

## Eminent Golfers.

### XXVIII.—JACK SIMPSON.

There be some golfers who are always with us (long may they remain), of such the names are household words from one generation to another—Tom Morris, for instance, Lord Chancellor of Golf, who sits enthroned, so to speak, on the woosack of his profession, unharmed by assault and battery of cross-grained Father Time. Others, again, like "that bright *Occidental Star*, Queen Elizabeth, appear on the scene with the rapidity of a meteor; these, when they come into view, dazzle for a season by their brilliancy, and anon vanish into the black night. Yet do they leave some traces of their path, some cosmical dust to be gathered up by the observer, in the form of a well-won championship, or of some matches which remain as ever-interesting memories. In this latter class, regretfully, is it to be stated, do we find Jack Simpson, the champion of 1884. Surely, no player was ever more fascinating to watch, the more the pity that he now appears practically to have given up the game. True, he re-appeared in the championship of 1891, but by no means in the form with which first memories of him are associated. Still, as he is at present at Elie, or was a short time ago, working with Mr. Forrester, the ingenious inventor of sundry irons and mashies bearing his name, it may be hoped that Jack Simpson may be heard of once more in connection with first-class professional Golf.

Since his championship days, Andrew and Hugh Kirkaldy and others have been busy making names for themselves; and nothing can be more interesting than foursomes, singles, and every form of competition wherein the greatest number of players of the first force have opportunities of meeting. Jack Simpson is the eldest of six brothers, all of them golfers, of whom, Archie, now at Prestwick, and Robert, the professional at Carnoustie, are the best known. He is a native of Elie, or Earlsferry, like his friend Rolland; like him, also, he was a stonemason by trade, and speedily became about the best player in the Elie Thistle Club. In a recent notice in this *Journal* of Rolland's career, some remarks were made on a celebrated foursome in which these two first appeared, so to speak, in public. Those remarks need not be here recapitulated; sufficient to say that most astonishing driving on the part of the Earlsferry players was the main feature of the match. Rolland, splendid player though he was, and is, held the opinion that Jack Simpson could play a yet stronger game than himself, if he, Jack, happened to be in his best form. The year 1884 was the period at which he was seen at his best. A tournament at Innerleven was held in the summer, at which all the principal professionals were present. The writer, as it chanced, was also there, and walked down to the links to see the fun. About the first individual he came across was, as it turned out, the subject of this sketch, who was then unknown to him. Simpson, dressed in a loose blue serge coat, on coming out of the club-house, indulged in a couple of preliminary swings—*ex pede Herculem*. His style and athletic appearance so arrested the writer's attention that he formed the impression that the probable winner stood before him. As events turned out, this proved to be the case, although, after the first round, nothing seemed less likely than the fulfilment of such a prophecy. It was rather to his brother Archie, then a lithe lad of about seventeen or so, that attention was directed, for he had returned with the very fine score of 80, and was six strokes lower than Jack, who was no better than several others,

Willie Campbell, for instance. Archie's second round was also a good one, 85. He, therefore, seemed tolerably certain of premier honours, the more so as Jack had taken 42 for the first half of his second round, and was left with the almost impossible score of 36 for the nine holes home to beat his brother. Now, however, he came away with his very best game; slightly aided by a gentle following wind his driving was extraordinarily fine, and mainly by reason of it he, as we have said, won by one stroke with 86, 78=164. The two brothers both beat the record of the green, and were respectively six and five strokes better than Willie Campbell, who was third.

This last half-round of Jack Simpson was an admirable illustration of his irresistible power of recovery. He hardly ever started in a competition without playing some very unsteady Golf at the outset. A not uncommon commencement with him was a ten about the first or second hole, or perchance he might just save double figures by the skin of his teeth. Then would the disappointed admirer, with sorrow, transfer his attention to some other notable, only subsequently to rue his lack of abiding faith, for, as likely as not, the next thing he would hear would be that Jack Simpson had about ten or twelve strokes left for the last hole in order to win. Such,

for instance, was the case in 1884, when the championship was played at Prestwick. The weather was of the stormiest, a strong gale blowing, which met the competitors on the outward journey. Jack, having survived the crucial ordeal of the difficult first hole, was still unvanquished by such hazards as the second presents; but this period of tame inaction was no longer to be tolerated, and his individuality must be asserted. Hence his next step was to top his tee-shot into a whin about ten yards from him, precisely at the place where two very long drives were absolutely necessary. Having, moreover, met with further obstructions on the way, he holed out in nine—a figure which, taking the field against him into account, must surely put him out of court. At this point, then, his admirers, or many of them, like Thibse—

"Saw the lion's shadow ere himself,  
And ran dismayed away."

