

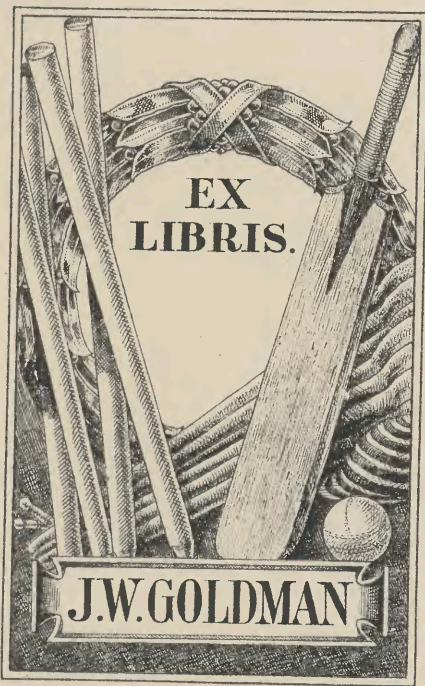
REMINISCENCES
OF CRICKET
ON THE BORDERS

Robert Douglas

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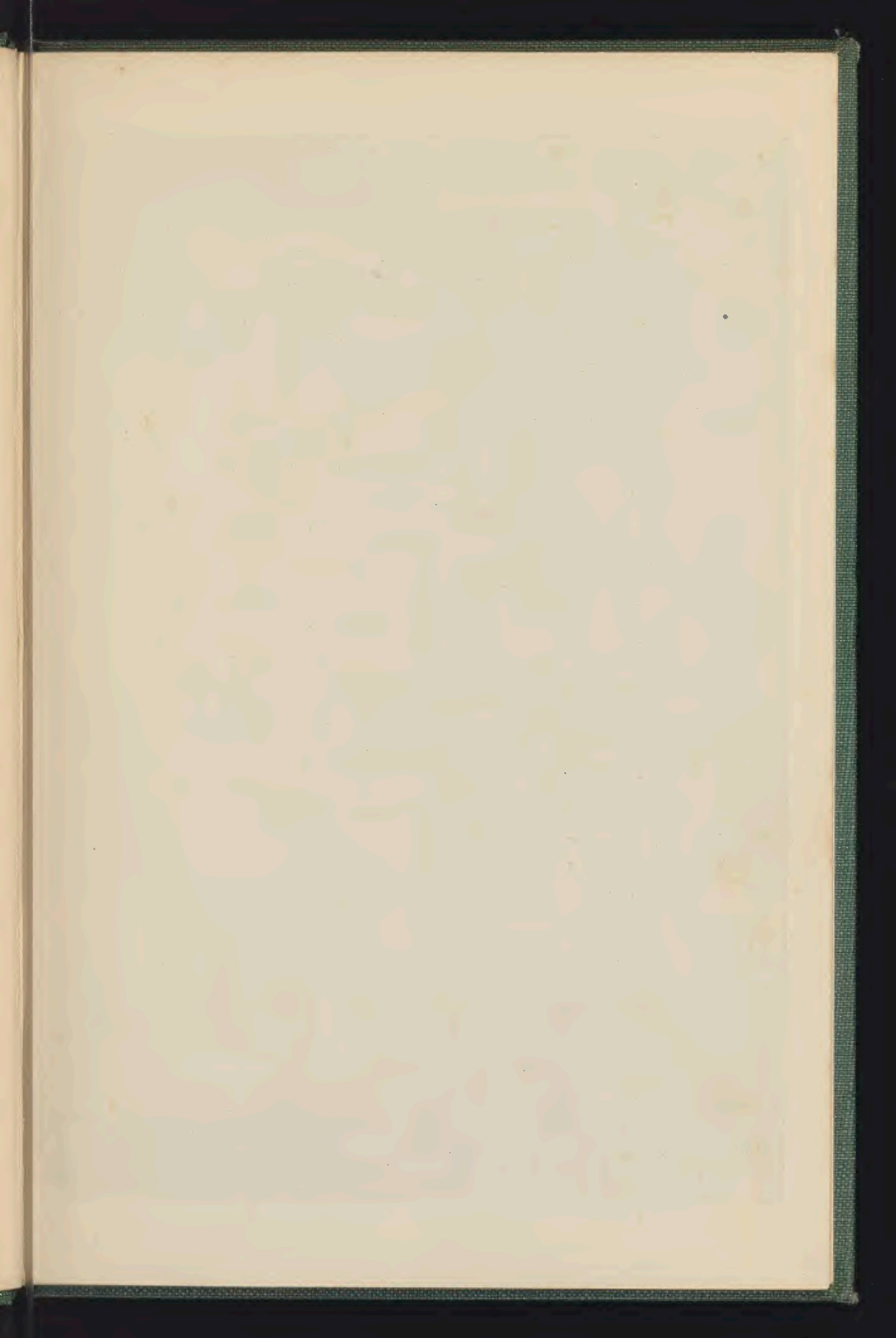
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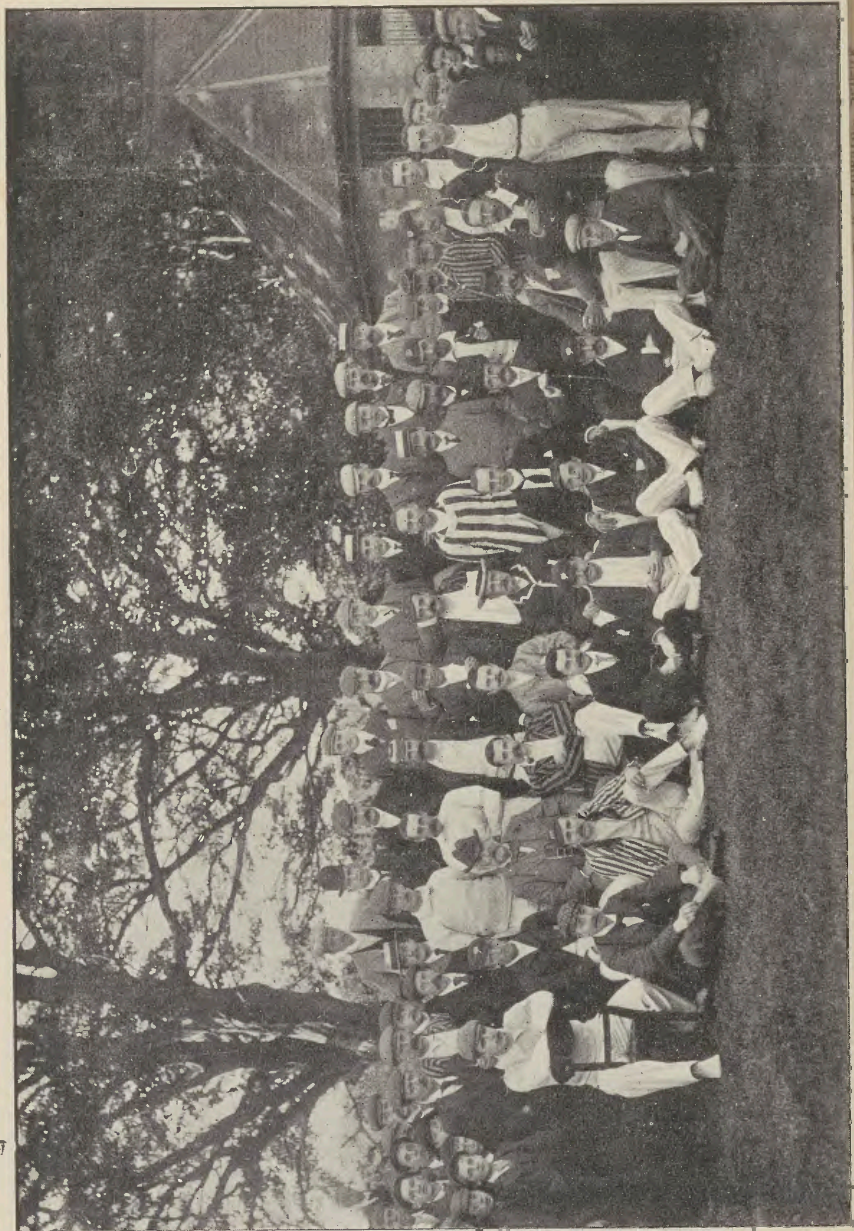
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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Reminiscences of Cricket on the Borders.

