

CHAPTER II

BODY AND MIND

TO make the idea of 'inspiration' fit in with the other ideas on the golfing swing already packed away in your mind is the next question. You take up a club in order to swing at a daisy with the whole of the fifteen maxims I have before quoted lying doggo in your subconscious self, each simply aching to attract your attention. As you swing, some one of them will have succeeded in pushing itself into the foreground of the mental view, while the others are half, or hardly half, perceived in the background. And right into the limelight in the foreground of this mental picture you now have to crowd yet another item, the deep inspiration I recommended. How are you to manage it?

This is a problem in experimental psychology (which is all the go nowadays) and by attacking it we raise ourselves to the dignity of philosophers. But philosophy is nothing if not scientific; so let us ensure that our psychological experiment is made scientifically. We must eliminate to begin with, so far as we can, all outside distracting influences. Therefore, I say, try your experiment

quietly in solitude by yourself. Let me repeat, of all things don't begin to experiment when you are actually engaged in a match with an opponent. You will most likely lose your match, which matters little, and you will probably ruin your experiment, which to you may matter much. For the nervousness you will feel in trying it in a match, when you know that if you fail you will infallibly proceed to nag at yourself the whole of the rest of the round for having thrown the game away, is enough by itself to spoil any stroke. As you value your future golf, then, do not experiment like that: Try the new way of striking when the fate of the ball is a matter of no importance whatever. That is the true method of science.

Choose therefore a quiet part of the links where you will not be in anybody's way: choose also one where you are not likely to lose your ball. For if you are in a state of anxiety lest you should hit somebody else, or lest your ball should fly off into the rough and hide, your mind will be distracted. As you swing, you will be thinking of what may happen to the ball, and your eye which you are trying to keep on the spot where the ball lies will be instinctively fidgeting to follow its flight. To escape this temptation I advise you to experiment with captive balls. The plus man may scoff at them, saying that with a captive ball you can't tell whether you hook or slice. He is right enough there, of course, but then we are not out just now to contend with hooking and slicing; we are after something else. And that something else can be

very successfully observed with a captive ball in your own garden.

You can easily buy a captive ball or make one for yourself. A golf-ball hampered by a yard of double string with a pair of champagne corks at the end can hardly be induced to fly fifty yards even by the strongest driver, while you as a weak brother may quite likely find forty to be your full limit. But if you haven't got forty yards of free range in your garden all you have to do is to tie on more corks. You can stop the strongest flier in ten yards if you only put on clogs enough.

Next we come to the question of teeing up. I cannot believe that even a high tee does a weak brother any harm, whatever its effect may be on the plus man, and I am sure that if you want to save the turf of your lawn from unsightly scars you will have to use a tee. This again can be bought in the market at a price anywhere from twopence to two shillings, and of these tees of the shop there are many varieties: or you may commandeer from the gardener or buy at the ironmonger's a foot or so of common rubber garden hose, an inch or $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch in diameter, and cut it (with a wetted knife) into tees of any height you choose. I should recommend you to cut it into sizes of $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, and one inch in height. Join them in assorted pairs, with a bit of red rag tied between, to keep them from going off too far and to make them easy to find.

So now at last we are ready for action. Tee up a captive, home-made or bought, and take your

club in hand. Stand back in order that you may try a preliminary swing at a daisy, and watch your own mind as you strike. After you have struck ask yourself immediately what you remember having had in the foreground of your mental view. The inspiration was there, of course: you were out for that: you can scarcely fail to remember how you first ex-spired as you soled your club, and then in-spired deeply while keeping the club-face close to the ball, how you continued to hold the breath in during the up-swing, and breathed it out as the stroke finished. There was no difficulty about that: the novelty of the idea of inspiration enabled you to keep your attention firmly fixed.

But how about the other fifteen points, which you had in your mental background, in the keeping of the unconscious self? What happened to them? Tax your memory sternly, demand whether it can recall anything of any of them: Ask it first as to the beginning of the swing. Did the wrists start the club back? Did they take it up slow? Was the left wrist flexed so as to be hollow at the top? During that sequence of three motions, or rather three parts of one motion, you were primarily, no doubt, busy over the question of inspiration or keeping the lungs full; but you must bully your memory to tell you something about those other three also. How much it will tell is bound to vary indefinitely with the individual who makes the experiment. Smith's memory may be able distinctly to recall the

details of all three. Jones's may have no definite picture of any; all it contains may be a vague idea that the left wrist was bent out stiffly when at the top, and consequently the up swing was not given time enough to finish itself out and the down swing began a little too soon, with the result that the body came through before the arms. There is a whole train of causation here. If the wrist had been well hollowed, or bent under, at the top, the left hip would have had time to get twisted round opposite the ball and the body need not have got before the arms.

Suppose yourself to be Jones, and suppose your memory to have retained thus much of the action. Swing again (waggle and expire, sole and inspire) and mind, now, you flex that wrist right at the top. You strike. Round comes the club with a whish-h-h, and you are conscious not only that you did contrive to hold your breath but also that you did flex that wrist rightly. You managed to have both images in the foreground of your mind at once, so to speak, the tightly closed mouth and the flexed, hollowed wrist; you had to do a sort of mental squint, but both things were in the view.

Perhaps you did not manage it. In that case swing again and see if you can control your mental action better. Never mind the rest of the fifteen old maxims; concentrate on that last one only, the hollowing or flexing of the wrist at the top, not of course forgetting inspiration. I have set you really an easy task, for by the time you get

to the top of the swing you have about done with the inspiring; the breath is ready to be exhaled, and the effort to hold it may be allowed to relax, while the effort to give that flex to the wrist continues.

Now then, address the solid ball itself and not the meek daisy this time. Sole your club. Swing. Let her go! Hurrah, you have managed it. You did flex the wrist without having forgotten to hold the breath. You have made an experiment in psychology, and your golf begins to be inspired