But the next accounts to hand were that, despite the wind, the nine, and all else, he had finished the round in 78—considerably lower than anybody else, and, as it ultimately turned out, the lowest round of the day. Following this up with 82 in the afternoon, he won the championship with 160, while Rolland and Willie Fernie tied for second at 164. This, again, was a grand

and most characteristic display.

Golf is often—may one say usually?—a game of surprises; but no player that ever lived could boast half of Jack Simpson's fertility of resource in providing the totally unexpected. The most brilliant player conceivable, he was at the same time frequently the most disappointing; the whole man seemed contrived in acute and striking contrasts, "a living ganglion of irreconcilable antagonisms." The things and strokes he was not expected to do, these he did, leaving undone those wherein no mortal man, as one would say, could have failed. Thus, the finest driver imaginable, he would electrify one by missing the globe, or the next thing to it; after a superb approach to within twelve inches of the hole he would miss his putt. Of somewhat morose cast of countenance, he was, nevertheless, of a most genial, kindly nature, therefore popular with everybody, and amid the many queer incidents due to his idiosyncrasies he alone always appeared by far the least surprised or disconcerted of the party.

For some time he lived with his brother at Carnoustie, learning club-making. He there, as may be supposed, made many fine rounds, divers of them below 80. Whilst there an incident happened which may be given as aptly illustrating our previous



remarks. The ninth hole was at its longest. Jack was playing a big match, and had drawn his tee-shot to the left, where it lay rather heavy in long grass. Without the least consideration he hit out with his play-club, just grazing the paint on the extreme top of the ball, which moved perhaps a yard or two. Once more the blow fell, probably a vertical one this time, for the ball sprang straight up, as nearly as possible striking the striker in the face. A third time the driver descended, and now one of his very best was the result—a small matter of 260 yards or so. This was followed by a superb iron approach, to within a foot or so of the hole. Meanwhile, during these adventures the enemy had been to some extent embroiled in difficulties, wherefore Jack was left with his short putt for a half, which he missed, and so lost the hole. During the entire proceedings, and after they were over, Jack's lineaments were void of emotion, and expressionless as a brick wall. His feelings, if he had any, never found vent in words; whether, like the parrot, he thought the more, is beyond what deponent is prepared to state.

Simpson played with remarkably light clubs, driving with a swift swing, and off the right leg. He was gifted with enormously strong hands and wrists, hence the power of his cleek play was quite exceptional; in fact, he could hardly ever get a cleek whose head would withstand for any length of time the force of his blows, nor was it any uncommon thing for him to bend the blade out of all shape in a very few shots. He was an admirable iron player, exceedingly pretty in style. He did not, however, make much use of the running loft, preferring rather to pitch the ball up with considerable spin and but little roll. His weakness was in his putting, especially in holing out, at which he was probably inferior to the average of good players; but his wonderful driving more than made amends for his shortcoming. The whole of his play was characterised by a sort of easy carelessness, an indifference to consequences, which, while certainly it betokened the bold and fearless player, yet probably frequently cost him a hole, a stroke, or worse. With an admixture of an additional grain or two of caution as a diluent, with the exercise of a little more care on the putting-green, he had, it is to be hoped still, the capabilities of being quite the finest player ever seen in this or any other generation.

H. S. C. EVERARD.

DIDSBURY GOLF CLUB.

Mr. D. Anderson, jun., of St. Andrews completed a two month's engagement with above club on Saturday last. He has given great satisfaction and proved an excellent coach, and the standard of play of the members has greatly improved under his tuition. An interesting match was played last week between Mr. H. Ross Conbrough, captain of the club, and Anderson against Mr. Fred C. Morgan a member of the Bowdon Club, and Tom Gourlay, resident professional of the Bowdon Club. The match was seventy-two holes, thirty-six over the Bowdon course on Wednesday the 25th May, and thirty-six at Didsbury on Saturday, the 28th. Mr. Conbrough and Anderson were 3 up on Wednesday, and on Saturday won by 3 up and 2 to play. Saturday's game was a very keenly contested one, Mr. Morgan and Anderson playing a brilliant game all through. Gourlay began badly, but improved each round and played a very fine game in the final round. Mr. Conbrough played a steady game throughout, but showed particularly well in the final round, when he and Anderson made the fine score of 36. This is the record for foursome play. The details of the score were, 4 4 4 4 5 4 3 4 4. Considering the ground has gone back somewhat owing to the recent rain and warm weather, this is a capital performance.

