as a sapling in a storm. He sliced continually and forced himself to play many shots from hazards and the rough. It was these incredible recoveries that caused the great throng of spectators to gasp amazingly and stare at one another in speechless wonder, then to burst out into a roar of applause that shook the Jersey hills.

The match ended on the 29th green. Travers played the first 18 holes in 69, Jellie in 67. Their scores for the 29 holes were 109 and 114.

It was the golf of supermen, unbelievable, miraculous, staggering. And

the strain told. Travers was hardly able to stand as he grasped his conqueror's hand for the congratulations of a gentleman; the lines on his face made it look old and a smile would not come though he tried for it. Then Jellie was caught up in triumph on the shoulders of Tom Innes and Monty Fraser and, followed by the cheering, happy, worn-out throng of spectators, they started for the club house. Huntington, running along to relieve Fraser or Innes should they tire, shouted in Jellie's ear:

"Evans beat Gardner, but he'll be pie for you tomorrow! We knew you could do it, Jellie, old man! Wow! Old Jellie! Wow-ee!"

They jollified for an hour at the club house, then tore their hero from the arms of the admiring throng and hustled him into an automobile. It was nearing dusk when they reached Grass-view.

"Now," said Huntington, "we'll have a good dinner and then take Jellie up and put him to bed. He still has Evans to beat, though if he plays as he did today that'll be easy enough. Only one more, Jellie, old man, and for God's sake get some sleep. You look pretty bad. Tomorrow at this time you'll be amateur golf champion of the United States."

So after dinner they escorted him to his room and left him there, with a last reminder that they would leave at half-past seven in the morning for Baltusrol and the final victory.

The first thing Mr. Jellie did when they had gone was to lock the door. Then he walked to the window and raised it and stood looking out on the night. Unseeing for a long time he gazed at the stars—perhaps Sirius was among them. Then he turned from the window and went over and sat down on the edge of the bed. In the glare of the electric light the appearance of his face was enough to warrant the solicitous advice of his friends. It was sunken and haggard, and pale as death. His hands fumbled nervously with the white counterpane. The grim light of mingled fear and despair was in his eyes.

"Eighty-eight," he said aloud involuntarily, as a thought forced itself into speech.

He got up and went to his desk and began scribbling mechanically on a sheet of paper, like a man in a trance. He covered the sheet on both sides, doing over and over again the sum:

14

30

31

13

88

He reached over and tore a sheet off his desk calendar, disclosing to view the date of the morrow: "Saturday, August 13." In the blank space left above the date for memoranda there was a large cross scratched in red ink. He sat and gazed at it for a long time, while the minutes stretched into hours, with the hopeless eye of a man doomed. The night grew cold, and all sounds about the club house ceased, and still he sat gazing at that date on his calendar.

Long after the clock in the hall below had struck one, he pulled himself out of his chair and walked over to the mantel, where reposed a bronze urn bearing an engraved inscription. Mechanically he read its words, over and over again. A gleam of hope appeared in his eye, but swiftly died out, to give way to an expression of increased despair.

"Nibbie," he groaned, stretching out his hands to the urn, "O, Nibbie, why didn't I kill you just one day later?"

He tottered across the room and threw himself face down on the bed.

At dawn he arose and dashed cold water over his face. There was a new air of determination about him now, the air of a man resolved to know the worst; his movements were abrupt and decisive, as though he were pressed for time. He took his bag of clubs and quietly left the room, closing the door gently behind him. All was still in the club house. He tip-toed stealthily down the stairs, through the halls and over the piazza to the lawn.

The East's first delicate blush appeared on the horizon as he reached

the tee; the magic air of the early morning, moistened by the dew, filled his lungs. He took the driver from the bag and teed up a ball. Trembling fearfully he gripped the shaft and took his stance. He tried to analyze his feelings, to discover if that wonderful sensation of confidence and mastery which had suddenly come upon him three months before had as suddenly left, but all within him was chaos.

He swung at the ball.

It dribbled off the tee and rolled thirty yards away. He picked up his bag and started after it. This time he used his brassie and missed it altogether. He tried a driving mashie, and pulled into a hazard. Doggedly, grimly, he took up his bag and followed it. He made the first hole in eleven.

The details are painful; let us avoid them. At a quarter to six Mr. Jellie holed out on the ninth green, and, adding up his score with trembling hand, found that he was 76 at the turn. There was an insane light in his eyes and he was muttering aloud to himself, but his actions seemed to be under perfect control. He filled his bag full of stones, strapped the clubs in tightly, walked to the lake on the eleventh hole and threw it in. He saw with satisfaction that it sank at once. He hastened back to the club house, and saw with relief that none of the members were down yet. A porter who was sweeping out the library greeted him respectfully as he passed, but Mr. Jellie made no response. He went up to his room, packed a travelling bag, and was down again in five minutes. The walk to the railroad station is a mile and a half,

and it took him only a little over a quarter of an hour. The whistle of an approaching train was heard as he entered the station. He crossed over to the ticket office and demanded:

"Give me a ticket for Mexico or South America."

"We don't keep 'em," the agent said; "You can get one in Philadelphia."

"Alright," said Mr. Jellie, "give me a ticket to Philadelphia."

"That's your train coming in now," said the clerk as he shoved the paste-board under the wicket.

Mr. Jellie hurried to the platform. The train was nearly empty. He found a seat in the corner at a distance from the other passengers, sat down and pulled his hat over his eyes. A moment later the train started.

Five thousand people waited at Baltusrol for three hours on the morning of August 13. But he whom they expected never came, nor was he found, though the search was frantic. And thus for the first and only time in history the amateur golf championship of the United States was won by default.

In a little town down South, on the banks of the Mississippi—he didn't get as far as Mexico—Aloysius Jellie is leading a lonely and monotonous existence. He is in communication with his friends in the East and may return to New York some day, though he refuses to answer certain queries which they make in every letter. Sometimes he plays checkers with the store-keeper, and he is quite an expert.

He can't bear the sight of a dog.