By ROBERT DOUGLAS,
SELKIRK.



With Introduction by ANDREW LANG, Esq.

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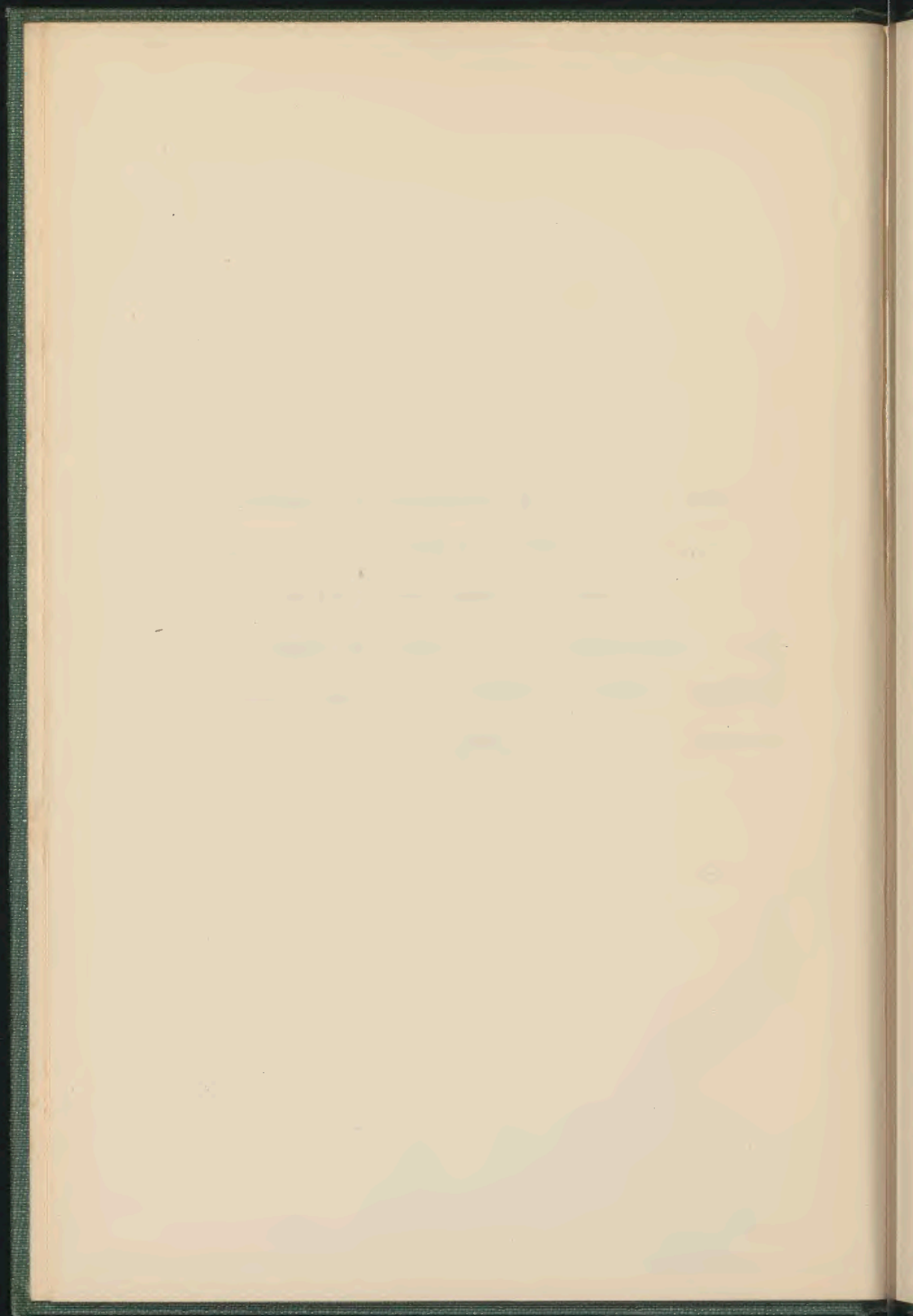
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This little book of Reminiscences is published by request of a number of friends. The writer of it lays no claim to literary merit, but sends it forth believing that it will prove of interest to the large number of lovers of the great summer pastime in the Border district.

May, 1909.



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GALASHIELS :
PRINTED BY CRAIGHEAD BROTHERS.
LADHOPE VALE.

Introduction.

(By Andrew Lang, Esq.)



In respect to Border Cricket I feel like "the oldest inhabitant," who, according to Sam Weller, "never remembers anything"—of importance. I first saw this noble game played by little boys at Selkirk on the road opposite to the entrance to Viewfield. The bats had bark on the backs of them, and were conspicuously home-made. As one knew nothing about the rules, which perhaps were home-made too, the game was an attractive mystery. Cricket was locally known as "the Bats." The date must have been about 1850. I do not know when cricket was brought to Selkirk, perhaps about 1840. At all events the Etrick Shepherd, in his strange romance, the "Confessions of a Justified Sinner," speaks of cricket as being played in the South of Scotland about 1770; he himself would see nothing of it at the head of Etrick, where it has not yet struck root, though an old Celtic form of the game occurs in remote parts of Argyll. My impression is that Perth was the earliest home of the regular game, and that it was introduced by Cumberland's red coats after Culloden. In a violent Cameronian pamphlet of about 1750 these

“scarlet vermin of hell” are reprovèd for playing games on the inch of Perth on the Sabbath. In exchange for the Stuarts they gave us cricket!

My introduction to actual cricket took place in what was called the Dooocot Park, a field belonging to Dr Anderson. I was led to the wicket like a lamb to the slaughter, with a full-sized bat in my trembling little fists. Somebody tossed me a lob, which lighted accurately on my knee-pan, and I was borne homeward in agony. In fact I never was so much hurt by a ball in later years.

Later I remember seeing a match between Selkirk and Hawick on the old Mill Haugh, but the proceedings were still mysterious. Hawick won and went home in a brake; it was darkly rumoured that they were to be ambushed on the road by some choice spirits who could not endure defeat. But this last case of private war on the Border must have been very mild.

At about ten I went to school in Edinburgh, and knew no more of Border Cricket till I was about fifteen. At that day the Selkirk players whom I best remember were Mr Andrew Johnson, Mr Robert Douglas, and his cousin Mr John Douglas, who was a very hard hitter, and also hit very high; it was pretty to see him. The only match which I remember was against Kelso, and nothing remains in my memory of it, but the beauty of Mr Allan Raper, then a Cheltenham boy, who played for Kelso, and had golden hair. blue eyes, and other personal advantages. Later, his brother, Mr Robert Raper of Trinity College, Oxford, became my coach in Latin composition and my friend unto this day.

