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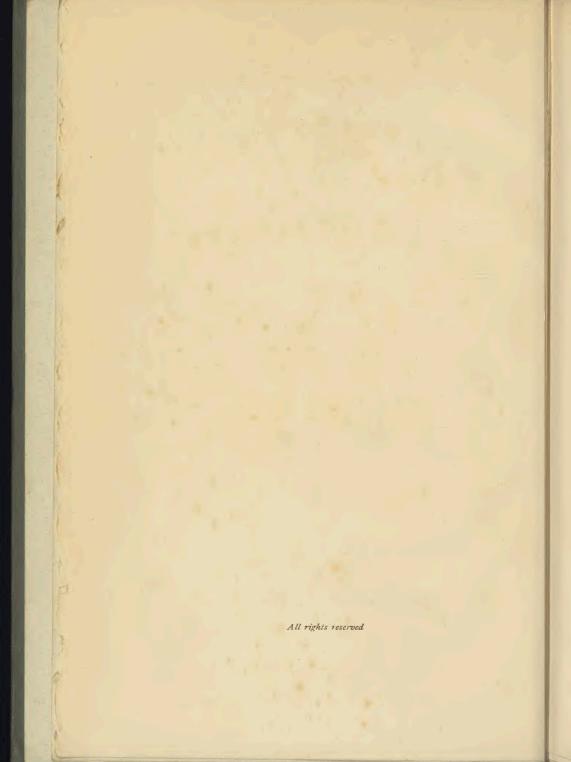
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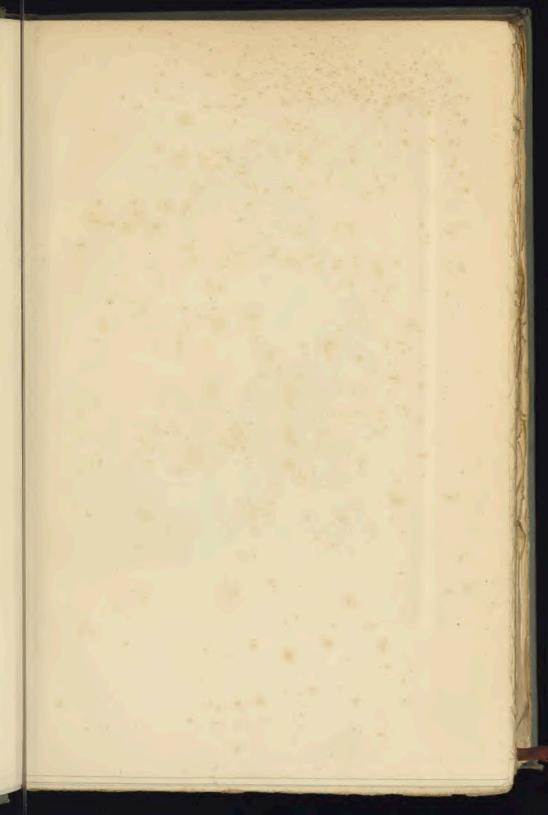
BY

THE MARQUESS OF GRANBY

AND MR.

GEORGE A. B. DEWAR







Alexander M. Kellow.

OUT-DOOR GAMES

CRICKET & GOLF

BV

THE HON. R. H. LYTTELTON



LONDON
J. M. DENT & CO., ALDINE HOUSE
19 & 30 BEDFORD STREET, W.C.
1901



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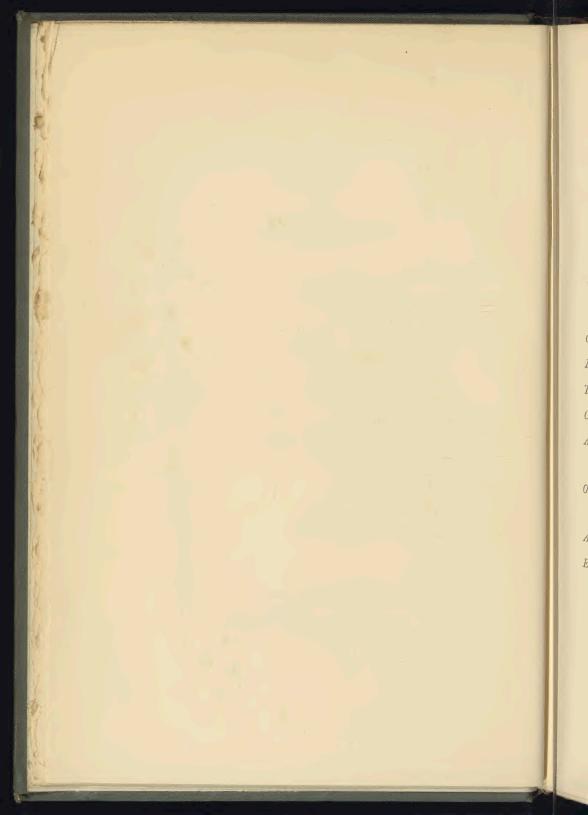
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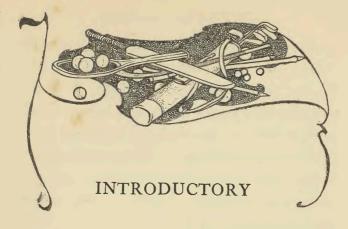
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WE have all of us seen in late years a multiplication of handbooks on hunting, shooting, and all forms of fishing, and games, both outdoor and indoor. Hunting especially has been the means of bringing into existence works that are classics. Beckford, Surtees, and Whyte-Melville are three great names, and the sport of hunting has been brought before our eyes by means of novel, treatise, and poetry. In Whyte-Melville's "Market Harborough" the author remarks, in discussing the redoubtable Crasher, that the love of hunting breeds a poetical instinct in its devotee, and the man who goes well across country frequently has a spirit of poetry in him, and we can well understand that this is the case. The wild excitement, the open air, and most of all the pace,

would seem to those, who have never hunted, to make up the chief poetical elements of hunting. To Mr. Surtees belongs the credit of having established for ever a standard of humour in the novel that, as far as hunting is concerned, is not likely to be superseded. "I hope you read a chapter every day," said the father to his son. "Yes," said the son, "I always read a chapter of Jorrocks before I go to bed." The father was not thinking of Jorrocks, but the Bible. Walton's "Compleat Angler" perhaps holds a higher position, as a beautiful bit of inspired prose writing, than any book on sport that has ever been written, and Sir Edward Grey has told us how the book has grown into a part of his life. Sir Edward Grey is a born angler himself, but nobody who has any taste for a pure and old-fashioned style can fail to love the "Compleat Angler," though he may never have handled a fishing-rod in his life. In the same way Whyte-Melville, both in his poems and novels, has written about hunting, in such a way that a man need be no rider, and need perhaps never have seen a fox in his life, to appreciate both hunting novels and poems, and, if he has any humour at all, the same

must be said of, at any rate, two of Surtees' books, "Jorrocks" and "Sponge." But what can be said of the literature of cricket, and games generally? Nyren has written a simple, old-fashioned book that has a great charm about it; and in modern times we have the great name of Andrew Lang, who seems to me to combine every quality that a writer on cricket should have. But between those two writers, or at an interval of about fifty-five years, the literature of cricket may be said to be a series of records and one or two treatises, and some poems, few of which have any great merit, if the famous hymn sung to the praises of Alfred Mynn be excepted. The cricket novel of the level of Handley Cross has yet to be written, but there is no reason why the cricket Surtees should not arise; the description of an exciting match has been done, and admirably well, in a book for boys, which it is to be hoped the present-day youth read as all did thirty-five years ago-" The First of June;" and there are many forms of excitement in cricket matches, which could be brought in with great effect in a novel. The cricket literature of to-day has been of two kinds, the reminiscence

and the didactic treatise. W. G. Grace, Daft, Giffen, and Caffyn have given the first kind, and the Badminton and the Oval series the second.

Golf has the great advantage of numbering amongst its great players a man who to his great skill as a golfer has added a fine gift of writing. Mr. Horace Hutchinson has laid down the proper principles by which golf is to be learnt. He has also charmingly given us a series of pictures of golf links, and in fact it may almost be said that he has told us everything, and has exhausted the subject of golf. But of golf, as of cricket, it may be said that the golfing novel has yet to be written. Mr. Surtees may have found out and produced the one form in which a sporting novel may be produced, and so covered the ground that any subsequent effort must more or less be a form of imitation. It only needs, however, an author with the necessary gifts, and both a cricket and a golf novel can then be produced. Golf, however, though of ancient date in Scotland, is, as far as England is concerned, quite a new plant. stage of reminiscence has not yet arrived, though it certainly will some day, and the didactic so far has held the field.

The present volume will treat of cricket and golf, but I hope that both reminiscence and teaching will be conspicuous by their absence. As far as golf is concerned, the author's reminiscences only extend to thirteen years, as until 1886 he never saw a golf club, and as for teaching, he may be said to know nothing of the game. At cricket everything that he can say on the didactic side he has said elsewhere, and the public are weary of statistics, which, thanks to the energy of our press correspondents, are thrust upon them at every turn. What the author hopes to be able to do is, to talk of cricket and golf from the untechnical point of view, to try and show not only the charms of both games, but also the shortcomings and the principles which should guide those in authority on the matter of reform, and the proper spirit that should be shown in playing the games, and also to describe the conditions under which both games are played, and the points of interest of both.

Many people must have often wondered if the English world generally have ever asked themselves what has contributed most to the pleasures of mankind. Hunting is and must always be the sport of the rich and well-todo, and it is sad to think that the hunting farmer is not to be found in the number that formerly was the case. Speaking from an outside view, the one man who ought to be able to hunt is the farmer. He occupies the land over which the field gallop; he is willing to be put to expense and trouble to keep up hunting, and yet the hardness of the times, the diminished profits, and the greater demand on his time, have sadly thinned the ranks of hunting farmers. Shooting is always in the hands of those who can afford a license and the other expenses, but these are of such a nature that this too is a sport for the well-to-do. Fishing in England, owing, it is presumed, to the huge increase of towns and water-polluting manufactures, is having its area seriously curtailed. Racing and coursing are participated in mainly because they are a source of gambling; the thousands that go to race and coursing meetings are gamblers, or at any rate many more than fifty per cent. are. Eliminate, if it were possible, all betting by a stroke of the pen, and most of the race meetings would die a natural death. If racing was really confined to the few who own horses and do not bet, like the late Lord Falmouth and the Duke of Westminster, it would be even more than it is now the sport of rich men, because a horse is an expensive animal, and to keep horses in training on the chance of winning prizes that, apart from betting, would have comparatively small money value, will always be an expensive luxury. What has then really contributed most to the gaiety of nations, confining the word nations to those who speak English?

The one article which is mentioned without hesitation as an answer to this question is the ball. This is of different sizes or different weights, sometimes hard and sometimes soft, sometimes kicked, more frequently hit, but in whatever size or weight you find it, it somehow or other forms the indispensable chief part in games. Take away, if possible, that blessed ball, what would a large majority of the inhabitants of the British Empire do for recreation? The very idea takes our breath away; we should have to take to keeping tame rabbits or haunting tea-gardens. The ball in some shape or other was introduced

to all of us who were well brought up directly we could walk; it is the means whereby we get recreation and exercise in youth and middle age; and when the muscles are withered and useless and no longer actively participate in games, still the eyes are there, and what the hands and muscles cannot perform, the eye can appreciate when looking on at others. The old therefore find their pleasure in criticism.

Consider for a moment what it means. A ball is the centre, the focus, the indispensable feature of cricket, football, golf, tennis, racquets, croquet, fives, lawn tennis, and billiards. If figures could be given on this subject it would be interesting. What is the annual cost of all these games? how much is spent in materials and rent? and finally, most astounding of all, how many human beings play in all these games, and how many go and look on at others?—if all this were known, humanity indeed would be staggered. To take first-class cricket alone, each year in England and Australia millions of spectators crowd to matches; there are county clubs, social clubs like Quidnuncs, the Zingari, Free Foresters, clubs belonging to iron-works, soap-works, working-men's institutes,

schools, public, secondary, and elementary, villages, towns, and districts. At football the same thing occurs; the spectators at a League match in Birmingham, Sheffield, Newcastle, and all over Lancashire, amount to ten, twenty, and even forty thousand. Golfers travel all over the United Kingdom and Ireland in search of links. There has been a revival of croquet; where there were forty years ago about six tennis courts, now there are about twenty-five; while in every club and hotel and many houses billiard-tables are found, where in evenings men of every profession and trade, and those with none, get much enjoyment, exercise, and perspiration from the gentle art of billiards. Englishmen have the love of games in their marrow as pipeclay was in the marrow of Mulvaney, and when we consider all these facts we may indeed regard the ball with respect, affection, and reverence.

Our feelings towards those unfortunates who take no interest in games, and have never played in any, are those of pity. There are men whose lives have been written and are even considered great, whose minds have been laid bare before the public, but who yet have never

appreciated cricket. Carlyle, that sour, snarling, dyspeptic old man, took eighteen years in writing the life of Frederick. What his poor unselfish wife suffered during that time we all know, but I cannot help thinking that if in the year 1861, when he was deepest in the valley of the shadow of Frederick, he had gone to Lord's and seen the University match, and entered into the spirit and excitement of that interesting game, he would have returned home a better man in every way. Frederick would have been forgotten, perhaps even the dyspepsia and the noise of the neighbour's poultry, and best of all Mrs. Carlyle might have had some hours' peace.

Cricket and golf are the two games that this volume professes to try and discuss, and in doing so it is difficult not to enter into comparisons. It is an evil and a danger to England that the crowds who go to races are more in number than the crowds at any other game. Of course racing goes on in some form or other all the year round, but the demoralising thing about racing is that the vast majority only go to races because of the facilities given to betting. Few

on a racecourse have ever owned a horse, many are as ignorant of the points of a horse as a Malay, and yet they go in the hope of winning a few pounds or shillings. People do not go to see cricket in a spirit like this: the large majority are or have been players, and therefore they understand the game, and they do not go with the object of betting. It is impossible to say how much cricket owes to the fact that as a medium for betting it is impossible, and always will be. A man may risk hundreds of pounds over a match if he chooses, though we never heard of such a case, but the professional bookmaker is an animal that does not find his métier on the cricket field, and where he does not exist, betting is not carried on to an unhealthy extent. A professional bookmaker will not establish himself anywhere unless there is a good prospect, perhaps you may say certainty, of his making money, and I am thankful to say that cricket is not adapted to his purpose. This can hardly be said of any other game, although I do not think there is much betting connected with Association football.

The real reason why professional bookmakers avoid cricket is because there is no scope for

villainy. A jockey can be squared, also a trainer, and a stable-boy, and any one of them is sufficient for the purpose. But it is impossible for a bookmaker to bribe or square a whole eleven, and to square one or two would not pay. With the best intentions in the world, they may not be able to effect his purpose. Two men who had been bribed might get no runs, bowl no wickets, and field badly; but some others would score freely, bowl well, and two men fielding badly might not do much harm. It might be possible to find an eleven whose success generally depended on the skill of one man, like W. G. Grace for Gloucestershire, or Richardson for Surrey, when each was in his prime; and if it were possible for such a man to be squared for a series of matches, no doubt his side would lose matches that otherwise they would have won. But to attempt this for one match would be risky; if attempted for a series of matches it would become obvious and impossible. It may at first sight appear that this is equally the case at football. I know nothing of Rugby football, but at the Association game, unless two sides are very unequally matched, the

goal-keeper — but only the goal-keeper — frequently has it in his power to lose a match. I have heard of such a case, but it was some years ago, and it is earnestly to be hoped that such things do not occur now.

