

THE HEART OF A GOOF

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The Heart of a Goof by P. G. Wodehouse

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WHAT THIS STORY IS ABOUT

Golf is the Great Mystery. Like some capricious goddess, it bestows its favours with what would appear an almost fatheaded lack of method and discrimination. Mysterious, but there it is.

Ferdinand Dibble should have been a competent golfer—but he was a goof. That he loved Barbara McWay was beyond a doubt; but he hadn't the nerve to ask her to marry him. Every time he felt he had mustered up enough pep to propose, he took ten on a bogey three. And then self-confidence left him. How does he achieve his object? Many other great golfing problems are solved by the Oldest Member. His pertinacity in these matters makes him a plus man.

A real Wodehouse book of humour and golf.

*For List of Books by the same Author,
see pages 315—317*

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P. G. WODEHOUSE

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TO
MY DAUGHTER
LEONORA

WITHOUT WHOSE NEVER-FAILING
SYMPATHY AND ENCOURAGEMENT
THIS BOOK
WOULD HAVE BEEN FINISHED
IN
HALF THE TIME

PREFACE

Before leading the reader out on to this little nine-hole course, I should like to say a few words on the club-house steps with regard to the criticisms of my earlier book of Golf stories, *The Clicking of Cuthbert*. In the first place, I noticed with regret a disposition on the part of certain writers to speak of Golf as a trivial theme, unworthy of the pen of a thinker. In connection with this, I can only say that right through the ages the mightiest brains have occupied themselves with this noble sport, and that I err, therefore, if I do err, in excellent company.

Apart from the works of such men as James Braid, John Henry Taylor and Horace Hutchinson, we find Publius Syrius not disdaining to give advice on the back-swing ("He gets through too late who goes too fast"); Diogenes describing the emotions of a cheery player at the water-hole ("Be of good cheer. I see land"); and Doctor Watts, who, watching one of his drives from

the tee, jotted down the following couplet on the back of his score-card:

*Fly, like a youthful hart or roe,
Over the hills where spices grow.*

And, when we consider that Chaucer, the father of English poetry, inserted in his Squiere's Tale the line

Therefore behoveth him a ful long spoone

(though, of course, with the modern rubber-cored ball an iron would have got the same distance) and that Shakespeare himself, speaking querulously in the character of a weak player who held up an impatient foursome, said:

Four rogues in buckram let drive at me

we may, I think, consider these objections answered.

A far more serious grievance which I have against my critics is that many of them confessed to the possession of but the slightest knowledge of the game, and one actually stated in cold print that he did not know what a niblick was. A writer on golf is certainly entitled to be judged by his peers—which, in my own case, means men who do one good drive in six, four reasonable approaches in an eighteen-hole round, and