Kelso then and for long afterwards was captained by Major Dickens, a very broad-blown blonde Englishman, full of humour, but credited with a tendency to "win, tie, or wrangle." He put plenty of life and chaff into the game, and would run a hundred yards' race with any opponent between the innings. An elderly coachman or butler of the Duke of Roxburghe, Reynolds, used to bowl slows, and the Marquis of Bowmont and his handsome brother, Lord Charles Ker, were prominent players; the Marquis was a useful bat.

In the following year some boys of my own age, Linton, Leithead and Scott, began to be of service. Linton was a good bowler, with a curious action, and a good deal of spin and "devil" in his deliveries. The wicket, though almost bare of grass, played better than one would expect, but there was no ground-bowler, no professional coach, and it was not in style that we shone, though wonderful catches used to be made. At that time the legality of overhand bowling was dubious: the no-balling of Wilsher, the Surrey bowler, occurred about that date. A level delivery was the most orthodox, and was really graceful, when men like Tom Sewell bowled. However, in Scotland, both on the Border and in Edinburgh, men bowled with a delivery as high or as low as they pleased: the last of the fast bowlers with a slinging delivery whom I saw in first-class cricket was Mr Powys, who played for Cambridge in 1874, or 1875; I remember that he very promptly lowered my brother T. W.'s leg stump with a shooter. However T. W.'s bowling was serviceable in defeating Cambridge by an innings. Mr Powys was reckoned a dangerous bowler

even by Mr W. G. Grace, then in his prime ; he was very fast, and his balls kept low. Indeed—thanks to the nature of the pitch perhaps—you might expect two or three regular shooters in an over, in these days, which tended to make the innings short. A hundred and fifty runs would have been a great score at Selkirk. I remember no longer individual score than sixty by Guild, a professional who played for Hawick. With two consecutive shooters on the leg stump I got rid of Guild and of the last man, but Selkirk was pretty badly beaten. By this time I bowled for the town, and by aid of a curl from leg was rather useful, though I could never bat, and it was pretty safe for the batsman to entrust me with a catch.

We generally beat Melrose, and Galashiels was an easy victim ; on the last occasion when I bowled the Gala lads were all out for thirteen. After that, persistent bad health dismissed me from active service for ever.

Hawick, which had an excellent ground, was almost always too strong for us, but once when we enlisted Mr Swire, an Oxford undergraduate who was a long vacation tutor at Broadmeadows or Hangingshaw, he hit up 85 runs rapidly, and Selkirk was victorious.

Kelso, too, generally defeated us, for we had no cricket tutor, and our ground was shifted again and again before the town acquired its present field, on which I have never seen any play.

When my younger brothers, T.W., A.C., and W.H. grew up I have heard that they were useful. T.W. was certainly one of the best amateur bowlers of his day, playing for Oxford, and, when a Clifton schoolboy, for

Gloucestershire, with the three Graces. I never saw a better bowler's catch than that, left-handed and low down, with which he dismissed Ulyett, the great Yorkshire bat. except Ulyett's own miraculous catch of a tremendous high return by Mr Bonnor, the Australian giant, at Lord's. T.W. was also a run-getter, at least in England, how the Border wickets suited him I know not. A.C. was a remarkable cover-point, and I have been told that W.H. hit a Hawick bowler four times consecutively into the Teviot. But I was not present. Mr John Douglas sent my brother John for five fives in an over, of that feat I was an amused eye-witness. On another occasion he lifted the ball straight at my dear mother, who was sitting on a distant boulder on a bank above the river. She played it away with her parasol as it was alighting on her head!

Modern Selkirk players, I suspect, would smile at our simple old-fashioned and untutored cricket, and at such queer wickets as we met, for example at Jedburgh. I only played there once, and did "the hat trick," none the less Jedburgh, being a few runs ahead on the first innings, declined to go on, and the rest of the day was wasted on beer and melody! You see that cricket was not a formal sport long ago.

As for the Umpires! It is said that T.W. was appealed for lbw., first ball. "Not out!" said our umpire; "I cannot give Tom out first ball." But the same story is told of Fuller Pilch and W. G. Grace. "Wullie, ye'll be leg before if ye dinna tak' tent," said the umpire when I was bowling. I sent the next ball full pitch on Wullie's pad. "Out!" cried the umpire. "Wullie, I tell'd ye how it

would be." Now the leg of Wullie was not by any means in front of his wicket. I cannot defend my own conduct in taking advantage of the psychology of this umpire. On another occasion, at Galashiels, the local crowd shouted "shame!" when one of their men was given out. One of us said suavely, "it is your own umpire," and that was sufficient. Yet though umpires were careless, and knew little of the rules, I do not remember a case of deliberate unfairness, except the first-ball incident, when the judge candidly gave the reason for his decision.

Mr Leslie Balfour-Melville was then a cricketer of tender years; forty years later, last summer, I saw him make three consecutive innings of 68, 145, and 202 not out, for Lord Strathmore's eleven at Glamis Castle, against professional bowling. The ground is spacious, but he hit over the tops of the trees outside.

Scotland is handicapped in cricket, our weather is bad, our wickets thereby suffer, and our leisure is limited. Yet Mr T. R. Marshall, who, though born just south of the Tweed, played most in Scotland, played four first-class matches at Lord's in a fortnight, and had an average of 85. Had we a better climate, and more pecuniary support, our cricketers would rival our foot-ball players. Probably Rhodes, the great Yorkshire bowler, has been hit about on Border grounds more severely than in England or Australia, because the men were not afraid of his prestige.

If we had not much skill in the old days we had plenty of enthusiasm, and the seed of cricket, if it fell on stony ground, at least sprang up. *Floreat*, long may it flourish is the prayer of a duffer.

Reminiscences.

(I.)

The Playing Pitches of the Borders.

In my recollections of Border cricket since its introduction to the Borders, over 60 years ago, I do not mean to particularise any special matches, but just to give my experiences and observations throughout the intervening period. I have been an admirer of the game all my life, and like that famous Souter, Mr Andrew Lang, fell in love with it at first sight. It well deserves the title of King of Games. I was a player in the Selkirk first eleven for upwards of twenty years, and had, therefore, ample opportunities of witnessing its rise and development. The first difficulty was the roughness of the grounds, and all Border towns were faced with it. Kelso was the first Border town to get a good pitch in Shedden Park, the gift of a lady, Mrs Shedden. Owing to the roughness of the pitches of other Border clubs, small scoring was the rule, and sometimes a pair of black eyes were thrown in.

HAWICK.

Hawick was the next to get over the difficulty, mainly through the influence of the late Lord John Scott, who used his influence with his brother, the late Duke of Buccleuch, to secure a good playing pitch for the Teries. I well remember in June of 1859 meeting Thomas Rawlinson and the late John Scott, who was a well-known tweed designer in Hawick, and who died in America many years ago. George Wilson, who was then secretary of the Hawick Club, was along with them. I met them at Newtown Station as they were returning from Dalkeith, where they had been making arrangements with the late Duke for the Cricket Field, which they still hold. I was, indeed, pleased when they told me that they had been successful in securing the field. Hawick has advantages over the other Border clubs in having one of the largest grounds in Scotland. It is beautifully situated on the banks of the Teviot, and has also the honour of being the birthplace of the game on the Borders. In its earlier days it had some good players from England. There were two brothers Hall, George and David, Ben Tillotson, who is not long dead, Hudson, a splendid wicket-keeper, Jack Smith, a good all-round cricketer, and last, but not least, the agile Thomas Rawlinson. All these men did good service for the Hawick team. A good few years after acquiring their new ground they built a fine pavilion. I was present at the opening match, the first day they occupied their new pavilion. Their opponents were the premier club from Edinburgh, the Grange, and Hawick

carried off the victory on that eventful day. Hawick by this time was complete with all the necessary equipment for the game.