As compared with football, cricket is not so much a scene of storm and stress; its interest is spread over a wider area of time, and at the present day it would really seem that the Britisher loves football more than cricket. One reason for this is, no doubt, because cricket is on the threshold of drastic reform. As at present played, it is far too much in favour of the bat, and the matches are unfinished. But football probably will always attract the greater crowd, because a man may see the game begun and ended in an hour and a half, and the bulk of the matches are played on Saturday half-holiday afternoons, when the workmen mean to enjoy themselves, and wages jingle in their pockets. Moreover, a Britisher loves excitement, and football is the concentrated essence of excitement. There is also an element of roughness about it, not to an undue extent, but to some extent, and a Britisher loves this too; it is

probable indeed that this is one of the causes that makes him at heart a soldier. If you have watched football in League matches at Birmingham and West Bromwich, you will always notice that, however great may be the enthusiasm created by a fine tricky run, there is always a yell of joy when a player of the visiting eleven is sent flying on his back, and then, indeed, the spectator may be said fully to realise the pleasures of life. But such things do not occur in cricket: this is quite a different game: it is long drawn out, in a great many cases it is painfully slow, there are long delays, the niceties of the game are observed only by the intelligent, a batsman is only applauded by specialists in the pavilion when he plays a maiden over successfully on a difficult wicket, the public only applaud him when he hits a fourer, and the higher and harder it is, the more lustily will they shout.

It must not be supposed, however, that there is no excitement in cricket; there may be, and frequently ought to be a long drawn out and painfully exciting phase of the match that may last for some hours. A fourth innings of a match, when the quantity of runs necessary to

win is the right number, the number that seems likely to ensure the inside winning by one wicket, or the outside by twelve runs, unless there is a collapse or pounding of the bowling by the earlier batsmen—such an innings is according to the best judgment the finest spectacle to watch that any game can afford. We all know the look of such an innings, how the hopes and fears alternately rise and fall; how, when you really begin to feel happy, the side whose colours you are wearing look like getting the runs, when lo! one or two wickets fall, and your spirits go to zero, and the other side become proportionately exalted. It may be that the last man comes in when ten runs are wanted: the excitement then cannot last long, but it is so intense or even painful, while it lasts, that men are positively afraid to face it. Many men retire into the bowels of the pavilion in order to avoid looking on. Cricket, during the progress of a match, may present every form of excitement or the reverse. The game may at one moment look an absolute certainty for one side, ten minutes after it looks an equal certainty for the other side; the downfall of a

batsman who is well in and scoring rapidly often has, and it is to be hoped often will again, turn the fortunes of a match. While he was in, the scoring was fast, and the bowling looked easy: now he is out, the boot is altogether on the other leg, the bowlers are happy, and the two batsmen who are at the wickets both look like getting out every over. The celebrated International Match between England and Australia in 1882 lasted only a short time, but the last day's cricket can never be forgotten. The University match of 1870, that of 1864, and Gentlemen and Players in 1877 and 1883, are just the same landmarks in cricket history. To this day all old cricketers and young ones too, who properly understand the history of cricket, talk of such matches, and call such matches by the name of some player whose prowess was the chief feature of the game. The Gentlemen and Players match in 1857 is always known by scholars as Hankey's match, because Hankey's innings of seventy was the main feature of the match. The University match of 1864 is to this day Mitchell's match; 1870, Cobden's match; the Australian and England match of 1882,

Spofforth's match. Absence of betting, real skill and patience, intermixed with rapid and perhaps unorthodox hitting, many ups and downs, a most perplexing uncertainty, and the caprices of English weather—such is cricket, and it is justly called the king of games.

What can be said of golf? What is the reason of golf coming to stay in England and in America, too, if report speaks truly? It is not easy to say why such is the case. Anybody can understand why football is a popular game; it is fast for one thing, and there is violent exercise in it, which an Englishman always loves. And in the case of cricket anybody can understand the joy of hitting a ball over the ropes, while the excitement of playing before crowds appeals strongly to many of us. But how uninviting it sounds to hear golf described: "Your object, sir, is to get a ball down a series of holes in as few strokes as possible." Such was the definition of a Scotchman of the game, spoken in proper dialect, and no more and no less could be said. How very different from an imaginary epitome of the game of Association football: "See that ball, and see those two posts; now set

to work, and kick that ball between and through the posts, and if anybody gets in your way just knock him over and go on." This sounds far more attractive to the Britisher: "knock him over!"—this is real joy, and so simple. Golf, however, in the first place, is a game like billiards, you must mind your own play, you can only to a limited extent, and that indirectly, interfere with your opponent's play. There is no "knocking him over" at golf, nor is there at billiards. All you do is to play your best in the hope that your opponent's best may not be as good as yours. If your opponent at football is running the ball down, you can go for him, not with your fists, but with your body. At cricket, if you are getting runs, your rivals are trying to bowl you out, or get you out somehow. But, except that you give safety misses at billiards, and thereby impede your rival's progress, golf and billiards stand alone among games in that they require you to concentrate your efforts on your own game and ignore your opponent's; he must go his way and you must go yours. At billiards you can do absolutely nothing while your enemy is playing; you have to look on and

cannot even play. At golf you do indeed play, but you cannot interfere with the enemy. Each of these two games is self-centred; learn how to play certain strokes well, and when you win matches it is because your rival cannot make them so well as you. Of course, there is a large amount of luck in both games, billiards especially, but over a series of matches there is little to choose in this respect, and there is luck at every game except chess and that class of contest.

But though you ought not to heed your opponent, but simply play your game and if possible ignore him altogether, still to do this is a counsel of perfection, for the skill of your rival exercises a most important effect upon the play of practically everybody. I have mentioned billiards so much that I may be accused of wandering from the subject of cricket and golf, but there is in some ways so much in common between golf and billiards that I think I may be pardoned. A few years back, and even now, you could see players of the calibre of Mitchell, Peall, Dawson, and Diggle play among each other, and so well did they play that a simple man would infer from the length of their breaks and general

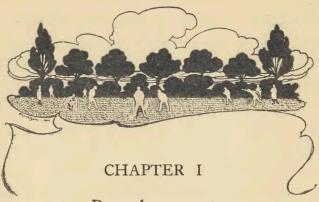
skill that for Roberts to give them a start of nearly half the game was impossible. The inference that was made was that these players could play against Roberts as well as they played against each other. In nine cases out of ten no greater mistake could be made. You play against a great and strong player—he does not interfere with you, there is nothing to prevent your making the same breaks as last week you made when playing against Snooks, but as a matter of fact you do not make these breaks, and you seem unable to play at the top of your game when playing the great player. It is the same of golf. Vardon wins nearly every match he plays, not only because he plays better than any of his rivals, but also because everybody, or practically everybody, feels something within him which tells him that Vardon cannot be beaten, and this feeling has a blighting effect, and though Vardon may not be playing at the top of his game, still he wins; whilst Roberts has the same effect on his opponents at billiards. Everybody, no matter what game is played, knows how he feels when pitted against certain strong players. It is one aspect of how

nerves affect players, and to analyse and explain it is difficult. It is easy to understand that to play the top of your game all that is necessary is to put your opponent out of your mind altogether, and just go on and play as if you were playing against an ordinary player. As I have said before, this is a counsel of perfection, and few can obey it. A man is somehow apt to feel that it is no good playing a good stroke, the probability being that his rival will bring off one equally good or better. The fact is overlooked that even a grand player fails occasionally, and that everybody finds it very hard to beat a very steady player, who can profit so much by one of his opponent's mistakes. Somehow or other a blight is on you; try how you will, you cannot forget or put out of your mind the prowess of the great player who is opposing you; he strikes a terror. This is one characteristic of golf, and it is one which golf shares with billiards.

One great attraction of golf, however, is that which appeals to the older of us, with whom work is a disgusting necessity and holidays the joy of the year. The middle-aged professional man with a substantial figure—"a fine chest that had slipped

down," as I have heard it described—and a family, used to be driven in old days to the seaside for his month's holiday. I have known several cases in which it is not too much to say that the one thing the head of the family looked forward to all through his so-called holidays was the getting back again to his London house, his business and his club. He had absolutely nothing to do at the seaside, except consume tobacco, walk about the cliffs, and avoid street minstrels. Now the same business man has probably taken to golf even if only in foursomes, he has an amusement and a recreation every day, and he can always take it at the seaside—he can get a game, and his children can get health at one and the same place. I have heard people talk of the sorrows of a golfer's wife; they are nothing as compared with the sorrows of a non-golfer's wife during an enforced stay of a month at the seaside without golf and nothing to do. His children can learn golf in the proper way, namely in the holidays and not at school: there are often ladies' links where his daughters can play, and though the conversation may be too much in the one line of golf during dinner, nevertheless everybody is happy, and the holiday is a holiday and everybody is the better.

I have heard it said that bicycling and golfing have revolutionised England. In a sense they have. Distance within a limit has been quite annihilated, and a game has taken root on a soil where it was badly wanted; it has brought into activity a large trade, and increased the value of property in the neighbourhood of links, and added to the gaiety of nations.

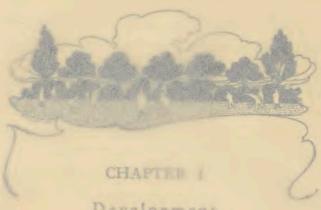


Development

CRICKET has developed as fast as any other game, much faster than football, racquets, or golf—at least that is my opinion. There have been several stages in its development, and the first and most important stage came into existence in 1827, when the game was about fifty years old, and underhand bowling was displaced in favour of round-arm. Nyren speaks of David Harris as the greatest bowler he ever saw, but here is Nyren's description of his bowling:—"First of all, he stood erect, like a soldier at drill; then, with a graceful curve of the arm, he raised the ball to his forehead, and drawing back his right foot, started off with his left. His mode of delivering the ball was very

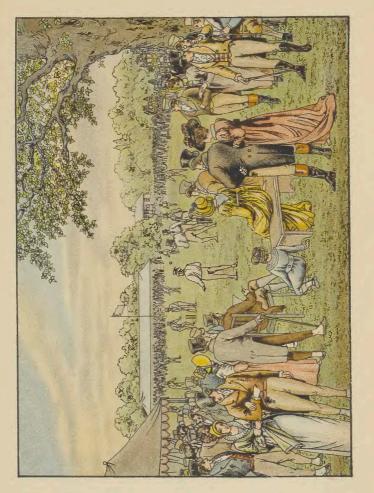


CRICKET AT LORD'S IN 1822.

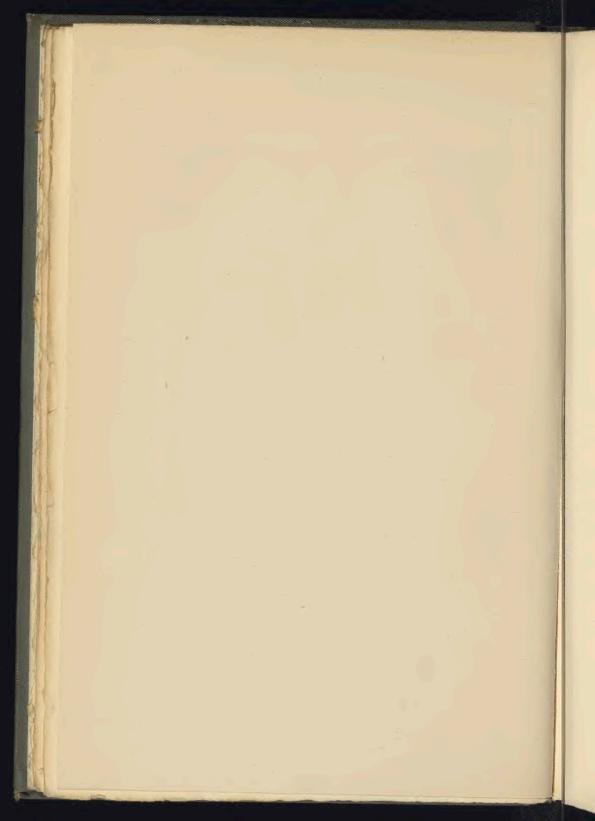


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CRICKET AT LORD'S IN 1822.



singular. He would bring it from under his arm by a twist, and nearly as high as his armpit, and with this action push it, as it were, from him. How it was that the balls acquired the velocity they did by this mode of delivery I never could comprehend."

With all our respect for the old chronicler it is not easy to follow this description. No human being could produce a fast ball by a push from the armpit, but probably David Harris and several others did not stick to real underhand bowling. The best lob bowler I ever saw was V. E. Walker. Nobody could call V. E. Walker's bowling strictly underhand, and if I have been correctly informed Clarke's was not either; but lob bowling is classified as underhand, and it certainly is not round-arm. In the case of V. E. Walker the arm was slightly bent and a little raised. In strict underhand bowling the hand and elbow are in a straight vertical line; but if the arm is bent in such a way that the elbow is outside and the hand swung slightly away from the body the result may not be round-arm bowling, nor is it real underhand like A. W. Ridley, W. M. Rose, or Osbert Mordaunt.

In the case of the last three bowlers the arm was stretched at full length, but of David Harris's bowling one may infer from Nyren's description that the arm was shortened by bending the elbow backward, which may have produced the armpit theory. But though the strictly underhand bowling may have been slightly varied, and though the wickets were rough, batting got too much the upper hand, and after a fierce controversy round-arm bowling came in in 1827, and was called throwing by its opponents. William Lillywhite and Jem Broadbridge of Sussex are the two names which may be conjured with, for if they did not invent round-arm bowling they at any rate were the first who brought it into first-class cricket. There were three matches played that year between Sussex and England, and Sussex won two; and we may well be surprised to read that the leading players of England, after the second match, signed a petition against the Sussex throwing, when Lillywhite's bowling was what we should call slow medium, quite fair in its delivery, and not by any means likely to hurt the batsman, for Lillywhite being a short man, there could only be a minimum amount of bump.

After this year (1827) the old-fashioned fast underhand bowling went out of fashion, and even lob bowling went to the wall. The superiority of round-arm bowling became so manifest that bowlers went into the opposite extreme, and it was not until the famous William Clarke bowled his lobs with astonishing success against all classes of batsmen that lob bowling came in at all. In this respect cricketers were like other people who desire to have and practise some new thing, and when they get it ignore utterly the old practice and the old science.

In these days we keep men at high salaries who have brought wickets to a perfection of smoothness which our forefathers never dreamt of. Last century the old Hambledon Club played for many years on Windmill Down, which sloped down hill on all sides from the centre, and this Nyren admired, as it sharpened up the fielding; the bowlers too selected the wickets, and we read that it was part of the craft of a bowler that he should be able to select the wicket which should suit his own bowling. Nyren quotes as an instance of David Harris's genius, "that he not only could choose a wicket to suit his bowling but

that of his colleague as well." Beldham lived till the year 1862, and no man that ever lived could have seen such changes as he did. William Caffyn, in his very interesting book "71 Not Out," mentions how old Beldham walked seven miles to see a good match at Godalming in 1852. I should have liked very much to have had a talk with the old man: he had seen Lord Frederick Beauclerk, William Lambert, Fuller Pilch, and George Parr bat, and Lumpy and David Harris, William Lillywhite, Redgate, Hillyer, Clarke, and Jackson bowl. In fact Beldham saw every stage of development of the game, except overhand bowling and the modern billiardtable wicket. Caffyn describes him as walking in a beautiful clean white smock-frock, and such a sight would have aroused all the sentiment of one's nature.

If you go to Lord's you will see specimens of the primitive bats; they were thin in the handle, very heavy and thick in the blade, and entirely adapted to a driving as opposed to a wrist style of play. It is a curious fact that among impending changes there are many who advocate a reversion more or less to this shape of blade

by making the bat narrower and thicker. But in the earliest days the bowling was mostly fast underhand, and much of it along the ground, or "sneaks," and the only way to deal with bowling such as this was to drive it forward-to cut was impossible. Beldham remembered those days and spoke of the cricket with contempt, and indeed it probably was dull to men like Beldham who saw the next stage of development. But to the historian there is a picturesque side, and many of us can remember something of the same sort of match in the south of England on the village greens, when the spectators used to sit smoking churchwarden pipes, with beer in china jugs on small round tables, and when many a match used to be finished in one day.