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ABERDEEN.

The weather here on Saturday was not of the most favourable description for golfing, and as a consequence there was not a large turn-out of players over our two local courses. The members of the Victoria Club competed on Wednesday and Saturday over the eighteen-hole course on Aberdeen links, for Mr. James Pirie's prize (played for under special handicap). On comparing the cards handed in, the following were found to occupy the four leading places, viz. :—

Gross. Hcp. Net.		Gross. Hcp. Net.	
Mr. J. B. Banks ...	88 4 84	Mr. Alex. Cooper ...	86 scr. 86
Mr. L. Anderson ...	85 scr. 85	Mr. A. Mitchell ...	97 3 94

At the same time an extra competition for the club's monthly handicap prizes took place, the following being the result :—Mr. Alexander Cooper, 86 (scratch), and Mr. J. B. Banks, 88, less 2=86, tied for the prize for first-class players; while Mr. F. O. B. Ewing won the prize for second-class players.

ALNMOUTH GOLF CLUB.

On Saturday afternoon the fourth competition for the monthly cup was decided. The following are the scores :—

Gross. Hcp. Net.		Gross. Hcp. Net.	
Mr. J. Hedley ...	93 10 83	Mr. J. de C. Paynter	94 4 90
Mr. C. A. Ridley ...	86 scr. 86	The Hon. R. Jervis	108 18 90
Mr. M. Allan Hutchin-	...	Capt. H. W. Roberts	108 18 90
son ...	98 12 86	Mr. F. T. Ridley ...	94 3 91
Mr. J. B. Radcliffe...	88 scr. 88	Mr. F. W. Wyndham	110 19 91
Mr. J. Lowrie ...	95 7 88	Mr. E. J. Dent ...	109 16 93
Mr. B. Brumell ...	106 18 88	Mr. W. Smith ...	106 12 94
Mr. W. Cail ...	105 16 89	Mr. T. A. Hutton...	102 16 96
Mr. G. F. Charlton	96 6 90	Mr. R. Barker ...	121 16 105

Messrs. C. M. Bell, T. Tate, G. Scott, and W. Frazer made no returns. The optional sweepstakes was won by Mr. Hedley.

ASCOT LADIES' GOLF CLUB.

The monthly competition for club prizes was favoured with a fine afternoon on Thursday, 26th May, though the rain which fell shortly before play began had apparently made the greens rather difficult, judging from the scores, which were as under :—

Gross. Hcp. Net.		Gross. Hcp. Net.	
*Miss B. Chetwynd	98 24 74	Miss R. Maitland ...	107 19 88
Miss Hichens ...	101 24 77	Miss E. K. Pott ...	104 15 89
Miss L. Chetwynd...	103 24 79	Miss L. Mott ...	104 15 89
Miss Maitland ...	105 24 81	† Hon. E. Milman	96 3 93
Miss Adlercron ...	106 24 82	Miss J. C. Bayley ...	105 12 93
Miss Mott ...	108 24 84	Miss M. Macintyre	110 15 95
Miss M. K. Pott ...	107 20 87	Miss R. D. Haig...	97 scr. 97
Mrs. F. F. Mackenzie	112 24 88		

\* Winner of handicap prize. † Winner of scratch prize.

Also played :—Baroness Berkeley, Miss M. Clement, Miss Bowring, Miss N. Hichens, Mrs. Goshing, Miss Merewether, and Miss A. Adlercron.

REGISTER HOUSE CLUB, EDINBURGH.—The principal event of the season—the annual competition for the silver cup, presented by the keeper, Mr. Hope Finlay—was held on 25th ult. over Elie links. Unfortunately, the weather was wretched, and the players were thoroughly drenched in the course of the first round. The green, however, was in splendid order, and some steady scores were made over the eighteen holes. Prize-winners :—Mr. P. M. Robertson (winner of cup and gold charm), 108, less 24=84; Mr. Alexander Foster, 93, less 1=92; Mr. John Henderson, 117, less 24=93; Mr. William Ellison, 120, less 24=96; Mr. Robert Cromb, 116, less 20=96; Mr. D. M. Gavine (scratch), 97; Mr. Erskine Steele, 106, less 8=98; Mr. Alfred Tawse, 104, less 6=98.