SELKIRK.

"A word for guid auld Selkirk,
Her royal hills amang.
Her story 's set to music,
The lilt Jean Elliot sang."

Selkirk was the next to acquire a new ground. They were for over twenty years playing under difficulty, at the mercy of the Town Council, and liable to be shifted any day, for the manufacture of tweeds was rapidly rising, and the Haugh lands down by Ettrick Bank, which was all burgh property, were ready to feu. This was in the days before the railway came to Selkirk. With a great deal of labour a fair pitch for the ball was made, but fielding ground was very rough. It was all covered with wild bushes of various kinds, whins and broom, &c. The Railway Station was the first interruption to the then cricket ground. Then a large mill was built, and the Town Council granted another ground below the Station, between the railway and the river. We got a bit of square land with turf, but, like the first ground, the fielding ground was very rough, but with a few willing and enthusiastic players, we cleared and improved it very much. The tweed trade was now rising by leaps and bounds, and our cricket ground was again feued for another mill. This was in the year '71. I was a member of committee, and the late Richard Dunn, who died at

Earlston, was secretary. We were the two who were deputed to negotiate with the late Mr Scott, tenant of Philiphaugh, for the present ground on that estate. Mr Scott was hard to deal with, but we secured it at last. Then the club set about getting it prepared for the game. We took estimates to lay a forty yards' square, and Percival King, who was a professional in Edinburgh with a good deal of experience of cricket grounds, got the contract, and his work gave perfect satisfaction. The first game on the new ground was played in June, 1872, a team from the Grange being the opponents.

In August of the same year the committee of the Selkirk Club arranged to bring a team of Scottish professionals to play eighteen, selected from the Borders. A few years later they built a commodious pavilion, in which one can sit and view the old burgh on the hill, and the vale of Ettrick and the Tweed as far as Abbotsford. I will, however, leave this at present, and deal with how other Border Clubs secured suitable playing grounds.

GALASHIELS.

Galashiels was the next to acquire a better ground. Their first ground was a small field which is now part of the Public Park, and many a good match was played on it before they secured their present ground at Mossilee. I am not so sure about the date when they acquired it, as my match-playing days were almost over then, but I think it was about 1880—29 years ago. It stands at a high

altitude, and has a commanding view. Down east the triple Eildons can be seen, and on a fine summer's day, when Nature is green, the view is magnificent.

MELROSE.

Melrose forty years ago played in the Greenyards, and had a good pitch at that time. They had some good players. The first time I saw the veteran player, Major Dickens, was when he was playing for Melrose. He was then in his prime, and was an active, fine-looking man. There was also one Wyborg, a fast bowler, but I think he was imported into the team by the Major. Melrose was playing the Grange on the occasion I refer to, but I have never heard of the premier team having been there since, and I often wonder how it is they do not oftener play such teams. They had a good ground, central and beautifully situated.

JEDBURGH.

Jedburgh has never been very prominent in cricket. They are more successful as football players. I remember once playing at Jedburgh, but I have forgotten where the ground was. I do not think it was a good ground, however, and I remember only the names of two players, sons of the famous solicitor, and historian of the county of Roxburgh, Jeffrey of Jedburgh. I never played at Jedburgh again, but I played in the return match with them at Selkirk.

EARLSTON.

Earlston has now a fairly good club, and this year has issued a good card. I have a special interest in Earlston in many ways. I was twelve years resident there, and did all I could to introduce the game, and I am pleased indeed to see my efforts have been successful. They have a few promising young players, and in time may yet make their mark.

O, Leader, with its beauties fair,
 It's wooded banks and windings rare ;
 And as I listen to the purling stream,
 It inspires my memory and awakens a dream :
 A dream of yore, when the Rhymer was nigh,
 His poetical fire was blazing high ;
 He tuned his lute, and he sung a song,
 Which perpetuates his memory although he's long gone.
 His Tower it still stands to witness his fame,
 And the Ercildoune folks still venerate his name.
 On Leader's banks there is many a scene
 Well worthy to admire,
 To raise the muse and make us sing
 With warm poetic fire.
 There is Carolside, in Leader's bower,
 And Drygrange, big and braw ;
 But Cowdenknowes, wi' her yellow broom,
 She is bonnier than them a'.

ST BOSWELLS.

St Boswells Club is now nearly a quarter of a century in existence, and play some very good matches, getting into the Border League for the first time last year, and giving last year's champions, Gala, rather a surprise.

They have a good pitch right in the heart of the Borders. The Club, I should think, will now make steady progress, and will be greatly encouraged by their success of last year.

PEEBLES COUNTY CLUB.

Peebles County Club are well to the front, and last year were well up in the League matches. I don't think much of their ground, but only once played on it in 1872. They have had the service of a good prof. in Trott, who is, I understand, the brother of Albert Trott of Marylebone Club, who was characterised by the Indian Prince cricketer as the most accomplished bowler in the world.

Having so far seen how the various clubs secured better grounds and better organisation, I will in my next paper give an anecdotal narrative of criticism of prominent Border players, with some anecdotes and incidents which came under my observation during my connection with the game in the Borders.



Reminiscences.

(II.)

Development of the Game.

GALA'S START.

In my previous article I showed how the various clubs got better playing grounds and better organisation. I will now endeavour to describe how the game developed and the playing improved. I remember well the first match, Gala v. Selkirk, on the Selkirk ground. It must now be about sixty years ago. Gala had the honour of winning the first match between these still rival clubs. I know only one man who is still living, who took part in that game. He is Mr John Johnston, who played for Selkirk, and who went to Hawick over forty years ago. He was a good bat, and played many a good innings for the Teries. All the others of the players in that game on the Selkirk side have gone over to the majority.

The Gala team, as far as I remember, who took part in that first match are all dead. I think I remember all

their names. They had three Englishmen just come to Galashiels in the days of handloom weaving, bringing all their knowledge and experience of the game of cricket. They were a host in themselves. They were the two brothers Holmes, and Joe Boothroyd, and they did more for the introduction of the game to Galashiels than any others. Others of the team were Peter Crichton, J. McDonald, A. Scott (brother of the late laird of Gala), and Monteith, a manufacturer. As I write entirely from memory I may be excused for not being able to recall accurately the names of the others. But the Gala boys were delighted with their victory on that occasion, their first match in Border cricket.

PROGRESS OF THE GAME.

In those days cricket was not so attractive as in these latter days, with better pitches and more experience and professional coaching. It was evident that it was the spirit of rivalry which brought the people to witness the game. Each side had its followers, and sometimes gave vent to their feelings in a rude and boisterous manner, but as time wore on and the game became better understood, the spectators became more polite and better behaved, and gave their plaudits to a bit of good cricket on either side. Forty years ago matches were early started, and were generally played out, as there was usually plenty of time for a second innings. Every year Border cricket grew in attractiveness and popularity. Of course, the fact that it is

a summer game and is played usually under the sunniest smiles of our climate adds to its charm, and as an old player I know what a grand influence it has on players to play a match under a summer sun on the bright green turf. You cannot play cricket in cold weather. There is yet another name which deserves mention. I refer to the late James Dobson (Jamie as he was called) who did much for Selkirk Club in its earlier years. He was an enthusiastic cricketer, and a good wicket keeper, and a great droll. I remember at a social meeting of cricketers, Jamie was called on for a song, "Mie sing," he said, "I gang to the kirk every Sunday, and I just ken twa tunes. The yin's Auld Hunder, and the tither's No."