William Lillywhite and Broadbridge, as I have said, brought in round-arm bowling; and with no heavy rollers or mowing machines invented, I should think it probable that many bowlers were successful who were nevertheless not possessed of great skill. Readers must have a proper sense of proportion and make a little allowance, but there is a great deal of truth in

the remark that is made in 1900, that any fool can get runs now and any fool could have got wickets between 1830 and 1860, and the state of the grounds is the reason and the cause of this. Old Lillywhite, Redgate, Hillyer, Mynn, William Clarke, Jackson, and many others, were grand bowlers, fit to be compared with the best of any time and country, but the plodding, medium-pace, straight round-arm bowler, who kept a fair length and hammered away at the wicket, met with his reward and success in those days between 1830 and 1860, which he certainly does not meet with now. I saw Gentlemen v. Players both at Lord's and the Oval in 1866. Though there was great variety of bowlers, there was little variety in the bowling of any one bowler, who would be content with what I should call pounding away. Speaking of thirty years ago, the bowler who perhaps more than any other was famous for general accuracy and good length was Jemmy Grundy of Nottingham. Grundy never bowled for catches; he was strictly roundarm, and was far more successful on Lord'swhich then was a ground favouring the bowlers,

owing to its natural slope from north to south—than he was at the Oval.

On most grounds then a bowler could find a spot, and a ball pitching on that spot would sometimes shoot, sometimes hang, and sometimes bump. Grundy was successful because he could find such spots; but if he bowled now in such weather and on such wickets as we have seen in 1899, I say with confidence he would have been played all day with ease. Conversely, a man who plays fairly straight, can hit tolerably hard, and can meet the ball with the bat when it comes on straight with no hang or bump, but half stump high, goes in now and gets maybe 30, 60, or even 100 runs; but there are many such playing now whose captain, if he had been playing at Lord's between 1850 and 1870, would have rejoiced if he made 10.

As there are dozens of batsmen who can make hundreds now to the one batsman of forty years ago, so the general result is, in fine weather, drawn matches, and this fact has forced the hand of the lawgivers, and changes will be made. This will be dealt with fully in a subsequent chapter; but in talking of the de-

velopment of the game after the introduction of round-arm bowling in 1827, with rare exceptions drawn matches were unheard of unless caused by bad weather, and this state of things was the case up to, at anyrate, 1880. The Duke of Dorset in 1784 got up an eleven to go to the Continent to play, I suppose, the French—though I have never heard of or seen any of our lively neighbours play cricketbut they were stopped at Dover by a revolution. Cricket in France was stopped by a revolution: I may be wrong, but I cannot conceive any revolution preventing the University match from coming off in England: but until 1859 no English eleven ever went abroad or to the Colonies to play cricket. There was not nearly so much cricket. Matches, as a rule, were finished in two days, and the ordinary cricketer could, and frequently did, play twenty years and more. The average life of a cricketer was sixteen years; now, it is probably not more than ten.

I quoted James Grundy as a specimen of the straight plodding type of fast medium-pace bowling, but I perfectly well recollect his

bowling, in Gentlemen v. Players at Lord's in 1866, to A. H. Winter, and being hit three times to leg in two overs, and a fieldsman being accordingly put there. I infer from this that the most accurate bowler of thirty years ago is not to be compared in this respect to the modern bowler. In these days a man may hit to leg, but he does so off straight balls; in 1866 such a stroke was considered an outrage and was never seen, E. M. Grace always being excepted. Grundy therefore bowled sometimes to leg; J. T. Hearne, Mead, and Lockwood practically never give a ball off which George Parr would have made the orthodox leg-hit. Here, then, is another instance of development in first-class cricket: leg-hitting has been removed out of the game. A very beautiful thing to see was fine leg-hitting, and its disappearance is a calamity. One reason, and I think the strongest, for the bowling in old days being more off the wicket, was that it is easier to bowl straight when bowling with the hand right over your head than it is when bowling on a level or below the shoulder. In overhand bowling the hand moves up and down in a straight line between hand and wicket; in round-arm bowling this is not

the case, as anybody can see who takes a ball and makes the attempt. It requires more practice to bowl the ball where you want it to go if you bowl round-arm than it does if you bowl overhand, and the fact that bowling with the hand over the shoulder was not allowed before 1864 makes it obvious that the old bowling-that is, the round-arm bowling between 1830 and 1860—was more off the wicket than now. As a matter of fact, the straightest bowler in those days was the most killing. As bowling makes the batting, or creates the level that batsmen reach, it may be inferred that as the wickets certainly were not so easy, only the batsmen with real talent could become famous. You may now coach a boy with fair eyes and aptitude for the game and good nerve to such a degree that he becomes a prolific scorer, but this was not possible in the old days. Very seldom indeed in a first-class match did any but a really good bat get 50 runs; and, as I said before, a captain would rejoice if many a man who can now get long scores scraped up 10 in 1860—at any rate on Lord's.

James Grundy, when Jackson bowled at

Lord's, would sometimes stand well away from the wicket and hold the bat with one hand, being indifferent whether the ball were hit or This is reported by William Caffyn in not. the book quoted before, which is well worth perusal. Grundy evidently liked to bowl at Lord's but bat on the Oval. Once in Gentlemen v. Players, C. G. Taylor got out owing to a ball of Hillyer's hitting him on the hat and knocking it on the wicket. What would Abel and Hayward think if that occurred now? It no doubt did then require pluck and nerve to stand up to Jackson on Lord's, but it must be borne in mind that, though the bowling was as fast as it is now, up to 1864 it was not above the shoulder, and this to my mind makes the whole difference. If I had to play on a fast bumping wicket, I would far rather play a very fast bowler with a low action than I would play a fast bowler with a high action over the shoulder. I honestly believe that the bowling of Richardson, Kortright, Jessop, and Jones, the Australian, on what Lord's was sometimes in old days, would have resulted in fatal accidents.

I may take the period from 1830 to 1860 as

marking out a long stage in development; but in 1864 another stage arose, namely the introduction of overhand bowling, and this alteration of the law is the latest change that has been made in the interests of the bowler. As there was a period of about thirty years when round-arm bowling held the field, so now, after the lapse of another thirty years, overhand bowling has taken its place. Of course in the thirties there were plenty of bowlers who, like J. H. Kirwan, bowled with a very low arm, so in the sixties and seventies there were plenty of round-arm bowlers. But in 1899 hardly any bowler exists who does not bowl right above his head. The Australians were the pioneers of this style, and I never heard of an Australian with a low action. It is probable that overhand bowling may be the most difficult to play, but in adopting entirely the overhead system of bowling and discarding round-arm bowlers have in my opinion made an error. The whole essence of modern bowling is variety. We see all paces, all heights, and all the different forms of twist and break, but the stamp of bowler, who bowled round the wicket, and kept the arm on a level or a little below the level

of the shoulder, and made the ball come with his arm, is practically extinct. About the year 1844 there were two famous umpires, Dark and Caldecourt, who held different views on the important question of leg before wicket, and the question became so acute that during the progress of a match at Lord's the matter was referred then and there to the M.C.C. Committee. The result was that the ruling was made that the ball must pitch in a straight line from wicket to wicket, not from hand to wicket; thus making it difficult for a round-arm bowler, bowling round the wicket, to get a man l.b.w. Scoring was kept within reasonable limits in those days by the fact that wickets were not so true, owing to the mowing machine not having been invented nor the heavy roller, and bowlers bowled round the wicket as well as over. Now, however, there is no doubt that inability to get a man out l.b.w. has handicapped round-the-wicket bowling, and this rendering of the l.b.w. rule made by the M.C.C. about 1844 has had far-reaching effects on the development of the game, for it has been the principal cause of the disestablishment of round-the-wicket round-arm bowling.

Batting, as I have said before, is made and formed by the bowling, so in its development it has adapted itself to the style of bowling it has had to meet. Up to the year say 1870 there was a prevailing method of round-arm bowling, and fast round-arm bowling, as I have said, is more difficult to keep dead straight and accurate than is overhead. This fact made it unnecessary for batsmen to hit in any style but what may be called the orthodox; there was no pulling either of the pitched-up ball or the long hop; and I can well remember murmurs of disapprobation in the Lord's Pavilion when a ball was hit across the wicket. An off ball was hit to the off, an on ball to the on, and for about twelve years every batsman got a fair share of balls to hit. About the year 1874 there arose another feature of bowling, which was that, instead of being mainly fast or medium, it became slow. Shaw, Southerton, Peate, Bates, Flowers, Watson, and many others may be quoted as flourishing at this time, but why fast bowling should have gone out of fashion so much as it did I cannot quite explain. All fast bowling was child's play to W. G. Grace in the days of which I am speaking, when he was

in his prime, and this was perhaps the reason. But whatever the cause, slow bowling came to be the prevalent style, and the best way to get wickets was to pitch good length balls outside the off stump, and have most of the fieldsmen on the off side. This then marked another stage of development, because batsmen, to avoid the trap of being caught on the off side, began to cultivate the pull or cross-wicket hitting, unheard of a few years previously, but now becoming easier as wickets improved. In 1878 the first Australian Eleven came to England, and though Englishmen were slow to learn the lesson, they came to realise that variety was the loadstone to look for. Variety of pace, variety of pitch, but no variety in the height of the armthat was the stamp of bowling that we learned from the Australians, and the first English bowler who brought it to a high pitch of skill was Lohmann.

For the last seven or eight years we have had a series of dry seasons, and the art of making perfect wickets has reached a climax. Bowlers are beginning to despair, there are all styles and all paces, but the bat triumphs, and the beginning of the twentieth century under new regulations and changes of the game will begin a new era. I may put in a tabulated form the various stages of development since the beginning of the game and approximate dates. 1750 to 1827primitive wickets, fast underhand bowling, heavy bats, driving in front of wicket. 1827 to 1860wickets smoother but still not good, round-arm bowling as a rule medium pace to fast, giving plenty of balls to hit, free batting, plenty of cutting and leg-hitting. 1860 to 1880-overhand and preponderance of slow bowling, heavy roller and mowing machine and improvements in wickets, slower batting. 1880 to 1900-every variety of bowling made easy by the billiardtable wickets, plethora of runs and very rapid scoring, combined with batting of the slowest and most sticky nature.

Such, briefly speaking, is the main feature of cricket development, and our readers will gather from what I have said that the main cause of all development is the gradual improvement of the wickets, which has gone on ever since the beginning of the century, but which has improved by leaps and bounds since the discovery

of the mowing machine and the heavy roller. There was one ball common enough in the sixties at Lord's and not uncommon on other grounds, and this was the shooter. The shooter is absolutely as extinct as the Dodo, and one reason why mediocre bats can now score so freely and could not forty years ago is because mediocre bats could never stop shooters. How shooters were produced is a matter on which great difference of opinion exists, and which I cannot quite explain. Some people think that the balls were not quite so round and well made as they are now; I myself think it probable that wickets eaten off by sheep and mown with the oldfashioned scythe was the explanation. The mowing machine shaves the grass like a razor; there are no little tussocks of grass, as was the case formerly, hardly visible but nevertheless existing; there was something for the ball to bite; but whatever the cause, every now and then both fast and slow balls, on touching the ground, instead of rising, became as it were glued to the surface and hit the bottom of the wicket, and I have seen a ball remain there, an inch or so in front of the stump, humming like a top and twisting round

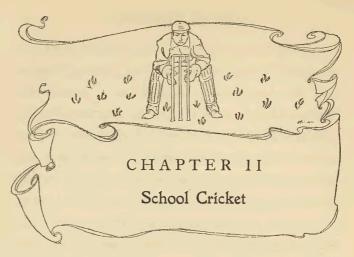
and round. Some shooters no doubt were impossible to stop, especially when combined with a break back. Such shooters as these may be easily remembered by those who saw the University match in 1870, when S. E. Butler, bowling from the pavilion end, got all ten Cambridge wickets at a cost of under four runs per wicket, several of them with balls that shot dead and broke down hill. There was indeed some credit to a batsman who got runs under these circumstances.

I have hitherto written about bowling and batting, the development of the latter being entirely dependent on and governed by the development of the former. It must not be supposed, however, that fielding has not developed very much in the same way and from the same causes. Between 1827 and 1878 the fields were placed in very much the same positions. I mean by this that to a slow bowler there was a fixed method of placing the field, as there was to medium and fast bowling. A little variety might be made by a particular bat with a particular hit, such as George Parr leg-hitting; but, as a rule, to fast bowling there was a mid-on and a mid-off, a cover-point and a short-leg,

point, short-slip, wicket-keep, long-slip, longstop, and long-leg. If a great cutter came in, long-slip would probably be moved to third man; if R. A. H. Mitchell came in, long-leg would be placed deep square-leg. As there was always a long-stop even to what we should call slow medium bowling, so did the wicket-keep always stand up to the wicket. It was also the custom to observe a certain routine according as the bowling changed ends. For instance, the same man fielded long-leg one end and cover-point on the other, all other fields kept the same placesmid-on and mid-off, and long-stop, for instance, crossing over and fielding the same place both ends. A very different state of things is seen now. Practically the ball never bumps nor shoots, and is never on the leg side; the wicket-keep can therefore with ease do without a long-stop to all but the fastest bowling, and when this is on he falls back and takes up a bastard position, a sort of mixture of wicket-keep, long-stop, and short-slip. The post of long-stop is disestablished; we see shortslip one end fielding out deep in the country when bowling is at the other end, we never see a longleg or a deep square-leg; neither is there, strictly

speaking, a mid-on or short-leg, but one fieldsman who tries to cover both places. There are two short-slips, and the only fieldsman who invariably occupies the same place, whichever end the bowling, is the wicket-keeper. The cause of all this change or development is not entirely the greater perfection of the wicket, it is largely due to the system of boundaries. I cannot quite remember in which year the system of boundaries came into vogue, but I think it came earlier in some grounds than in others, and its introduction was one reason why deep long-leg and square-leg were abolished. The Australians who came over in 1878 caused a development in our bowling system, but that was not the only lesson we learned from them. They never bowled on the leg side, and they had an astonishing wicketkeep; and for the first time in the history of cricket was seen a sight at which the old cricketers rubbed their eyes — a wicket-keep standing up to fast bowling without a long-stop. It was an astonishing feat to do at that time, when the wickets were not so perfect as they are now: it would not have been possible at Lord's before 1872.

At the time of writing this chapter, after the season of 1899, the difficulty of getting batsmen out on the smooth wickets is so great that bowlers have been driven to try methods incompatible with the true science of the game. They are not altogether to be blamed. As I have said before, any fool can get runs now, and human nature being what it is, bowlers will bowl whatever seems most likely to get wickets. So fast bowlers pound the ball down, very short, very fast, with the hand as high as nature will allow, to get the batsman caught behind the wicket; but the ball is nothing more nor less than a long hop, and to bowl a series of long hops is not bowling, according to all well-established canons of the art. In the same way slow bowlers, in endeavouring to get as much twist on the ball as possible, have sacrificed all length and precision, and in some cases are driven to bowl outrageous bad balls in order to tempt an Abel or a Noble to hit the ball up. When cricket has arrived at this stage of its development it is time for reforms to be made, but this must be reserved for another chapter.



A LEADING statesman who is also a golfer, but not a cricketer in the sense of an actual player, has recently made a speech in Scotland in which he gives sundry reasons for placing golf above cricket as a game. There is a story of an acute, hard-headed Scotch engineer being cross-examined by a barrister on some point connected with the witness's own profession. The barrister asked some absurd question, which could not be answered on account of its absurdity, and all the witness would say in answer was to the effect that it was impossible to say. The poor fool of a barrister, however, continued to press his question, till finally the witness said, "Man, you might as well ask me how far

it is from London Bridge to Christmas Day." I am tempted to make the same remark when I am asked which, in my opinion, is the best game—cricket or golf. The thing is not arguable. The only points of resemblance in the two games are that a ball is required in both games, and a weapon of some sort to hit the said ball. Mr. Balfour has urged with great truth that it is impossible to say that a man would go to Lord's or the Oval to enjoy scenery as he would, presumably, to North Berwick. Mr. Horace Hutchinson has somewhere said that a golfer who in the middle of a game makes any remarks on the beauty of the scenery is probably three holes down and only four to play. This would seem to imply that golf is such a great game that such trifling considerations as appreciation of the beauty of nature and love of the picturesque ought to have no place in the true golfer's constitution. There is, however, a great deal of golf played on wet clay fields with nothing striking in the way of scenery to charm the golfer. The oldest golf links in England, if not in the world, are at Blackheath, but golf at Blackheath is not played

with anything like so picturesque a surrounding as cricket at Wilton or The Mote. Golf is no doubt a better game for the middle-aged and old and for busy men; the middle-aged and old are too short in the wind for cricket, the busy man has not the time. Mr. Balfour was undoubtedly right in this, but he prudently left out of the discussion the relative merits of the two games for youth and young men up to thirty years old, and on this ground I may be excused if I hold that cricket bears the palm.

Our games have to be considered from all points of view, and one of these is, Which has the best effect on character? Certain critics say that far too much time is given to games at our public schools and universities—a broad question which I do not propose to discuss at length here. I have, however, in the course of my life met with several men who hold this view, and I can with truth say that a great many ought not to be taken as fair judges of the question, for they have never played any game, except perhaps lawn tennis, in their lives. The contention of those who take the opposite view is that games have an important influence

on the making or marring of a boy's character, and with this remark I cordially agree. There are many virtues which a game may instil into the boy, but the three most important are unselfishness, esprit de corps, and pluck. For youth, that is, boys, no game ought to be encouraged that does not keep these three points in view, and golf cannot be said to come up to the mark in this respect; but I am only speaking of youth and boyhood. As far as unselfishness and esprit de corps are concerned golf is a bad game; you play for yourself, and therefore it may be said to be selfish and lacking in esprit de corps. When a man has reached thirty years of age he may be expected to have reached a time of life when his character is moulded and fixed in some shape or other: if he is a good sportsman, well and good; if not, he never will be. I say, however, with confidence, that to train him into becoming a good sportsman at thirty ought to be one of the purposes and objects of games at school and during boyhood, and for this cricket is a better game than golf.

I do not wish it to be inferred from what I have said that golf is anything but a grand

game: I only say that if I had the charge of boys I should only encourage golf to the extent of allowing just enough to implant a proper style and swing into the youth, and then I should stop it; he can always take it up later. The proper games for schoolboys are cricket and football. Rowing would also be included, but this is only practicable in a few schools; wherever it can be carried out, it ought to be, as in regard to unselfishness, esprit de corps, and pluck, rowing leaves nothing to be desired.

I am willing to admit that, the chief object of games for boys being what I have said, cricket is not absolutely perfect. It is quite impossible for a boy to be a selfish oarsman, it is difficult to be a selfish football player, but it is easy for a boy to be a selfish cricketer. It is possible that a boy or man should prefer to get 50 runs and lose a match than to get 10 and win it; and if this is the case the captain of the eleven, or anybody who has any management or guidance of games, should do his utmost to rid the eleven of such a member. But in cricket and football, as compared with golf, racquets, and other games, there is a side

to be thought of as opposed to the individual, and so we get esprit de corps. I will say here that a middle-aged man is far more likely to play golf in a sportsmanlike way if he has in his youth been disciplined in temper and other ways by football and cricket. He will have learned the spirit in which games should be played, the way to appreciate an opponent's good stroke-in other words, he will play in a sportsmanlike way. Of course there are, and always will be, some boys and men who are past praying for—they never will be sportsmen; but let us all hope that these may be what John Bright called the residuum only. At anyrate, I am sure that the best chance to make good sportsmen is to encourage games for boyhood, but they must be games in which the individual must be merged in the side, and therefore cricket in schools ought always to be an important element in the curriculum.

Our ancestors, and indeed some of ourselves, played cricket in private schools in a very different way to what we do now. Everything was rougher thirty years ago. The rod governed our morals; we were insufficiently

fed; the stamp of master was by no means high; we never washed in hot water; and our cricket was invariably played on rough wickets. We may have gone to the other extreme now, but that is the way of things generally in these days. The playground where I first learned the elements of eleven-a-side cricket was more like a hayfield than a cricket ground. Our knowledge of the rules was by no means perfect, and was the constant cause of disputes, even to the extent of pugilistic encounters. At the leading private schools now there is a beautiful smooth wicket, perhaps a professional bowler, and very likely one or two masters who have played for the University. There is drill and method in the choosing of sides, and the boys get systematic coaching. The mere fact of good wickets being the rule at private schools is a change of the first magnitude; I can say with truth that, taking all my school-days at a private school in Brighton and at Eton, I never played on what would now be called a firstrate wicket till I got into Upper Club or the top game at Eton. There are still, in the case of public schools where such a lot of cricketers

have to be provided for, roughish wickets to be found, but there is much improvement. It may appear strange, when we think how a ball bumps on hard, rough wickets, that bad accidents did not occur by the ball hitting boys on the head, and to me I confess it is surprising still. I think, however, that, taking the bowling generally, it was by no means so high as it is now. Round-arm bowling was the rule, and this explains the comparative immunity from knocks and blows of a serious nature. Knocks and blows of a milder form, however, we had in plenty, and we endured them in a way I venture to think the modern schoolboy has no idea of. The common fault of boy-batting was just what was natural when bumpy wickets were so common; the right foot was not kept still. No fault is so easy to acquire; no fault is so difficult to get out of.

Youth is the time to learn and to be taught, in cricket as in everything else—how and what to teach is in every case entirely dependent on the boy. Some will never be taught; there is something wrong; hand and eye never can be made to agree. On the other hand there are

others, very few in number, who want practically no teaching; they see the ball, judge its length, and play accordingly. My own belief is that if you were to ask but Mr. Mitchell of Eton—and the late I. D. Walker would have said the same-What did you teach Maclaren, Jackson, Forbes, Ottaway, and a few more? he would have replied: "Nothing; the right principles were born in them, all they required was practice, and not half as much of this as boys of less skill." A little advice on matters that experience alone can give, such as judging a run or the peculiarities of a sticky wicket, may be given with advantage. When a golfer or billiard player of mature years wonders why he is never able to play a certain club or a particular stroke, you may point out to him the fact that there are a great many boy cricketers with quite a fair talent for the game, who with the best coaching in the world cannot get rid of some particular fault, such as a fatal one of pulling a leg-stump ball. In practice the coach sometimes hugs himself with the belief that the fiend is banished, but in a match it may come

back any moment; the boy forgets himself, the old Adam is there, and bang goes the leg stump or l.b.w. The golfer has a habit of pulling his arms in when playing quarter shots with the iron; the billiard player feels happy when he has to play almost any stroke; but no matter how much practice he gives himself, he never feels confident or at ease when a stroke requiring half a screw presents itself.

I have heard it said of a wonderfully successful head-master-successful I mean in his boys getting scholarships - that his success is the result, not as may be imagined of his own teaching of the sixth form, but of his practice of taking classes and prowling about among the lower forms. This master had an eye, and an unerring eye, for youths who were likely to become scholars. He caught these boys when young and taught them himself, and in due time he passed them on to his most learned and experienced masters to be finished; they had the scholarship gloss put on them, and University rewards poured down. It might be the same, I believe, if a master or some other coach who had the same gift could, by observing lower boy cricket, spot the boy who had cricket in him. Such a boy need not be taken away from his surroundings, but there are sundry hints that may be given him. If he is a fast bowler and is left to himself he will probably overbowl himself; it may then be possible to prevent this. I have known many an instance of a boy of fourteen or fifteen, a bowler of natural spin or break and very fairly accurate; but at seventeen or eighteen what is he? A bowler with tolerable length, but the spin and break are gone for ever. He has been overbowled, or perhaps he has got into a bad habit of bowling beyond his natural pace, or he has bowled in practice and tried tricks, or got into careless ways; all this may have been prevented by kindly advice, but in many cases this advice has not been given and a good bowler has been spoiled.

It is true of matured cricketers that temperament has a great deal to do with success. We all know cricketers whose play at the nets gives one hope of great things in matches, but the result falls far short of the promise. Such a boy wants encouragement, but not very much

can come of this, and unless nature works some change, it is probable that such boy will never develop into a really successful bat. He will play an occasional fine innings, but cannot be depended on. On the other hand, as there are some billiard players who may be generally depended on to show their best form when they are far behind, so there are cricketers who appear at their best, the more important the match and the more critical the position. There appears to be some quality or gift in their constitution that can be pulled out when wanted like an organ stop. Nobody is more aware of this than the player himself. I believe nervousness in a greater or lesser degree is common to all, but it is certain that while this affects some boys and men so as to discount much of their skill, in others it hardly affects their play at all.

School cricket has every element of fun and enjoyment in it; the scoring is not too high, for the wickets are not always dead true; the hits, except in the school matches, are all run out, the spirits are elastic, and hope springs eternal in the boyish breast. The school hours

have to be kept, and in the games there is not often continuous cricket for more than two to three hours, so there is none of the weariness that is the curse of the modern first-class cricket—the inevitable result of batting preponderance and bowling impotence.





EDWARD GOWER WENMAN.



County Cricket

IN another chapter I have traced in some degree the development of the game as regards play. I will now try and show how the game has developed from what I may call the social side. Cricket is now a very serious affair; the struggle for supremacy among counties has reached a pitch of gravity that seems remarkable, considering that many counties are made up of players gathered in from all parts of England. Why an Oval crowd should be so desperately keen to see Surrey win a county match when Nottingham, Yorkshire, Kent, Cambridgeshire. Suffolk and Middlesex, have at different times been drawn upon to make up the Survey eleven seems incomprehensible, but it is a lace. Human nature, as Squeers said, is sum



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un'," and I can't explain it. It is the same in football. I have seen 20,000 people in Birmingham in a frenzy of excitement when Aston Villa played Everton or West Bromwich Albion, but the Aston Villa Club is and has been recruited from clubs in Lancashire, Yorkshire, Scotland, and the Midlands, and I really believe that only one or two genuine Birmingham men have in some years played for their best eleven. So long as Surrey and Aston Villa are called by their respective names, that is enough. The real inhabitants, the crowd, will be quite satisfied.

It is this intense keenness of crowds that has far-reaching effects—the public want to see their side win, and they pay their money gladly in the hope of having their wish gratified. This same public, however, will not continue their payments if their side instead of winning matches lose them, and nobody knows this better than the gentlemen who form the Committee of the County Club. The Committees are made up of men who are genuine residents of the county which gives its name to the miscellaneous eleven who represent it. They are probably, though

not by any means certainly, fond of cricket; some of them have been players of more or less note in their time, others are wealthy men who may possibly never have touched a bat in their lives, but who, nevertheless—and this is one of the most curious features of the game—are in the habit, in the case of struggling counties, of making large pecuniary sacrifices to help their county.

The Committee have then to adopt every means in their power to win matches. If they are rich, like Lancashire or Surrey, they very likely employ agents to scour the country in search of bowlers—bowlers being usually the commodity counties are in want of. Every young bowler of about twenty years of age, who knows that he is possessed of skill in this department, is on the look-out to represent a first-class county. If he lives in such a county he will be selected at the beginning of a season to play for the colts against the county eleven; and if he is sufficiently skilful, he may of course be retained by his own county and in due time represent them. But after all, only a limited number of Yorkshiremen, for instance, can be kept or retained by their Committee, and so it comes to pass that there are sundry young bowlers of less skill on the look-out for a job; this then is the opportunity of other counties, especially those in the South of England and Lancashire. The young professional may be seen by agents or offer his services to a particular Committee; he is probably brought up at the county's expense to be tried, and if found sufficiently good a sort of bogus qualification is given him, which qualification I may say is not bought for him at the player's own expense, but at the county's.

This is the system which is now in vogue among cricketing counties. I don't pretend to say that I think it is the best system, or one without very serious drawbacks. It is very far from possessing the interests or the *esprit de corps* which the old Hambledon farmers must have felt when Hambledon village played All England; but it is a growth of the nineteenth century, and I suppose, like many other things, express trains, &c., have something to do with its having sprung into existence. Whatever the reason may be, I believe at present only Nottingham and Yorkshire are the two real genuine county

elevens, though very possibly Derbyshire might also be included. Sussex is represented by Staffordshire, Lincolnshire, India, Australia, and Nottingham; Surrey, by Yorkshire, Cambridgeshire, and Nottingham; Middlesex, by Yorkshire and Australia. Truly a remarkable state of things! I have said before, however, that this strange fact in no way damps the enthusiasm of a county's supporters; crowds throng to see the matches, and the zeal of the spectators to see their side win is only equalled by the industry displayed by the Committee in scouring the country for promising professionals.

Now what about the amateur? A first-rate county plays about sixteen matches in the course of the season: no counties, if the amateur is of sufficient skill, like the amateur to be absent from any one match; they want their best eleven, and they must have it at any price! In other words, an amateur, if he wishes to back up his Committee, must give up the whole of the four months to the game as completely as a professional; it follows from this that he must be so keen himself that he is glad to play every day of the season, and either be

of sufficient means to be able to stand the expense, or else, not being of sufficient means, he must have his expenses paid. Thirty years ago, there would hardly have been found an amateur who would have gone through the hard work and grind of such a season, and in those days expenses were not paid to any calling themselves amateurs. Here is another stage of development which I for one cannot pretend to say I either like or consider wholesome. I will deal with this subject in another chapter, but in writing of county cricket it is necessary to mention it.

It follows from what I have said that the most successful counties are, and must be, those in which large gate-money is the rule; the sinews of war for a county are not native cricketers, but money, money, money! Surrey, Yorkshire, Lancashire, Middlesex — these are the four counties which prosper, in the same way as in football it is Aston Villa, Everton, Liverpool, and Manchester.

The bright side of this picture is that the cricket is of first-rate quality. There is a chance for every really good cricketer to find some

county to provide him with an opportunity of distinguishing himself, and every year more and more close and fine matches are being played. The struggle for supremacy has never been greater than it is now, or more keenly fought out. Every run, every over, every wicket is noted, tabulated, and scored in decimal figures. The public all follow these figures if they understand them; they applaud hugely when the thousandth run is scored by some batsman, or the hundredth wicket secured by some bowler; telegrams are being sent all over the country almost every hour, and the result of each day's cricket and the performance of this or that individual is discussed in cottage, palace, bar parlour, and kitchen, eagerly, and in some cases acrimoniously.

There are signs that some abuses may be remedied in the near future, and the question of qualification is one. Formerly, all that was necessary to qualify for a county was for a room to be taken in the name of the player, in respect of which rates were assessed and levied. The player himself need never see the room, and he never paid the rates; he might even all the

time be playing for another county. Lancashire, I believe, always did give a more genuine qualification. There are in that county many large towns and many cricket clubs: these clubs want professional cricketers to bowl to their members and to play League matches on Saturday afternoons; accordingly a professional cricketer is engaged by all these clubs, who thus acquires a more or less bonâ-fide qualification on the ground of residence. It is true that he probably goes to his own home in the winter, but for the four or five months of the spring and summer he resides in the town where his club ground is situated, and though this is not complete, it is some sort of residential qualification.