Border cricket continued to be attractive, but in the early days there were only matches between local teams. The uncertainty of cricket always adds to its interest I think. A player may make a good score to-day and to-morrow he may be out for nothing. All Border clubs in the early sixties kept professionals and played teams from Edinburgh, and elsewhere, and there is no doubt they began to get cocky and think they could beat teams from anywhere. The meeting and beating of city elevens no doubt gave confidence to the Border boys. And confidence is a great thing in cricket, for it is no light thing to stand with the bat and know you are being criticised by thousands of spectators.

Early in the seventies Border cricket was very strong, and new players of note were continually springing up. New blood was yearly being introduced to each Border Club, and all of them had crack players. Of the most

prominent players I would select Mr Andrew Grieve, Galashiels, as the most consistent player whom the Borders ever produced. He is now over fifty years of age, and last year showed some splendid cricket. James Mercer, also of Gala, was a good all-round cricketer, and did good service for Gala for about thirty years. It is impossible to enumerate all the good cricketers I have known, for the Borders has been a famous hatching ground of good cricketers.

GALA OF TO-DAY.

Galashiels at the present time has some good young players, and their prospects for the coming season seem very rosy. They should have a good look in for the championship this year. They boast of playing without a professional, but overlook the fact that they have Booth, a Yorkshireman, who is equal to any professional. He is a capital all-round man, a left hand bowler, and an acquisition to any club. The team at present show good fielding, and Mr Murray Brown made last year one of the best catches I have ever seen when playing Selkirk at Mossilee. Anderson, one of Selkirk's best bats, drove a ball, and Mr Brown had a long way to run, but he succeeded in holding it about a foot from the turf.

Two years ago at Selkirk, a singular thing happened. Selkirk was playing Gala, and the three brothers Grieve, who have done so much for the Selkirk Club, were playing. John still plays for Gala, and is one of their best bats.

John drove the ball almost to the boundary, and was well held there by a third brother.

HAWICK CRICKETERS.

Hawick has reared some good cricketers. The late William Dryden was one of Hawick's best men. Montgomery was a splendid bat, and could always be trusted for a score. Leyden was another of Hawick's cracks, and James Pender was a powerful hitter, but wanted a bit caution in defence. Will. Young and W. Young were both good cricketers, but I am sorry that Hawick has gone back of late years, and I trust that this year they will come more to the front, and retrieve some of their past fame. Alexander Gill, who was reared in Hawick, and who went to the Newcastle County Club forty years ago, and greatly distinguished himself there, is still living in Newcastle.

MY NATIVE CLUB.

Of my native club, Selkirk, I am very proud, and there is always a warm corner in my heart for the Souter players. They have always held their own in cricket, and sometimes have done even more. For 1905-1906 they were champions of the Borders. They have turned out some good players, and are well backed up by the community with whom the club is extremely popular. The Linton family have done much for Selkirk cricket. In earlier years the late John Douglas was a good player. Leithead is another

distinguished name among Selkirk cricketers. Walter Heron, now in Peebles, was another good all-round man, and Andrew Blacklock, and Bob Harvey, are still well-known and effective players, and I was delighted to see that Bob is to captain the team this year. The club could not have a better. All cricketers know, at least all Border cricketers do, how much the Lang family did to help the game and the club in Selkirk, and there is still another who deserves all the credit he can get for what he did. I refer to Richard Lees, now in London. Andrew Lang has written and sung in praise of cricket, and we are proud of him as a good sportsman, as well as a distinguished literary man, but his fame is everywhere, and we must not forget men like Lees, who did so much for cricket in bye-gone days.

There is still another name which memory recalls of a promising young player of forty years ago. His name was Bill Dryden, and he was a splendid bowler. I remember one incident worth re-telling. We were playing Dalkeith at Selkirk. A man named Tod, a good bat, who was playing for the strangers went in, and Bill bowled him first ball. Tod came in again in the second innings, and again Bill was bowling, and again he dismissed Tod with his first ball. One of the Dalkeith players got his fingers hurt, and had to retire, but we allowed Tod to take his place. So Tod went in a third time, and again was bowled by Bill with the first ball. But Selkirk has often been unfortunate in losing some promising young players just at the height of their powers.

For the present I conclude here. My connection with

Border cricket has ever been pleasant, and now when my playing days are over the recollection of battles long ago, and of many bright faces and scenes that come back to me through the years, is a source of unalloyed delight, and brightens up the sometimes sad thoughts of one who loves to muse on past days, and old familiar faces that will never now be seen again on the cricketing pitch. Some other time I hope to give another budget of my memories of the game.



Reminiscences.

(III.)

Interesting Incidents—Popularity of the Game.

In my previous article I dealt with the introduction of the game to the Borders, and its rise and progress there down to the present time; but there are yet a few incidents which came under my own notice which seem worth relating. During my long connection with the game I have seen every team get its share of honour and superiority, and the honours, thus going round, no doubt helped greatly to popularise the game. When one club is always first, interest can never be so well maintained. Kelso at one time was a hard nut to crack. It was in the time of Major Dickens, who captained the team for many years, and was backed up by the then Marquis of Bowmont, heir to the Dukedom of Roxburghe. He was a good bat and was trained in England, and belonged to an English club called the Zingaris. The English

Church minister of that time in Kelso, the Rev. Mr Robson, was another good player. I remember once playing at Kelso when a rather strange thing happened with Mr Robson. I was keeping wicket for Selkirk. The minister was hitting a ball to leg, and it ran up his bat beneath his arm, and he held it there and looked round at me as much as to say, "What are you going to do?" I put my arms round him and the fielder at point took out the ball from under his arm and appealed to the umpire, who gave him out. The ball of course had never touched the ground. The late Mr C. J. Cunningham was another of Kelso's best players, and in those days they had always a good prof.

Cricket at that time was very popular in Kelso. Mr Elliot of Benrig was another of the team, and he was a good player and a good wicket-keeper. I have very pleasant recollections of my annual visits to Kelso for about fifteen years. I played my first match at Kelso about 1854. Mr Wylie, who engineered the Selkirk railway, and was one of the best players in Edinburgh at that time, played for Selkirk. He was a fine, round arm bowler, medium pace, and very difficult to play. The feature of that match was the small score of Kelso in the second innings. We had them all out for a total of nine runs, the smallest score I ever saw in all my experience.

Another important event in the history of Border cricket deserves record. It happened at Kelso in the years 1857 and 1859. The Kelso Club, which was then well backed up by the gentlemen of the surrounding

district, arranged to bring the All England Eleven to play 22 of Scotland in a three days' match. The Scottish team was captained by the veteran Major Dickens. I was present for one day on each occasion, and what pleased me best of all was the wicket-keeping of Tom Lockyer, who has been admitted by W. G. Grace to have been the best wicket-keeper England has ever produced. There was also splendid batting. William Caffyn was then in his best form. He went to Australia a few years later with the first team that went from England in 1861, and remained there as a professional for over twenty years. He eventually returned to England, and was still living in London a few years ago. There was another named Ellis, the best leg-hitter I ever saw. The eleven was captained by Jim Deans, a little man, but very stout, just the shape of a barrel. They rolled him about on the turf for sport. I need say no more about these important matches. The Englishmen were all better players than the Scottish team, for the game in Scotland was at that time comparatively young. On their return in 1859 I think the Englishmen had few changes in their eleven. Shedden Park at Kelso being a public park, they could not charge gate money, and, financially, the match was a loss.