There are other sorts of counties where another state of things exists; in such counties as Glamorganshire and Norfolk, Devon and Dorset, amateurs are to be found, who are glad and willing to play perhaps five, six, or seven matches in the year, generally of two days only, against another county of the same calibre. Such matches in old days used to be played between Worcestershire and Herefordshire, and now Bucks plays Herts and Devon plays Dorset.

KENT CLUB,

GRAND Cricket Match

KENT against ENCLAND,

Beverley Ground,

Adjoining the Cavalry Barracks, Canterbury,

ON

MONDAY, August 1, 1842,

And following Bays.

PLAYERS.

MENT.

W. de C. BAKER, Esq.
F. FAGGE, Esq.
N. FELLX, Esq.
A. MYNN, Esq.
C. G. WHITAKER, Esq.
ADAMS
DORRINTON
HILLIER
MARTINGALE
PILCH

WENMAN

Hon. F. PONSONBY
G. LANGDON, Esq.
G. LANGDON, Esq.
G. G. TAYLOR, Esq.
BARKER
BOX
FENNER
GOOD
GUY
HAWKINS
LILLYWHITE
REDGATE,
SEWELL

UMPIRES-MILLS and BAYLEY.

The MILITARY BAND will be in attendance.

These matches are very pleasant; the wickets perhaps are not quite so good as Brighton or the Oval, but this is entirely an advantage, as it enables matches frequently to be finished in two days. There is good-fellowship and friendship between the amateur members of the teams; each side is keen to win, but there is not the stress and strain of a first-class county match; there are no telegrams sent; the scoring is not reckoned in averages, and the cricket is altogether of a more light-hearted description. They are more of the nature of club matches, such as formerly were played between Town Malling and Benenden, or Montpelier and Clapton. I should be sorry to see these matches discontinued; they are to those who see them excellent reminders of what cricket used to be before modern excrescences had been allowed to grow. There is one drawback, and that is, that if a real native professional of high merit and skill be found in these counties, instead of devoting the remainder of his life to his native county, he is tempted away by the magic gold of Surrey, Lancashire, or some other first-class county. He has got to earn his living, and it is not in human nature

that he should refuse an opportunity of earning five pounds a match twice in the week, to say nothing of a prospective benefit at the end of his cricket career.

But such players do not often make their appearance, and even if they do leave their native county, it does not prevent the amateurs still enjoying themselves, and with the little or no expense that they are willing enough to pay, a county club such as this can easily find enough money to keep a ground, pavilion, and groundman, which is practically all that is wanted.

Some of these counties are not reckoned first or second class; they have no League system of registration of points; and second class counties such as Herts are in somewhat an unsatisfactory position, for they are too often nothing but feeding-ground for the rapacity of the rich first-class counties to gorge their appetites on. The real danger of county cricket is that genuine amateurs will become fewer and fewer, for they will not bother themselves to give up so much time as first-class counties require.



THE first Australian eleven that visited England came over in 1878, and since that time there have been visits from elevens in 1880, 1882, 1884, 1886, 1888, 1890, 1893, 1896, and 1899—ten in twenty-one years. Previously to 1878 three English elevens had been to Australia, but the two first had invariably played against odds, and the colonial cricket had been of a very primitive nature. It is true that the third eleven, under the management of W. G. Grace, found the colonials vastly improved; still for all purposes of inquiry we may take 1878 as a starting-place. During the last twenty-one years, in fact, so many have been the visits exchanged between different elevens of England and Australia that international cricket has come to be a regular feature, and it is certain

that neither side can give any points away to the other.

It may appear strange that Australia, with a total population not quite so large as London's, should be able to stand on an equality with England; but I, for one, for several reasons, am not surprised that such is the case. England has four months' cricket weather, Australia has eight; England has to crowd a great number of matches into her four months, Australia plays comparatively few matches, but can and does devote much more time to practice. Till recently there was a great difference between Australian and English wickets, and the Australian ones were so good that bowlers were forced to practise and had the opportunity of so doing; the result has been that they have learned more dodges, have greater powers of showing variety of pace and break, and on the whole Australian bowling has been and still is better than English. First-class cricket in Australia is more concentrated. It is entirely in three districts, and even in three towns—Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide - and Adelaide has only sprung into cricket fame during the last

ten years. This enables the authorities to choose their best elevens with greater facility, as they have opportunities of observing each man's skill, and there are not, of course, nearly so many players. Lastly, the Australians are our own flesh and blood, and have the same intense keenness for the game, which may be said to have been bred in them.

Each country, as will be shown later on, has learned a great deal from the other; but there is one essential difference between the two countries which must always exist, and that is the question of climate and its effect on wickets. The Australian wickets are so perfect, because for cricket purposes they may be said never to have rain, and the result is hard, fast, and deadly true ground. In England in 1899 we have had very much the same sort of wicket, but taking a series of years there is considerable variety in this country. This fact explains the phenomenon: English batting is on the whole more elastic in its nature, and can adapt itself to more different varieties of wickets, than the Australian. The same cause has made the Australian bowling better than the English. In

1899 we had a capital object-lesson. The whole season, after the month of May, the ground was dry and the wickets hard and fast; the result has been to show that bowling cannot be made sufficiently good to enable matches to be finished in three days.

The Australian batting of 1878 was, taken all through, of a rough and unscientific nature, but a year's cricket in England made a vast change in the whole stamp of colonial batting. There was one very fine bat in the person of Charles Bannerman, and there was a batsman of style in the person of Murdoch, but that may be said to be all. Their matches were won by the deadliness of their bowling and the activity of their fielding. The smooth wickets of Australia, as I have remarked in another chapter, showed them that it was possible to dispense with a long-stop, and this was one thing that we learned from them. Another point that we learned from them was in regard to bowling. Though Spofforth was not then the bowler of such variety as he afterwards became, he was more variable than any English bowler as far as pace was concerned, and he was the originator of a style of bowler of which, on the whole, in England, Lohmann of Surrey has been the most conspicuous example. In the same way, a great deal of the modern scientific Australian batting has been due to the opportunities given to the Australians of observing English play. After twenty-one years' international cricket it may be said that on hard wickets—of which, on the whole, the Australians have more experience than we—they play a more winning game; on soft wickets the Englishmen, having greater opportunities of practice, would probably win a majority of matches.

There has not in England been quite enough certainty in the way of weather to establish once and for all a certain stamp or class of play; I mean by this, that if we had nine or ten years of weather such as we have had in 1899 we should probably have been driven to learn more of the Australian stamp of bowling than we have, though we have gone some way in this direction already. In the same way, if in Australia they could have greater facilities for practising batting on slow bowlers' wickets,

their stamp or style of batting would be altered. The question arises strongly in my mind as to how will the Australians play and with what success if we get wickets of a wet summer like 1888. It is a curious fact that between 1878 and 1890 the Australians seemed to have provided themselves in the way of batting with certain hitters who are useful on slow wickets in a way that they have not done since then. In 1882 they had Massie, McDonnell, and Bonner; in 1884 they had McDonnell and Bonner; in 1886, Bonner; and in 1888, McDonnell: but in 1899 and, in fact, ever since 1890, with the exception of Lyons, they have not brought any conspicuous hitters. There is one simple reason why, as it appears to me, fast, vigorous batting is likely in Australia to die a natural death, and this reason is what I call the detestable system of playing matches to a finish, regardless of time. One side wins the toss, goes in to bat on a hot day, and stays in as long as it can on wickets like the proverbial billiard-table. Time is no object, and that side develops a painfully slow style of play. In some conversation I had this year with Howell, the

Australian bowler, I said, "I cannot imagine how you ever get a good batsman out!" His reply was to the effect that it would be impossible, were it not for the fact that they sometimes got themselves out. In other words, given a man of inexhaustible patience, a straight bat, and a good eye, there is no reason why he should ever be got out. Anybody who saw Noble bat in this year's test match at Manchester will see that this is no exaggeration. It is not possible in England to devote more than three days to any match, and I, for one, maintain that it would be the ruin of the game if more time were given. A continuation of summers like 1899 and no alteration of the rules would produce an absolute deadlock of international cricket in this country. I may say here, that the same deadlock would exist in English cricket under the same circumstances, and the hands of our legislators would therefore be forced to make changes and new rules. I will speak of this in another chapter, but in writing about Australian cricket, I cannot help wondering what will be the effect in Australia of narrowing the bat, raising the wickets, or of

any other alterations of the law. I suppose it is possible that in Australia they may refuse to abide by the latest alterations, and of course they are at perfect liberty to do so in their own country; but if international cricket is to take place at all, it must take place under the latest rules formulated by the M.C.C., or else there will be an end of it. This would be a great misfortune from every point of view. may be shortcomings and drawbacks in the perhaps too frequently recurring exchange of visits between the Australian and English cricketers; but remembering the splendid matches that have taken place, the interesting nature of the play, and the keen rivalry that is inevitably brought about between two great representative nations of the English-speaking race, we must all be forced to admit that, if international cricket were abolished, a great interest would be taken away from the game. As Englishmen we may perhaps speak too much from one point of view, but I for one think that the dead uniformity of wicket which is the vogue in Australia tends to make the game monotonous, and lacking in the interest which comes from the different pace and

quality of English wickets. In England, though we are in a cycle of dry seasons, which has made an exception lately, we have a variety of wickets, and this has enabled us to introduce batsmen like Grace, Shrewsbury, A. I. Webbe, Jackson, Steel, and A. P. Lucas, who may be trusted frequently to show us first-rate cricket on all sorts of wickets: from what I have seen of Australian cricket here they have given us hitters like McDonnell and Bonner, but not men who play the game as scientific batsmen on soft wickets. I do not say this in any unfriendly spirit; it is only natural that they should only be able to play as the circumstances of their climate permit them. I only repeat that on the whole it is a misfortune that Australian weather and climate should stereotype Australian batsmen into one mould. This cannot be helped; but there is a reverse side to the picture, and that is that the Australian climate must in the long run produce bowlers of greater variety than we can in England. Bowlers of the Jemmy Grundy, Mead, and Hearne type are impossible in Australia—as they say there, they play batsmen in. The same condition of things has made Australians pay greater attention

to fielding than do the English. It is difficult in Australia to get a side out; to do so at all, you must bowl well, field well, and, very important too, you must not miss catches. On a really difficult English wicket, Mead and Jack Hearne do not require much assistance from the field, they pound away on the stumps, and the ground enables them to bowl men out clean; and on the whole, therefore, I think it may be stated, as a general principle, that Australian out-cricket, by which I mean bowling and fielding, is superior to English, while English batting on all wickets is better than Australian.

What will be the effect on Australian cricket if an alteration in the laws is made that will bring about fewer runs, and no drawn matches, unless produced by bad weather? I venture to think that the effect will be of even greater benefit to Australian cricket than it will be to English. If we had had wet summers like 1879, 1888, lately, it is probable that no demand for cricket reform would ever have arisen; but there is practically no variety in Australian wickets; consequently matches have to be played to a finish, and the bowling, good as it is, is not

good enough for the batting. Any reform of cricket law has for its object a levelling up of attack and defence—in other words, of batting and bowling. It must be an advantage to any game to possess this equality, whether played in England or Australia, and furthermore I feel convinced that Australians themselves will ultimately prefer matches to be finished in three days. We must look to the future; in Australia the number of cricketers will increase, more matches will be played, and though their season is far longer than ours, time may possibly become more an object than it is now.

There is another reason: we are far too dependent on gate-money: but still, if only for the sake of old cricketers who love the game as well as for the general public, cricket ought and must be an interesting, or in other words, an elegant and picturesque game to watch. The Australian system of playing matches to a finish must tend to produce a dull, sticky, monotonous style of batting. I fully admit the graceful freedom of Trumper and the bold attractive style of Worrall, but generally speaking the batting style of the Australian bats-

men of 1899 was slow and monotonous. It was very sound and good, but if that style continues and becomes general, it must inevitably result in the public becoming indifferent. The world of history has lately been discussing the question of picturesque style in writing history. It has been stated by some most accurate chroniclers that it is dangerous for a historian to write like Macaulay and Froude; I suppose they think history should only be written for dull specialists and students, and not for the general public, to whom some historical knowledge is both useful and interesting. Mr. Andrew Lang has replied and opposed this theory in his own inimitable way. Mr. Lang is an enthusiastic lover of cricket, and he will, I feel confident, support me when I assert that style ought to be a consideration in cricket, as it is in writing history. If the system of playing matches to a finish is firmly established, style will suffer, and cricket will suffer too.

The really great cricketer is great on all sorts and conditions of wicket: the great Australian will play well on the more variable English wicket, the great Englishman will do his part on the easy Australian wickets. During the last

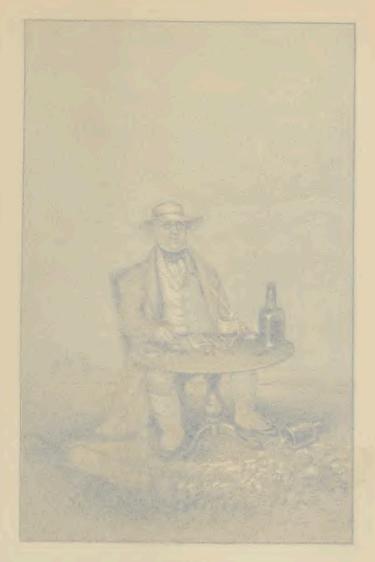
nine or ten years, however, in Australia there has practically been no sort of equality between batting and bowling. As Mr. Howell said, "You can't get a good batsman out; he gets himself out sometimes." This is beginning to be true even in England, and though a wet season will produce a change, wet seasons are impossible in Australia. Though the present state of things is cricket, it is not cricket of the best and most interesting type; and in the interest of the game 'twere better that some change should be made.



CHAPTER V

Reform

THERE are several essential elements in cricket as there are in all games, and when these essential elements are wanting it is time to take stock of our position, find out what is wrong, and if possible devise a remedy. Nobody who understands the game and is a sportsman can deny that the present state of things in cricket is intolerable, and the problem of how to make such changes as shall remedy this is in the minds of all who have any experience of the game. The first essential point which ought to be present in every game, and which is conspicuous by its absence in present-day cricket, is a decisive result to at least 80 per cent. of matches, and yet during the last few years it is, I believe, true that about 40 per cent., or nearly half the



M' WILLIAM DAVIES



CHAPTER V

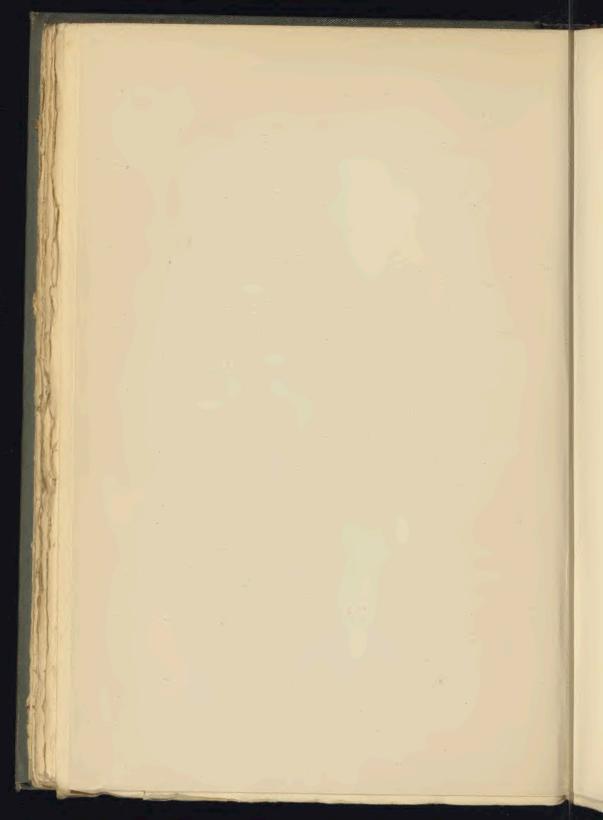
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The Late

MR WILLIAM DAVIES.



number of total matches, have been unfinished. Matches played on hard, true wickets, with fine weather, show a far larger proportion of drawn matches, and it is hardly saying too much that under such conditions the chances are about even that any first-class match will be drawn. Apart from the fact that this is a state of things that does not exist in any other game, let us see what the effect of this is on the game itself. In the first place, it is a proof that the scoring is enormous, and from this may be gathered the fact that the sense of proportion or balance is gone. No longer do batting and bowling, when the wickets are hard and easy, meet on equal terms. The game has become a question of how many hundreds can be scored; the bowler has been beaten by the mowing machine and the heavy roller; and the only people who can be said to enjoy the game are some of the spectators, who have probably never played cricket, and care only to see hard hitting, and the batsmen themselves. It is no wonder that the busy man, who can only afford to play a game one day in the week, has taken to golf. He has tried cricket, and his captain having lost the toss, he has fielded all

day and got no innings at all. He may even have been on the side whose captain has won the toss, but the innings has been declared at an end, and he has not been permitted to put on his pads. Two or three Saturdays spent in this way have made him forswear cricket, and small blame to him. Another bad feature in the game produced by this high scoring is that as the dead true wickets have made bowling impotent, so many batsmen who are by no means first class have been hoisted on a pedestal in no way deserved. They have scored and do score hundreds, not because they are good batsmen, but because it is impossible for any but one or two bowlers to bowl difficult balls. In other words, as all bowling has become easy, so all batting has become good. But this is a most unsatisfactory condition of things. To score hundreds and to have a big average of anything over 20 or 25 ought to be in the power or capacity of the few, not of the many; as it is, the fact that any fool is able to get runs simply means drawn matches. Real cricketers who love a close finish and a decisive result can only see their hearts' desire on a wet wicket and unpleasant weather. The ignorant spectator who understands and appreciates a hard hit, but does not understand or appreciate a hanging ball being beautifully timed and returned along the ground to the bowler, might have been taught better things, but his taste has been vitiated and his baser nature pandered to by the high scoring of the day.

There is another way in which high scoring is an evil, and that is that it tends to make the cricket on the third day a burlesque. Everybody sees that the game must be drawn, so all the heart is taken out of the players, the regular bowlers are taken off-it is no good tiring them —the field are listless, and the spectators leave the ground. In several cases lately stumps have been drawn before the advertised time. The elevens have to play a match on the following day two hundred miles off perhaps, and to catch a particular train becomes important. The whole spirit of the game is broken, there is a sense of unsatisfied effort and of wasted time, and if cricket was not the great game it is, it would be killed by such a state of things. Thirdly, the bowling suffers. It is impossible to get men out by bowling a good length.

The maxim inculcated by Nyren, "Be sure keep a length," is no good now. The ball cannot be made to turn, shoot, or hang. The shaven grass and the heavy roller have taken all this out of the ground. Any fool can get runs now, so the bowler has given up trying to bowl well, and bowls badly instead. You go and see a match nowadays, and you see a very fast bowler like Jones, the Australian, or Jessop, pounding the ball half-way down the pitch-with four or five men in the slips—and endeavouring to make the ball bump, that the batsman may hit under it and get caught behind the wicket. There is another bowler who bowls slow, and who is determined to get a curl or twist on his The bowler, whose ball has a natural curl from leg, is disestablished by the absurd regulation of leg before wicket as interpreted at present, and the bowler I am trying to describe is not one of that class. He is of the class that tries to get a twist of a foot or so, but though I have seen many such bowlers I never in my life saw one who could bowl a good length with a leg twist. The fast bowler pounding away with long hops, and the slow bowler

with a leg-break bowling every variety of length, with no command whatever over the ball—this is another terrible development of the game to which the present easy wickets and consequent high scoring have brought us. There is yet another, and this touches the batting, considered as a science, and a beautiful thing as it ought to be. A premium has been put on reckless and abnormal hitting. This is not altogether bad, because such hitting, though prolific of runs, does not as a rule last very long, and is always pleasant to look at; but it has also put a premium on Noble and W. G. Quaife and players of that class, who have succeeded in making cricket nothing short of a terror. There ought to be room for purely defensive batsmen; they have existed ever since cricket began. Haygarth and Ottaway are two examples of men who may be described as sticks, but who occupied a distinguished position in the world of cricket. These players, however, did not stick so long as to cause matches to be drawn. The wickets helped the bowler in those days, and even the strongest defensive player found himself bowled or caught after a

time. But the fearful and terrible feature of cricket now lies in the fact that Noble and Quaife, by a rigorous system of self-suppression, by never touching an off ball except by hitting it down on the ground, by leaving all rising balls alone, cannot be got out on the present wickets. They may be batting almost for days. In the third match played between England and Australia last year at Manchester, England, by scoring 372, practically made themselves safe from defeat, and all the Australians could, or at any rate attempted to do, was to play for a draw. Noble scored in the match 149 runs, and he was at the wickets for 81 hours, an average of 18 runs an hour on a fast wicket with boundaries, and at one time he did not make a run for three-quarters of an hour. Such cricket ought to be impossible. The man is not to be blamed. He must do his best to save the match, though to dig would be preferable as an amusement; but the necessity for such a thing ought not to arise in the first place, and to carry it out ought to be beyond the power of practical politics. Lastly, high scoring makes the game too hard a toil. It is all very well playing a few matches for three days, but to play every match for a full period of three days in hot weather on hard grounds, and with sundry night railway journeys thrown in—such a state of things wears out players, shortens their cricket careers, especially if they are fast bowlers, and wearies them of the game.

So much evil is being produced by the high scoring that I am in the position of thinking that any change in the laws or otherwise that may diminish the number of runs must be a benefit. But I will go further, and maintain that changes may be made that will not only diminish the number of runs, but will also improve the quality of the batting. If a batsman is not allowed to use his legs to prevent the ball hitting the wicket, or has to use a smaller bat, he will find that, though he may have to alter some of his methods, he will nevertheless be able to score quite largely enough. What, I hope, will be impossible is for the inferior player to be able to score 50 when an innings of 10 is about the proper figure—to judge from the real batting ability he possesses. It may be regarded as a certainty that if big scoring by inferior players

become a rare exception, drawn matches will not take place unless caused by bad weather.

It is perhaps necessary, before discussing the particular measures of reform, to state broadly that in England it is impossible to prolong the duration of matches to more than three days. Speaking personally and quite apart from considerations of gate-money, I should greatly prefer to see the majority of matches begun, continued, and ended in two days. If there are not many players like W. G. Quaife and Noble, it is quite possible, if no time is wasted, and if no innings exceeds 220, to occupy only two days in playing such matches, and I think I am right in saying that between 1860 and 1880 it was the fact that a majority of matches did only take two days. In summers like 1899, when nearly 50 per cent. of matches were unfinished, the wear and tear is too great, fast bowlers get worn out prematurely, like Richardson, much night travelling is a weariness to the flesh, and, worst of all, on the third day when it is obvious that a draw is and can be the only result, there is no seriousness in the game, which degenerates into burlesque. Three days is the utmost limit that

is possible for cricket in England, and I repeat, what has been remarked elsewhere, that even in Australia, where apparently time is no object, it would be an advantage to curtail the matches to three days. Many drawn matches prove several things, but there is one fact especially that I wish to dwell upon, namely, that they prove that the balance between batting and bowling is destroyed. When innings of over 250 are played, there is a triumph of batting over the bowling, and when this is continually occurring interest in the game must diminish; in other words, it is not a game in the strict sense, it is only an exhibition of batting, much as a football match, when one side scores ten goals to nothing, it is not a game, only an exhibition of goal getting.

I have heard it constantly remarked by some people who appear unable to satisfy themselves that reform is necessary, that we ought to possess our souls in patience and wait for a wet season, then it will be seen that so far from the bat triumphing over the ball, the boot will be on the other leg; there will be a series of small scoring matches, the Middlesex and Somerset match at Lord's being alluded to, when three hours sufficed

to finish the whole match. I cannot agree with the people who argue thus. To begin with, it is true that one match was finished in three hours. but whatever practicable change is made it is hardly likely that any more astonishing result will ensue. But the great point that reformers take is that you must not legislate for cricket in wet weather, but for cricket in hot summer days and on hard wickets, when both cricketers and spectators enjoy the game, and under the only possible circumstances that cricket is enjoyable. I venture to think that cricket reform will not make very much difference in the scoring on soft bowlers' wickets. As I have said, no reform would produce a smaller scoring match than Middlesex and Somerset match of last year.

It may be stated at once that altering the rules, and perhaps the implements, of the game involve questions on which the greatest possible differences of opinion exist, and no doubt that is one reason why the M.C.C. are slow to move; and there is another reason, namely, that the actual first-class players who rightly are consulted, for the most part are inclined, according as they are batsmen or bowlers, to look at the matter from

the batsman's point of view or the bowler's, but not both. It is this which makes me think that the present-day cricketers ought to lay great weight on the opinion of players like F. S. Jackson, A. E. Trott, S. M. J. Woods, J. R. Mason, and Lockwood, who can both bat and bowl. I do not deny, however, that the subject is a very difficult one, and any rash or injudicious change would be a calamity, as it would defeat its own object and produce reaction, which would be most deplorable. Fully admitting then both the difficulty of the subject and the danger of legislating on wrong lines, I cannot help thinking that a beginning might be made by the M.C.C., which is the prime authority, and which is, moreover, in a financial position to do so, inaugurating some matches to test experimentally a new rule. The club might play the Yorkshire eleven, or any first-class county, and in that particular match test what the effect of the alteration in Rule 24, relating to l.b.w., would be. Matches have already been played where a net has been set round the ground, and every run has been run out. However, the effect of this has not realised the expectations of some.

Another match might be played in which the batsman experimented with a bat more or less reduced in size, and with ordinary wickets against an eleven with ordinary bats, and wickets one or two inches higher. It would probably be necessary to have several matches played as experiments in one or more changes in the rules, but one object-lesson by practical experience would be gained, and the ground cleared for permanent and useful reforms—the one thing essential being that the matches be played on hard, true wickets.

Reforms may be classified under three heads:
(1) alteration in the laws independent of what may be called the implements of the game; (2) alteration in the implements; and (3) alteration in the customs, such as boundaries. Under the first head is the all-important question of l.b.w., and the follow on. Of all questions, that of l.b.w. has provoked the greatest difference of opinion, and the position of those who favour change or the contrary is so high, that a great deal of thought has been rightly given to this point. There is one point, however, on which I think some opponents of change—even so great an

authority as Mr. A. G. Steel—are wrong, namely, that a change would make the umpire's task more difficult. The effect of the rule as at present drawn is, that the umpire has to satisfy himself on the following points if he is to give the batsman out: (1) the ball must have pitched on some spot lying between two parallel lines drawn from the leg stump of one wicket to the off stump of the other, and from the off stump of one wicket to the leg stump of the other; (2) the ball must strike the batsman somewhere on his person before he hits it with the bat; (3) the ball must hit the wicket if it had not hit the batsman. Now, the first and third of these facts are extremely difficult to judge, and let us see what the proposed alterations would effect. The supporters of such a change argue that is a matter of no importance where the ball pitches, the important point is, whether the batsman keeps the ball out of the wicket with his legs, and not with his bat. The umpire with the law altered has not got to think of more than two of the requisites; he may dismiss from his mind all question of the ball pitching between parallel lines from wicket to wicket, which many think the hardest thing to judge,

and confine himself to the other two-namely, whether the ball would have hit the wicket if the batsman's person had not prevented it, and whether the batsman hit the ball with his bat. Now, if under the present rule the umpire has three things to keep in view and form a judgment on, and only two under the proposed alteration, how can it be fairly argued that the alteration will make his task harder? It must have the opposite effect and make it easier. The late Lord Bessborough once told me that somewhere about the year 1841 the rule as then drawn did not make it clear as to what was meant: Dark and Caldecourt, the two leading umpires of the day, held different views, and the M.C.C. had to be referred to. After much weighing of facts I have come to the conclusion that it will be to the advantage of the game that the rule shall be altered, and the reasons why this conclusion is reached are several: (1) Under the rule as at present drawn the bowling has become in one sense stereotyped, i.e., it is almost entirely over the wicket, as, unless a ball is pitched right up, it is practically impossible to get a man out l.b.w.; (2) the batsman would learn to play the ball with

the proper weapon, the bat, and he would hesitate before he threw his leg into dangerous positions in front of the wicket; (3) if bowlers were to bowl round the wicket it would be found that they would occasionally bowl a ball that properly could and would be hit to leg, a hit that is delightful to the player and charming to the spectator, but which, in these days, is practically abolished; (4) the task of the umpires, always difficult, would be made easier. Whether the M.C.C. will make any alteration in the law remains to be seen, but certainly a change should be tried, a few matches should be played, and the effect of the experiment watched. change in the l.b.w. rule may make an important change in the scoring, but it is not entirely owing to that reason that it is advocated here. Nobody objects to the really first-rate batsman getting his large scores, but what is objectionable is, that on the billiard-table wickets the best bowling should not prevent batsmen, who certainly are not firstclass, making hundreds. My impression is that a change in the l.b.w. law would go a long way towards removing this defect. If you carefully watch a great innings, such as Hankey's 70 in Gentlemen

and Players, many of Grace's, Shrewsbury's, Jackson's, Ranjitsinghi's, and others, it would astonish you to see how few balls hit these batsmen on the leg at all. Bowling is played as it should be: the ball is met by the bat, not by the leg, and this notwithstanding the pitch of the ball.

Mr. Steel is one of the highest authorities of the game: both as a player and as a judge of the game he can speak with a weight which commands the respect of everybody. Mr. Shuter is another player who as a batsman and captain has had a long experience, and it is therefore with a chastened feeling that I attempt to explain why I feel myself bound to differ from both these gentlemen on the important question of l.b.w. Mr. Steel bases his objection to a change in the law on the case of a slow leg-break bowler. Such bowlers, he says, would bowl good length balls with nearly every field on the leg side, and in his opinion the very best batsman would in a short time stop with his legs a ball which would have hit the wicket. It is assumed that Mr. Steel means round-arm bowlers only by the term slow leg-break bowlers, not lob bowlers, and we would ask how many slow leg-break bowlers

have existed. In 1884 the Australians brought over one who had been a success in Australia, but was a dead failure here. Mr. Cooper bowled round the wicket with a prodigious curl, and Mr. A. O. Jones of Nottingham is a similar bowler, though not with such a command of break. Mr. Nepean used to vary the off break with an occasional ball that would come in the other way, and Mr. Bull of Essex is also a performer of the same school. But the leading characteristic of all these bowlers is the almost exaggerated slowness of all the leg-break round-arm balls, and I believe that to bowl with a leg-break it is absolutely necessary to dispense with two of the elements that make good bowling-pace and length. Palmer, the Australian, used now and then, but very seldom, to bowl a fairly fast ball with a leg-break, but though he came off a few times, he would tell you that a good length ball was a fluke, and not within his power to command. If a ball is not of a good length, i.e., if either a full pitch, long hop, or half volley, a batsman should have no difficulty in hitting it with his bat, and not with his legs. Take the case of bowlers like Messrs. Cooper and Jones,



whose balls are extremely slow, and are generally delivered at a considerable height in the air. You will not, as a general rule, find that even these men are good length bowlers, but even if they were, I do not think they ought to have a chance of hitting the batsman anywhere on his legs. The proper way to play such bowlers is to go out and hit the ball full pitch, or stay back and play or hit it as a more or less long hop. Even if the batsman should misjudge the length, and find that what he deemed a long hop is really a fair length ball, its extreme slowness makes it comparatively easy to play back. If he does not succeed in this I maintain that inasmuch as he has first misjudged the length, and in the second place has failed to hit it, the bowler is entitled to his reward, and the batsman should rightly be given out l.b.w., though the ball might have pitched a yard wide of the wicket. Older cricketers like myself used to play when lob bowling was far more common than it is now, but I cannot call to mind that it was a frequent occurrence for the old-fashioned lob to hit the batsman on the legs, and if not lobs why slow leg-break balls?