To come more direct to Border cricket, it became a common thing to get up a scratch team and play one or other of the Border clubs. I remember when Professor Henderson was living with his family at Harewoodglen, in Yarrow. He had two sons who were both cricketers, and a match was arranged — Hawick v. Henderson's.

Scratch. They had a family tutor called Swire, an Oxford-bred cricketer. He was playing with them, and there were some other young gentlemen, and all were good cricketers. I was umpire for the scratch team, and I have often said that of all the cricketing innings I ever saw, Swire's playing that day was the best. He was well up for his century by very superior cricket, but, as the afternoon was wearing through, he told one of the fielders where to go and he would give him the chance of a catch. The fielder went to the boundary where he was told, and Swire hit a ball right into his hands, showing what a command he had over the bat. Tom Rawlinson, who thought he knew all the Oxford cracks, was puzzled he had never heard of him before. Of course the scratch team had a decided victory, and we had a very merry home-coming from Hawick to Selkirk. To beat Hawick, at that time, was a great achievement. The veteran bowler, William Dryden, was then in his best form. It was quite common now for some gentlemen to get up a scratch team, not representing any club, and tour the Borders with it.

Melrose is now one of the old Border clubs, and for a small town, it has kept its place very well, although it has had more fluctuating fortunes than the other Border clubs. Melrose has had some very good profs. The first, I remember, was Alexander Guild, who, as I mentioned before, is still living in Newcastle. He is a native of Hawick. This year, for the second season, Melrose is being coached by Tom Kyle, also a Hawick man, who was for a few years prof. for his native club, and did good

service then. He is none the worse of being a Teri, for Teries, as is well known, are all full of fire and enthusiasm.

Four years ago a match was instituted which is already an extremely popular annual event, and bids fair to become even more popular. This is the veterans' match between Gala and Selkirk, played alternately at each of these towns. This match always draws a large crowd of spectators, and much interest is shown in it. Some of the veterans are, of course, now settled far from the towns where they played in days long gone by, but whenever possible they turn up for this match. It recalls many pleasant memories, and when the old friends meet they fight the old battles over again with great good humour and unwearying interest. I think it is in the interests of the clubs in both towns that this match should be played once a year, and this seems to be the view of the public also.

For the present I will conclude here. It has been to me a great pleasure to recall the pleasant memories of happy days on the cricket pitch when hearts were younger, and perhaps lighter and merrier. I may conclude for the present, therefore, by saying that my liking for the game and all its associations has been a source of healthful and innocent pleasure to me all my life.



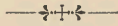
P.S.—Since writing the above reminiscences, which were up to last year, 1908, several important changes have taken place in the Border teams. H. Booth, who for three years was a great acquisition to Gala, has returned to his native County—Yorkshire. Kyle, who coached Melrose two years, has gone to Peebles, and it is expected he will be available for the County team to play along with Clements and Trott, which will make them very strong. I have heard they have been making great improvements on their present ground. Gala have secured the services of Beardsworth, who did very well in his trial match last year against Selkirk. Lane has succeeded Palmer at Selkirk, and made a very promising start against Hawick last Saturday (1st May), but had to retire hurt with 18 to his credit. Match stopped for rain.

The Kelso club, which in its best days was one of the strongest and most formidable in the South of Scotland (in the days of the veteran, Major Dickens, who was well backed up by the Duke of Roxburghe's family), are now trying to resuscitate the club into its old form, and a strong committee, with influential officials, has been appointed.

Altogether Border cricket for the season of 1909 looks very rosy, with a little new life thrown into it, and it is expected some good matches will be played. Melrose have also got a new professional, said to be a Welshman; and have a finely-situated ground nestled at the foot of the triple Eildons. I have a special interest in Melrose, as it was there I first saw good cricket over 50 years ago.

Our Cricket Jubilee.

(BY AN OLD MEMBER).



What? Fifty years gone! How the time wears on,
Whether we work or play,
And yet I remember our first Eleven
As if it were yesterday.

There was Dobson, carefully placing the field,
Keeping everything trim as a ticket;
Jack Johnstone, standing on springs at point,
And "Douggy" * keeping the wicket.

It's curious to think of our first cricket field,
And the change an old cricketer sees,
For the old ground now is no longer "The Haugh,"
But "Victoria Park," if you please.

Oh, the bonnie broom blossom that once grew fair,
And still to the memory clings,
There's nothing left now but a tree here and there,
And they're not very thriving, poor things!

* The chum name of Johnnie Douglas, a born cricketer.

Our first cricket ground was a sportive place,
And it made the fielders grin
When a hit to square leg went into the dam,
Or a drive was lost in the whin.

Our method of playing when we were young men
Was hardly the same as now ;
A little less science, perhaps, but then
We enjoyed it as much, I trow.

Swift over-hand bowling was new in our day,
Though everywhere now it prevails,
Yet the under-hand break had a curious way
Of getting a hold of the bails.

And there's room for improvement yet, my lads,
For, although you can play good cricket,
We could do with less " butter " sometimes in the field,
And fewer " duck-eggs " at the wicket.

We had merry club suppers in days of yore,
Contented with simple cheer,
For they seldom consisted of anything more
Than a pie and a glass of beer.

The " prog " was part of the Provost's trade—
He was baker and Provost likewise,
And a very good Provost and baker he made,
And a topper at tuppenny pies.

The fair was plain, but great was the fun,
We never were beat at a song,
For whether the match was lost or won
Our music was always strong.

There was Jack, he could give us "The brave old Oak,"
That flourished a hundred years,
And then, when we got "I'm afloat" from the Dean,
You ought to have heard the cheers.

Then Harper came on with his "Sweet Jenny Jones,"
Till the rafters above us were ringing;
He "skied" the balls in a style of his own,
And he skied his soul in the singing.

And then when Ned Davidson rose to his feet
We joined in the chorus he led,
And no one that heard it will ever forget
"The Hundred Pipers" of Ned.

But, alas! they have left us; the few that live on
In this world of hopes and fears,
Can they sing them, I wonder, the old songs, now,
As they sang them in other years?

There are not many living still bearing the brunt
Of the years since our cricket beginnings,
For the bulk of them now have been called to the front,
And have finished their earthly "innings."

But away with regret, lads, play life's game,
Straight bat, and a courage stout,
And be ready to bow to the last call home.
When the Umpire gives you "Out."

J. B. S

A Tribute

To the Memory of the late "J. B. Selkirk."



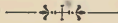
The good "J. B. S." has gone to his rest,
His venerable face no more we'll behold ;
But his memory for ever we will cherish with pride ;
His virtues to us shone brighter than gold.

No selfish motive inspired his breast,
For genuine manhood reigned there ;
His heart it was leal, plac'd where it should be,
And his leanings were rich and rare.

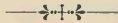
ROBERT DOUGLAS.



The Summers Long Ago.



To the Members of my Old Eleven.



Well, ah, well do I remember
Those sweet summers long ago,
When we played the "Prince of Pastimes"
Where the Ettrick waters flow!
Fired with early manhood's ardour,
Every evening we were found,
Keenly practising together,
On the well-known Border ground.

Nor were our exertions bootless;
To success the path they paved;
And the matches of that epoch
Time has on my heart engraved.
Batsmen we possessed in plenty,
Each of whom some runs could score—
Anything from one to twenty—
And occasionally more).