Mr. Shuter, whose opinion is entitled to the greatest respect, a few years ago seemed to anticipate that a great crop of l.b.w.'s would ensue if the law were altered, owing to the fact that players play forward with the left leg close up against the bat. The batsmen play forward, but do not smother the ball, which breaks and hits the player on the leg, and if the umpire thinks the ball would hit the wicket gives the striker out. Mr. Shuter, it may be inferred, thinks this a hardship from the batsman's point of view. It must be remembered that the cardinal fact in arguing this question is that the bat is meant to be the only and correct weapon wherewith to play or hit the ball, and let us keep this in mind in considering Mr. Shuter's objection. A bowler bowls a good length ball with a break back from the off. In nine cases out of ten a batsman must play forward or back to any ball. In Mr. Shuter's case the batsman has rightly or wrongly played forward, and has missed the ball and saved the wicket with his leg. The point on which I am at issue with Mr. Shuter is, that whereas he thinks that the batsman is to be pitied because he failed to hit the ball with his bat, I think, on the contrary, that

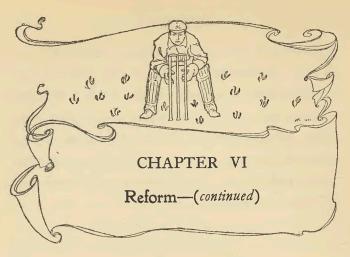
when the umpire has given him out l.b.w., he has met with his deserts. What more can a bowler do than bowl such a good ball that the batsman fails to touch it with his bat, and only stops it with his leg? The bowler suffers the hardship. He has done all that a man can do, but, under the present law, he has not met with his reward. In the case of by far the largest class of bowlers -those who bowl right hand and with a break back—there is no reason whatever why the leg should ever prevent the ball from hitting the wicket. It is the essence of forward play that the ball should be smothered. In the instance brought forward by Mr. Shuter the ball was not smothered, and it may therefore be fairly argued that the batsman should have played back and not forward. At any rate the leg, and not the proper weapon, the bat, was used, and the batsman ought to suffer.

In discussing Mr. Steel's objection I laid great stress on the lob bowling of former days. Mr. Steel brings forward the case of slow round-arm leg-break bowlers who, he urges, would be practically impossible to play if the rule were altered. I reply that you cannot bowl slow leg-break balls

except at such a slow pace that the batsman, if he is fool enough, may even play back at a half volley; whilst there is very seldom any good length ball of this character. A good lob bowler, on the other hand, bowled good length leg-breaks, and it seems to me, if Mr. Steel's argument is sound, that it would be such lob bowlers that the new rule of l.b.w. would unduly favour. But I can call to mind the days of V. E. Walker, Goodrich, William Rose, O. Mordaunt, A. W. Ridley, and Tinley, and I do not believe that in playing these bowlers good bats used to stop the ball with their legs, though the rule was the same then as it is now; and if they did not, why should presentday batsmen? and if they do, why should they not be given out? In 1884, on a well-known occasion, Mr. Alfred Lyttelton, "spes ultima Teucri," got three or four Australian wickets with lobs, which the bowler himself, in his most sanguine moments, would not have called higher than second-rate. One of the wickets was l.b.w., and doubts were expressed whether the batsman was properly given out. Mr. I. D. Walker was talking to McDonnell-both, alas, are now dead -and said that if a batsman allowed a lob to hit

him on the leg at all, he deserved to be given out, properly or improperly. McDonnell agreed with him. Both were batsmen, and I. D. Walker was a lob bowler also. To be given out l.b.w. a batsman's legs must be in a straight line between the two wickets, but it is not necessary that the legs should be in this position to anything like the extent that is seen in these days. From the dread with which some batsmen seem to regard any alteration in this rule of l.b.w., it would seem that the ball is constantly hitting the batsmen on the legs. I believe, on the contrary, that it would surprise some of our friends if the truth on this point could be known. I should like to ask any of our first-rate performers to carefully note how often in an innings of a hundred the ball hits his leg at all without first hitting the I believe that many an innings of over fifty has been played by W. G. Grace, and not one ball has hit anything except his bat or gloves. The upshot of an alteration in the rule will be, in my opinion, a blessed diminution in the number of runs scored by second and third rate batsmen; but first-class players will score very much as they do now, and if, as I believe, this is the fact, it is because first-rate batsmen are not hit by the ball on the legs at all, but use the proper weapon—the bat. If this result is brought about it will be most beneficial to the game, but more reforms will be wanted to ensure a fair equality between batting and bowling, between attack and defence. Such reforms will be referred to in another chapter.

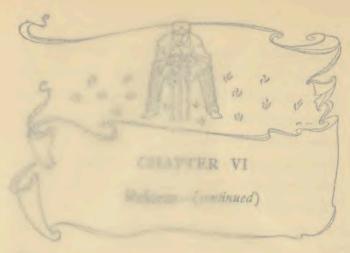




THE alteration of the rule respecting leg before wicket will not, as has been said before, alone suffice to bring down the scoring to a proper level, but it will nevertheless have a far-reaching effect on the game. Mr. Shuter's fear that when players play forward to balls that break from the off and miss them, a large crop of l.b.w.'s will be the result, is not an unreasoning one. I have said before that if batsmen do play forward, they should smother the ball; if they cannot reach far enough forward to do this, it is, speaking theoretically, a proof that they ought to have played back, in which case there is no reason why the legs, or any part of them, should be in a straight line between wicket and wicket, and if



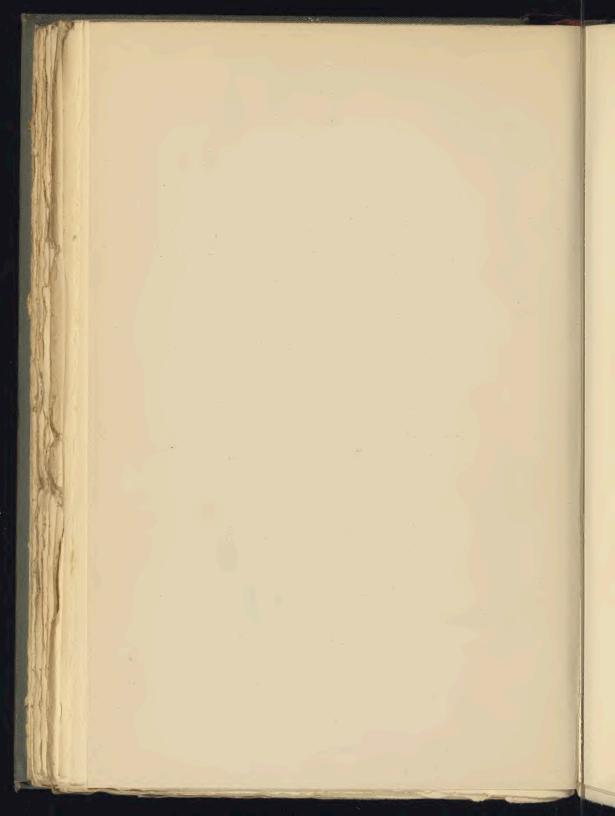
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this is the case they cannot be l.b.w. The rule of l.b.w., as at present interpreted, has perhaps been the cause of more forward play than was the case in the days of our forefathers. A bowler with an off-break pitches a ball outside the offstump, the batsman plays forward, does not smother it at its pitch, misses it, and the ball hits his leg; the batsman is not out because the ball pitched outside the wicket. Again the bowler pitches the ball straight on the middle stump, and again the batsman misses it and is hit on the leg; but the umpire thinks the ball is breaking away so much that it will miss the leg stump, and again the batsman is not out. Whichever way the rule is interpreted it will not affect the second case, but I can't help thinking that the first case, where the ball pitches outside the off stump and breaks past the bat and goes straight to the wicket till intercepted by the batsman's leg, may alter the matter very materially. If the ball with the off break cannot be smothered the batsman will run a great risk of l.b.w.: this will make back play to such bowling the proper game; and it was by such play that Robert Carpenter, the father of the present Essex professional, made himself famous.

Critics of the game have argued with some truth that too much time is wasted. Matches ought to begin at 10.30 and go on to 7, with only an interval of three-quarters of an hour. Without going into the question too minutely, whilst admitting some time is wasted, it must be remembered that there is a limit to the powers of endurance of the human frame. Bowlers, especially on these hot days and on perfect, hard wickets, cannot and ought not to be called upon to bowl more than thirty overs a day, and if you began at 10.30, got three hours' play before luncheon and four hours and a half after, you may not be able to get the side out, and your fast bowlers will have far too hard a day. All of us who have ever played know the feeling of lassitude that comes over us half-an-hour before luncheon and an hour before drawing the stumps. The Eton and Harrow match is hardly ever finished in two days, and several times there has been nearly eight hours' play on the second day; and though boys' pluck may carry them through and enable them to play up to the end, it would

be too much even for full-grown men if they had to do it day after day. I think that, taking everything into consideration, if play begins at II, luncheon ought to be at 1.30, and play should begin again at 2.30 and go on to 6.30; thus you would get six and a half hours' cricket, and taking the whole season through, this is all that the cricketers can do without wearing themselves out. I suppose it is with a view to stopping waste of time that the M.C.C. have altered the number of balls from five to six per over. Time has been saved, and to slow or medium pace bowlers there has been no great difference, and even to bowlers like Kortright and Richardson the change has not apparently done them harm. It is probable that the extra labour involved has been counterbalanced by the longer rest when the bowling is at the other end. There are many other methods of reform, and putting aside all fantastic proposals such as only batting in sections of three or four batsmen, we may consider the other proposals, and these may be divided roughly into two classes, those

¹ We quite agree with this. But at Lord's nowadays play rarely begins before 12: then there is a considerable interval for tea, and stumps are generally drawn at 6.30.—Eds.

which deal with the weapons and paraphernalia of the game and those that affect the laws.

One form of alteration of the laws which is strongly advocated by many is in respect of the follow-on rule, and declaring the innings at an end. The law up to the end of 1899 provided that the side which goes in second shall follow their innings if they have scored 120 runs less than their opponents in a three days' match, or 80 runs in a two days' match, and may declare the innings at an end any time during the last day of a match, but not before. It is not necessary to say much about the number of runs necessary to compel a follow-on. Some years ago it was 80 runs in a three, and 60 in a one day's match; the rungetting now is so gigantic that 120 and 80 will probably have to be increased, unless some means of checking run-getting is adopted, and in fact there has been a proposal to this effect before the M.C.C. committee. But the principles on which the law of follow-on ought to stand are by no means clear, and have been the subject of acute controversy during the last few years. It is so easy to get runs now that bowlers are over-

bowled and tire, while the batsmen, thanks to boundaries, can knock up hundreds with little exertion. The rule as originally made was with the intention of benefiting the side that was 80 runs behind. And if you read the "Scores and Biographies," you will find that Mr. Haygarth thinks it worthy of remark when victory crowned the efforts of the side that followed on. But in three days one side scores 450 and the other 530, the wicket is fast and dead true, and the eleven that batted first have been bowling and fielding for six hours, and are called upon to bowl and field very likely for the remainder of the three days. They can have no hope of winning; all that their opponents have to do is to maintain a dogged defence, and the match loses all interest, and what was intended to be a help turns out to be a stumbling-block. These being the facts, it is perhaps not altogether to be wondered at that the side that scored 450 have had to resort to subterfuges to avoid being placed in the unpleasant dilemma of being handicapped by their batting powers. The question of how far it is justifiable to resort to such strategy is discussed in another chapter; but here all that has to be considered is how can the rule be profitably altered.

The consideration of this must include the question of declaring an innings at an end, which up to quite recently could not be done before the last day of a match. One of our leading cricketers, Mr. F. S. Jackson, suggests that this power of declaring ought to be extended and given to either side after luncheon on the second day; and many others have taken this view, and have even extended it, and urged that the closure may be put in force at any time. The M.C.C. have, however, altered the rule to this extent that an innings can be declared at an end at luncheon on the second day.

My own personal opinion on this question is, that the whole matter is trifling: and whichever rule you make, you will find that very little effect on the high scoring will ensue. To be able to declare an innings at an end at any time would answer the purpose completely if it were a settled principle that captains would run risks. You would not stop individual high scoring, but you would greatly diminish the

number of drawn matches, for the simple reason that instead of eleven you would have six men a side batting. But experience has shown over and over again that captains will not run the risk of losing a match, and the consequence is, they will not declare an innings at an end till there is practically no danger of losing; and all that the other side have to do is to keep their wickets up till the end. So common is this, that several instances have occurred when it has been mutually agreed to draw stumps before the fixed time One, or perhaps both sides have a long journey to make before beginning a match on the following day: there is no chance of finishing before the settled time, the play has utterly lost all interest, and nobody is showing any zest in the game. The Oxford and Cambridge matches of 1899 and 1900 are good instances in point. Oxford on the last day on both occasions were many runs ahead, and wickets in hand, and there were two or three hours to play before stumps were drawn. To lose the University match is a blow to any University captain, so great a blow indeed that he will do anything to avoid it. In 1899 if Mr. Champain had been willing to run risks he would have declared the Oxford innings at an end perhaps an hour before, at 2.30, in which case Cambridge would have had about three hours and three-quarters to get about 240 runs. The wicket, however, was perfect, amateurs were bowling, and the Oxford captain would not run the risk of declaring the innings at an end. He thought that there was more probability of Cambridge getting the runs than of Oxford getting them out, so he went on batting.

The M.C.C. have now passed, or at any rate recommended, that any innings may be declared at an end at luncheon on the second day. When a strong side wins the toss and goes in, and at luncheon on the second day has got 700 runs, this new rule will very likely enable the match to be finished. One side is very strong and the other weak; the weak side may be got out twice in a day and a half and be defeated in one innings; but in one day this may not be possible. But these are exceptional circumstances, and in practice this change will not often be found of any use. As far as the abolition of drawn games is concerned, I do not think that any rule as to

declaring innings at an end will do much, because captains will not run any risks. This sentiment of our captains is encouraged by the modern system of calculation. In the county championship draws are ignored. You lose nothing, but a defeat is serious, and everything now is tabulated and published. The only way by which real benefit could accrue by declaring an innings at an end, would be to get established in the cricketer the principle that to lose a match is not so great a calamity as it is now thought to be, and more credit would attach to finishing and losing a match than saving it in the style of 200 runs to make and one wicket to go down. This, however, is too much to expect, and cannot be attained by any change of rule, or indeed any rule at all.