Bowlers also were not wanting,
 Though to every one 'twas plain
That amongst our tricky trundlers
 None could mate with Tom M'Bain.
But one thing above all others
 Fills my heart with honest pride :
To have been the chosen Captain
 Of so grand a fielding side.

Oftentimes the sun shone strongly,
 When the turf was touched by rain—
How alertly then we'd back up
 To the bowling of M'Bain !
Tom was deft and, ever-artful,
 Tossed up many a tempting slow,
Till the batsman, losing patience,
 Left his ground and had to " go !"

All too late he saw his error
 When the ball he thought he'd struck,
Breaking back upon the wickets,
 Softly bowled him for a " duck."
If (from too much " screw ") it missed them,
 You would hear the stumper shout,
As he tipped the bails off, " How's that ?"
 And the Umpire answers " Out."

Or perhaps he chanced to " swipe " it,
 And the ball would skyward soar,
Whilst he fondly thought that surely
 It would reach the rail for four ;

But the force was misdirected,
And, alas! the ball had gone
Only far enough for capture
By the hands of Long-field on.

Thus the Seasons passed with pleasure :
Every man could field and catch
In so masterly a manner
That we seldom lost a match —
Cydesdale scored but three-and-thirty ;
Gala only thirty-two :
But the twelve of all the 'Teries
In the shade all records threw.

Time since then has wrought great changes :
Some the game have ceased to play ;
Others, seeking after fortune,
O'er the seas have sailed away ;
Where, amidst the tempered sunshine
Of a clime more blest than ours,
Even to the tune of " hundreds " —
They display their batting powers.

I, too, once a jovial comrade,
From the ancient fold have strayed,
And against you for the 'Teries
Many a stubborn stand have made.
Nor does anything I know of
Stir my heart to greater mirth,
Than if I should score a " fifty " —
From an Inglis or a Firth.

Still, when winter nights close inward,
And my bat is on the shelf,
When I'm cosy by the firelight,
Dreaming idly by myself ;
Often then my thoughts fly backward
To the summers long ago,
When we played the " Prince of Pastimes "
Where the Ettrick waters flow.

C. J. W. DIXON.



“Amor Patriæ.”

A Border Lilt.



At the annual meeting of the Edinburgh Borderers' Union, Mr Duncan Fraser recited the following poem, written by "J. B. S."

Leeze me on the Border,
Leeze me on the land,
Known by every nation,
Where Freedom takes her stand.

Wherever ye may wander,
Whatever be your lot,
In earth's remotest corner,
Ye'll find the Border Scot.

His record is unbroken,
A' the world's avers,
Their names are on the Empire.
Oor Elliots, Scots, and Kers.

History canna mate them,
Read her pages through,
Yarrow's dauntless outlaw,
Etrick's bold Buccleuch.

On the path of glory,
In the battle's brunt,
Ever the same story,
Border to the front.

Iron wills that nane can turn,
Hearts that canna yield,
Victory at Otterburn !
Death on Flodden field !

A Rouse ! for Hawick callants,
They well deserve a cheer ;
And let nae Border man forget
The Slogan " Jethart's here "

A word for guid auld Selkirk,
Her royal hills amang,
Her story's set to music,
The lilt Jean Elliot sang.

For yet the thought o't harrows,
While memory endures,
A curse on Surrey's arrows,
That sped oor Forest Floo'rs

Fu' weel I trow that Selkirk
Can never be forgot,
Her fate, her sang, her Shirra,
Immortal Walter Scott.

The "pleisure" that is Peebles,
The beauty that is Tweed,
The man that can dispute them,
He's wrang about the head.

I've seen the yellow Tiber,
Hard by St Peter's dome,
Come flashing from her hoary heights,
To wash the walls of Rome.

The Rhine, the Rhone, the Danube,
Their grandeur weel beseems,
To me they want the sweetness
O' oor bonnie Border streams.

Gi'e me the warbling water
That through the meadow rins,
And let me hear the lintie's sang
Among the golden whins.

Where Veitch's honest heart was set,
On his beloved Tweed ;
Wi' Riddell singing' "Scotland yet"
Up at Teviothead.

Poor Leyden suffered death's eclipse,
Upon a foreign strand,
The words upon his dying lips
Were o' the Borderland.

The Ettrick Shepherd's fairy lore,
His sangs o' pawky glee,
While near him lies the deathless store
O' Yarrow's glamourie.

And O! forget them never,
The ballad minstrel host,
Their song shall live for ever,
Although their names be lost.

The Border through, there's not a stream,
Their hills and howes amang,
Unhaunted by the poet's dream,
Unhallowed by his sang.

Songs made in that high fashion,
Moulded to endure,
In love's immortal matrix,
To keep the world pure.

Though foreign sangs we'll no debar,
That's no to say, I ween,
That we forget "Young Lochinvar,"
Or "Jock o' Hazeldean."

Na, na ! let ilk ane haud his ain,
The sangs his faither sung,
And let nae coward loon disdain
The dear auld mother tongue.

" A wee bird cam," " My heart is sair,"
" My Jamie lo'ed me weel,"
" Oor ain folk," and a hundred mair,
Would move a heart o' steel.

They're written in a sacred scroll,
They're dear to me and you,
Wi' Border song, my very soul
Is soakit through and through.

There's scarce within your boundary,
A fit a dinna ken,
The triple forkit Eildons,
The quiet Rhymer's Glen.

The Tweed has mony a quiet path
Where you may tak your dearie ;
If by yoursel', just let me tell,
That some o' them are eerie.

Where she taks in the Powsail burn,
Tweed shudders to the deep,
Wi' stories frae that under world,
Where Merlin lies asleep.

And if ye gang through Leader haughs,
Alane, beneath the moon,
Beware the spell, that ance befel
The seer of Ercildoune.

And gin ye walk up Huntly burn,
Just reck this weird o' me,
Tak care ye dinna kiss a witch
Under the Eildon Tree.

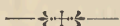
But Tweed has mony a bonnie dell,
Her tribute streams amang,
The country's sae delectable,
Ye canna weel gae wrang.

Wherever Border river runs,
And honest men survive,
Long may she breed her hardy sons
To keep her fame alive.

Then leeze me on the Border,
Leeze me on the land,
Known by ever nation,
Where Freedom takes her stand.

To praise ane that bore us,
Let each ane lend a hand,
And swell the hearty chorus,
" God bless the Borderland "

Conclusion.

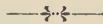


I have given expression to the pleasure I had both in playing and looking on at what I consider the best of out-door sports. I am glad that I have never yet lost the taste either for playing or watching it played. There are many of my companions whom I have written about who have gone over to the majority, which reminds us that we also must give in ; but I can truly say that the love of cricket has given me a great amount of pleasure. It was on the cricket field where I met many bosom friends. You meet all kinds, from Lords down to ordinary working men ; but I am now past the allotted span, and it is not likely I will have an opportunity of writing again.

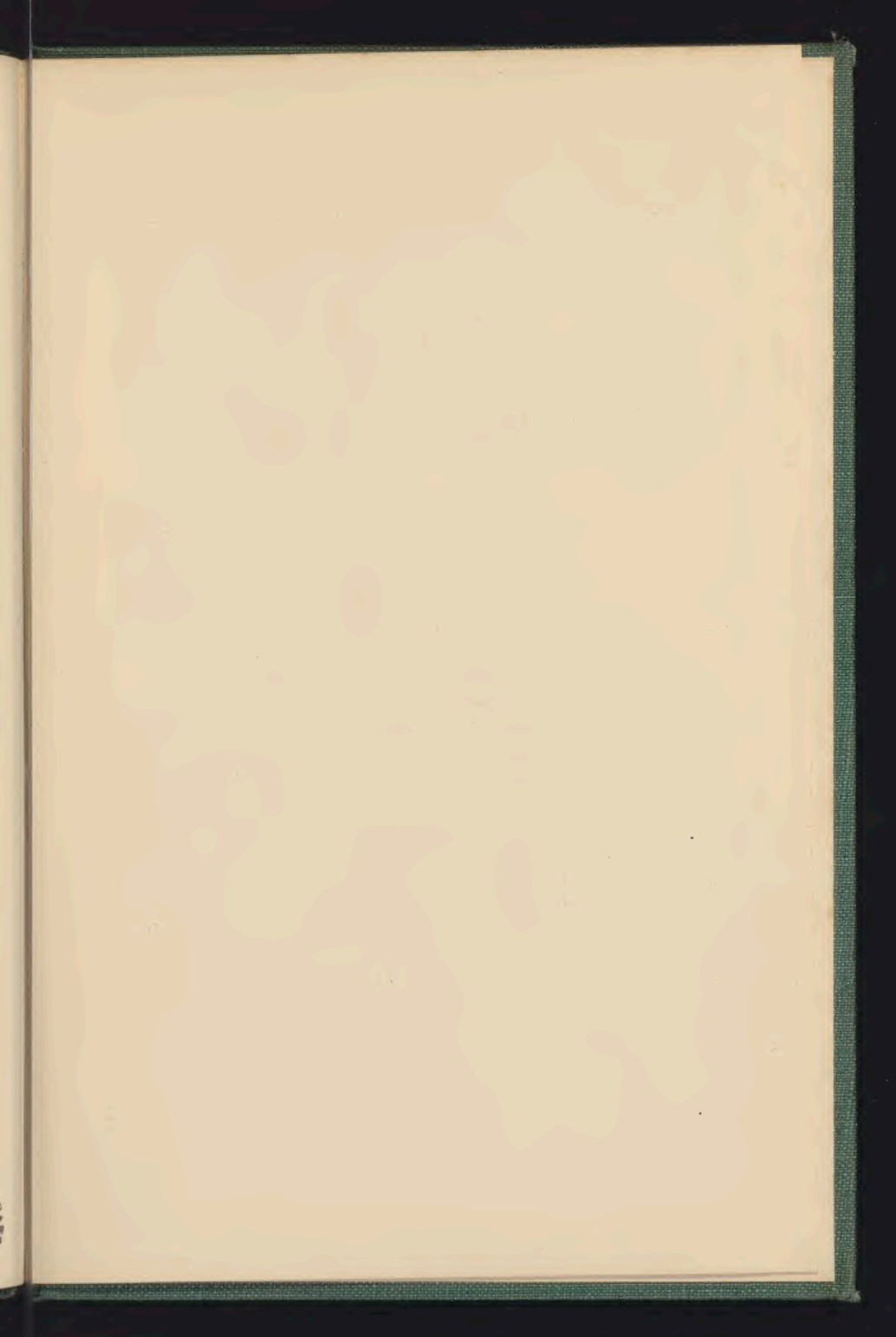
R. D.



Tempus Fugit.

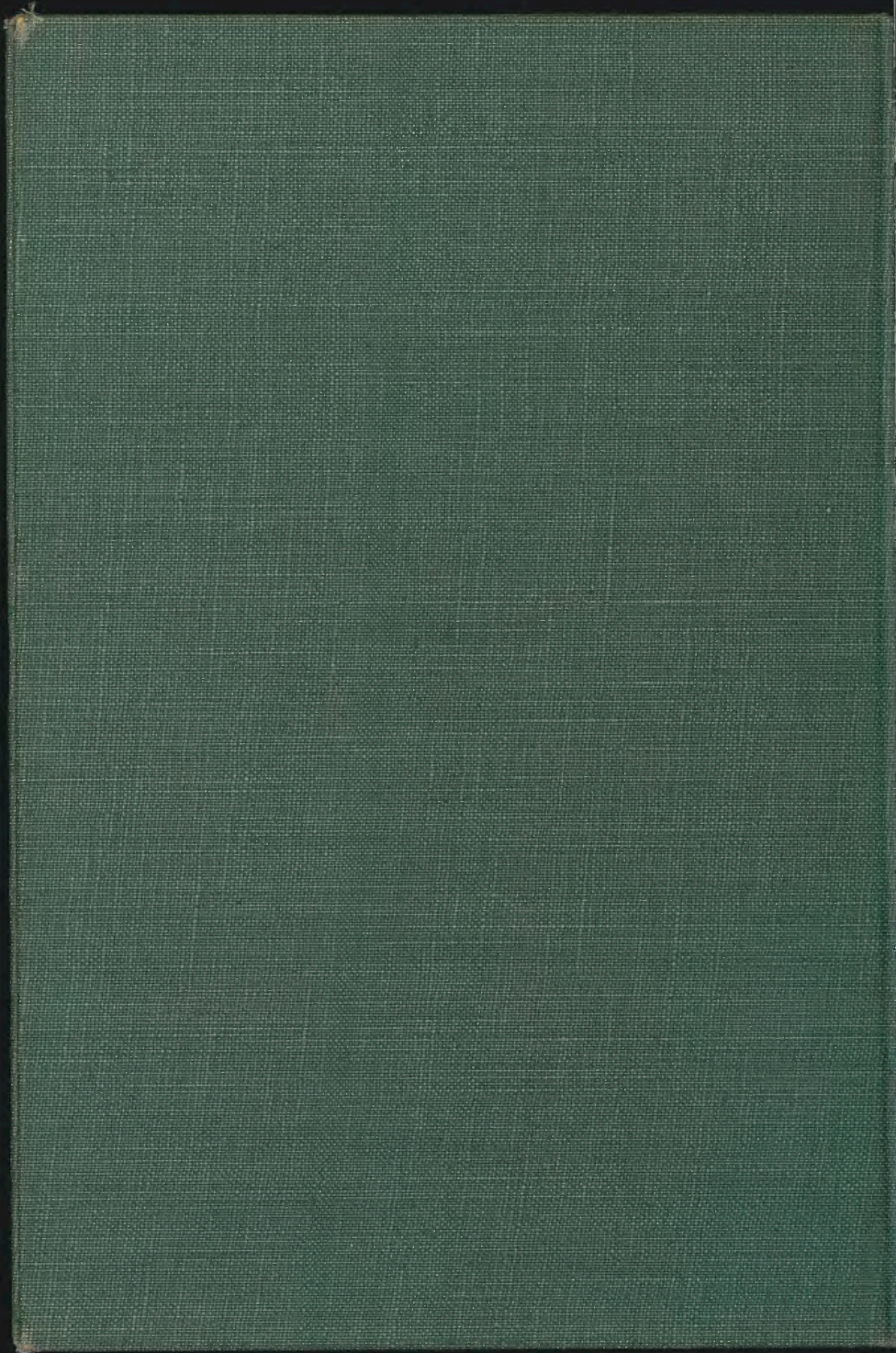


Time is moving fast and fleeting,
And no man can check its roll ;
It is like the rivulet and the brook,
Whirling, dancing to their goal.
Man looks on, amazed, and wondering
If each day is not the same.
Till a sting within him warns him
That he goes along with time.
Each day and year that passes o'er us
Hurries on the end of time ;
Tell us that our end's approaching,
And to make our lives sublime.
Then, O man, make haste to live,
For thou, too, soon must die ;
Let virtue ever be thy guide—
From vice with haste do fly.





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