The rule as to following on has seen some curious developments. It was passed originally to help the weaker side. In the days of low scoring it was considered that when a side was 80 runs behind, its chance of winning was absolutely nil. If there had been no follow-on the leading side would go in again, and scoring as the average side then did about 150, would put

their opponents in to make more than 200 to win the match; and in those days the odds would have been reckoned at fully 3 to I against this being done. The great increase in scoring, however, has worked a complete change in this respect. Innings of 300 and 400 runs are now played, and to be 80 runs behind is nothing. Whereas, formerly, to follow on meant practically to lose the match, now the side that follows on finds itself in the proud position of not only keeping its opponents out in the field for a day and a half, but also possibly by declaring their innings at an end when the wicket began to show signs of wear, to put the other side in on a broken wicket for two and a half hours' batting, and 200 runs to get to win. To give such an advantage was never contemplated. The M.C.C. now recommend that when one side is 150 runs ahead it should have the option of making its opponents follow on. Instead of the side which has followed on placing the other in the awkward predicament just described, the leaders, that is the eleven that is ahead, now have this power, and the advantage will and must be tremendous. Let us suppose

the side that has won the toss gets 280 runs, and dismisses the other eleven for 130, by luncheon time on the second day. The eleven with this advantage of 150 runs has now the power of going in again. It does so when the wicket is fast and good, and hitting away for some five or six hours finds itself at luncheon time on the third day 500 runs ahead. Of course under these circumstances the weaker side is in a hopeless position, and can only avert defeat by sticking, and playing the dullest of games, so that the last two hours' play is probably burlesque. What the effect of this rule may be it is impossible to say, but one objection I have to it is that the advantage of winning the toss is great enough in all conscience as it is; to give the side that is 150 runs ahead the option of making its opponents follow on will increase this advantage to a still greater extent, and whether this is right or wrong seems doubtful.

When we who are now middle-aged first played, thirty-five years ago, we had to run out our hits whether they were singles or fourers. Now for the last twenty years there are boundaries,

and Mr. Jessop and Mr. Ford, in an innings of 50, will very likely only run about 10 of their own runs. The consequence of this is that the batsman never becomes fatigued or out of breath. The idea lately has been promulgated that this is all wrong, and that there is no reason why he should be spared this exertion. Why should bowlers toil and moil and have all the hard work and not half so much of the fun. This change was thoroughly tried in the M.C.C. club matches of 1900, it being provided that if the ball hit the net, which was about two feet high, two more runs should be scored in addition to what had already been run out. This plan was found not to answer, so hits were run out unless they went over the net, in which case four runs were scored. Several improvements were hoped for by this change, but, on the whole, it has not been a success.

I propose now to conclude this question of reform by a brief consideration of the proposed change in the direction of what some hostile critics call tampering with the weapons of the game, and this takes two forms—one the enlargement of the wicket either by adding a fourth

stump or else raising by one or two inches the height of the existing wickets, or diminishing the size of the bat. To take the enlargement of the wicket first, at present the wickets are 8 inches in breadth and 27 inches high. Mr. Dixon, of Notts County, proposes no change in the law except the simple method of adding a fourth stump; this would give all but 21/2 inches greater width. Other reformers suggest raising the wickets I inch or I inch higher, making them 28 or 28 inch inches above ground instead of 27. Of course, there can be no doubt that it must be an easier task to defend a wicket of three stumps than one of four, a wicket of 27 inches than one of $28\frac{1}{2}$; and if it were impossible to bring about a diminution of scoring by any other means, I should certainly suggest adding this fourth stump, or raising the height of the three. What would, however, be the effect of this on batting, considered either on its scientific or attractive side? One of the curses of the present day is the stick who, by restraining every impulse to hit, cannot be got out on these perfect modern wickets. If the Scotton, Noble, and Quaife cannot be persuaded to hit when they are defending wickets of the present size, why should they when the wicket is enlarged, whether by widening or heightening it? The tendency will be to make them greater sticks than ever, and to me it is doubtful if the greater size of the wicket will by itself be sufficient to curtail their innings to an adequate extent. On the present perfect wickets an entirely defensive attitude and policy, unless accompanied by a change in the size of the bat or the l.b.w. rule, will in dry summer weather be sufficient to prolong the game to an undue extent.

I have my doubts also as to whether the widening of the wicket may not make it impossible or very difficult for the short-in-stature player to play with a straight bat to balls on the off stump, unless he moves his right foot, which is against all the canons of sound batting. This objection is not applicable to the raising of the height of the wicket, and if the wicket is to be enlarged I should prefer it in this form, though "sticking" would be even greater than it is now.

It is on this account that I venture to think that experimenting with the weapons had better take the form of reducing the width of the bat, say a quarter or half an inch, to 4 or $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches instead

of $4\frac{1}{4}$. At the same time the bat would probably be made thicker, and the weight would not be diminished.

Of the suggested reforms, I should anticipate more satisfactory results from this and the change in the l.b.w. rule than from any other. The narrower bat would not tempt men not to hit, but would rather have the contrary effect. It would undoubtedly give the bowlers' good balls a better chance of hitting the wicket or being snicked into short-slip's hands. A really good batsman possessed of a good eye and quick power of wrist would still be able to get runs, though not to the same extent, but the smaller bat would, however, undoubtedly cripple the inferior batsmen—a consummation I humbly think ought to be desired by everybody who has the true interests of the game at heart.

At the risk of repetition it may be well to give a summary of the reasons why reform of the laws and etiquette of the game is absolutely necessary. The easy wicket has made batting so easy that the proper proportion and balance of the game are lost. It is not only the good batsmen who make hundreds and two hundreds: the inferior batsman, who ought never on his merits to score above 50 runs in an innings, going in ninth or tenth, on perfect wickets, and against fatigued bowlers, finds it easy to hit away all over the place, and the runs come in numbers. The result of such run-getting is in every way pernicious. Drawn games mount up to nearly 50 per cent. of the total number of matches begun, and cricket, the finest game that ever was invented, stands in the inglorious position of being the one game in which such a state of things exists.

Bowling, however the ignorant spectator may regard it, when well done, is one of the finest sights in cricket to the skilled spectator. Yet it is crippled, because on the perfect wickets the shooter is abolished, and the ball cannot be got to turn, which, by causing such a number of runs to be made, throws on bowlers work that has greatly reduced the length of their lives as cricketers.

This state of things has driven bowlers to other expedients. They bowl in a great many cases beyond their strength so as to produce fast balls and length, and the science of the art is thereby

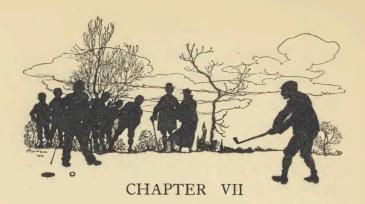
lost. To bang down long hops for the purpose of terrifying batsmen and in the hope of getting the ball to bump and the batsmen to be caught behind the wicket, is not bowling in the true sense. Yet who can deny, when Jones the Australian, Jessop, and Kortright are bowling that this expedient is frequently, perhaps generally, adopted. The bowler cannot be blamed. You cannot expect them to bowl for hours together for the batsmen. If bumping long hops are the balls most likely to get wickets, bowlers must deliver them: they are not to be blamed, but the rules of the game that has produced such a state of things. Similarly, slow bowlers, though they last twice as long as fast, get tired of bowling for hours at Quaife and Noble with no result; so they fall into bad habits, try for impossible leg breaks with a total sacrifice of length and science, and this is not bowling any more than fast long hops. When the skill and science of batting are considered, though nobody wants to run down real scientific correct batting, still it must be remembered that to play in such a way is far easier when every ball comes straight and true half-stump high. The real great innings

is played when the bumping ball, the hanging ball, and the shooter may come at any moment: when such an innings was played it remained fixed for ever in the memory. Now, alas, long innings have lost much of their charm because they are so common: they pall and are monotonous. A good instance of the baneful influence on batting produced by the plethora of runs might have been seen in the Australian and England test matches last year. To win a match became by the force of circumstances an object of secondary importance in the eyes of the Australians after they had won the second test match at Lord's. Their object was to win the rubber, and to effect this all they had to do was to draw the remaining three matches. Therefore the brilliant hitter had to abandon his naturally-attractive game and become a stick. In the case of the English team to score quickly was the object, and at the Oval our Maclarens and Frys were told not to play their proper game, but more or less to slog. So much for the disastrous effect on batting; and to this may be added, that often for hours, sometimes for the whole of the last day, it is so obvious that a draw is inevitable that during that period nobody exerts himself, and the grandest of all games degenerates into a burlesque.

There is something at once tragic and pathetic in the case of Richardson, the great Surrey fast bowler. Richardson, in my judgment, as a purely fast bowler—that is a bowler who bowled almost one uniform fast pace—was the finest fast bowler of all cricket history: Jackson, Freeman, Richardson—the greatest of these is Richardson. A short time ago I ventured to prophesy that the amount of work Richardson had to do must produce a premature break-down, and the particular fact I had in my mind was his second visit to Australia. Richardson's grandest work, which no fast bowler has ever equalled, was crowded into four glorious years, but during those four years, when the weather was hot and the wickets hard, he bowled in firstclass matches alone something like 6000 overs, and it requires only an elementary knowledge of physiology to see that such work cannot last. The career, therefore, of this grandest of all fast bowlers was a short four years. Lockwood and Jones may perhaps bowl a more difficult ball every now and then, but I say without fear of contradiction that, human nature being what it is, the world cannot possibly turn out a grander fast bowler than Richardson. And yet, in consequence of the undue advantage that the present wickets and rules of the game give to batting, in spite of his magnificent physique, we have the mournful fact to face, that in these days it is impossible for a fast bowler to last longer than the miserably short period of five or at the most six years. I have seen Richardson bowl hundreds of balls in his prime, and I am not prepared to say that I have ever seen a grander sight in cricket. I saw him bowl a few overs after his second visit to Australia, in the spring of 1898, and I felt glad to see him taken off, and nobody will persuade me to see him bowl again unless by some miracle he recovers his old pace and skill. I had far sooner not have my vision of the glory of his bowling when in his prime dimmed by the vision of his bowling in his decay -and he is not yet thirty years old!

Reform must be put in hand. Try experiments in the way of declaring innings at an end,

and see if that will answer; it is a small change, and may not do much. But alter at once the law as to leg-before-wicket, and if this is not enough to stop this odious run-getting-and I do not think that it will be-grasp the nettle firmly and cut off a quarter or half an inch from the bat and remove the reproach from the finest of all games, that no decisive results are possible for nearly 50 per cent. of first-class three-day matches. I have heard it said that batsmen will not consent to have their powers of run-getting crippled, that they refuse to allow that any reform is necessary. I refuse to believe that batsmen as a class are so selfish, have so little of the true interests of the game at heart. If true, it is a most melancholy fact. If anybody, of course, is really of opinion that it is immaterial whether a match is finished or not, that person is justified in opposing any reform. The wiser judges must combine and carry out some reforms to enable matches to be finished, or else the great game of cricket will be ruined, and nobody can conceive what a loss this will be to true well-wishers of the game.



Sea-side Links and Inland Links

WHEN golf was a game played only by a few, at the time when there were no links in Ireland or Wales and only Blackheath in England, practically all the golf that was played was played on sandy links by the sea-side. When, however, the game seized hold of England and the English, it soon became obvious that inland courses would be developed to an extent our forefathers never dreamt of. The Warwickshire and Worcestershire inhabitant would not be baulked of his play, or only content with such play as he could get by a short residence of a month by the sea-side in autumn. Links were made everywhere, on lawns, commons, across hedge and pond, and over trees, with every variety of green and every variety of lie, generally indifferent and seldom good.

Clubs were formed and professionals engaged, and a proof of the greatness of the game can be found in the fact that it is not easy, out of the innumerable number of clubs in England and Wales, to find one of them in anything but a sound financial position. In Warwickshire alone clubs and greens are to be found in Warwick, Coventry, Kenilworth, Solihull, Sutton Coldfield, Olton, Stratford-on-Avon, Ward End, and Atherstone. So great has been the demand for golf that it is doubtful if there is not at the present time more play on inland than on sea-side links. Fifty years ago, or even thirty, it would not have been difficult to find many golfers who had never played on any but sea-side links, and who would have scorned the idea of making any links on inland greens. So firmly established, however, is inland golf, that it may be interesting to compare the style of play on such links with those at the sea-side.

First it may be remarked that the two games are so different that a good inland player may find, that when at the sea-side he is entirely off his game for some considerable time, and his difficulties begin in their acutest form at

the tee. There are many inland links played on commons where a pulled or sliced ball loses a great deal of distance to the striker, but he nearly always has a chance of recovering himself by the second shot. Of bunkers in front of the tee there are comparatively few, and the grass is no longer in one place than in another. You curse the day on which you were born when you top your drive, but so many holes are about 270 yards in length that unless it is a pronounced foozle you have a chance of landing your second shot near the green. In the case of a good drive an iron club has to be used for the second shot, and a brassey for the topped shot. At North Berwick or Sandwich in the great majority of holes a topped, sliced, or pulled drive means a loss of at least one stroke, and too often this means loss of the hole. The consequence of this is, that though both at St. Andrews and Warwick Common the ball is teed up and the same driver used, a man may find it far more difficult to drive well at St. Andrews than at Warwick. This gives an excellent illustration of the enormous influence nerve and temperament have on

the game. A man with a phlegmatic, stolid, Teutonic sort of temperament will address himself to the teed ball at the sea-side, and by repressing the small amount of imagination there is in him, forget the bunker, the ditch, and the beach, all ready to receive the badlyhit ball, and hit the ball well and accurately. There are others who find it impossible to do this. With them the imagination is ever active and ever ready to dwell on the dangerous side of things. The result is, they are so overwhelmed by the presence of danger, that they forget to keep their eye on the ball, and as a consequence the ball is topped or foozled. The nervous player is terribly conscious that the faculty of forgetting-a most useful faculty in other things besides golfis impossible for him. At a particular hole on one day he sliced the drive, which disappeared comfortably into a bunker. What this unfortunate man should do is to forget this fact and banish it from his mind; but he cannot do this, and as a consequence next day, when again he is on the same tee, it comes vividly before his mind, and being afraid of doing the same thing, he promptly does it. On the inland course the same player has very likely missed his drive at a particular hole, but has recovered himself by the second; and though this second shot may not be forgotten, the foozled drive is, because the striker has lost nothing by it. The inland course does not as a rule punish the bad drive like the sea-side; the player therefore having less to fear drives with a light heart, and with a mind undisturbed by danger and hazards; and though the ball is equally teed up at the sea-side, and he uses the same favourite club, he misses there and succeeds on the inland.

There is another great distinction between inland and sea-side golf. The wind blows far more over the sea-side links. To first-rate players the wind must be very obstreperous to make more than a few strokes' difference in their play; but to inferior players any perceptible wind, especially if it should blow across the course, causes infinite disturbance. The same thing that has just been pointed out occurs here. On the inland course, where there is a cross wind, the badly-hit ball is blown a long way off the line, but not half so often into a

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hazard as it is at the sea-side. To the inferior player on inland courses, then, the wind, even if it is as strong, has not the same terrors. It seldom, however, blows as hard inland as at the sea, and nothing like so often. At Westward Ho, Littlestone, and Prestwick the wind, apart from the effect it has on the actual game, is often so high that any outdoor game is a burden. If in the east, it chills you to the bone, makes your eyes water and your hands cold, ruffles your temper and makes you lose balls, while you can hardly make your caddie hear what you say. As far as the game itself is concerned, a high wind unsteadies all but good players, and the painful results are more obvious on the sea-side links.

In the matter of approaching the hole there is also a great difference in the two styles of links, and the good player is considerably handicapped on the inland. To approach well it is essential that the ball be hit nearly straight to the hole. A good player does this, and on the beautiful smooth short grass you find at the sea-side, the ball thus hit goes straight to the hole. But on a clay common, or, indeed, practically speaking, on any inland links, the ball bounds all over the

place. In summer there are hard lumps of clay, stones, and every variety of small obstruction, the grass is often longer than it should be, while if it is wet the neat-lofted ball sometimes stops almost dead. Approaching thus on inland courses has elements of luck in it which it does not possess at the sea-side. But luck may, and often does, unduly favour the wild approach shot, and the bad player to his astonishment finds himself holding his own, at what some people think the hardest part of the game—approaching. If the running-up shot is played on rough links it is frequently found to be a case of "as broad as it is long." If a lump of clay or a stone turns the ball to the right one bound, another friendly lump at the next bound turns it to the left, and, on the whole, as the dying lawyer said who was troubled by the idea that he had frequently been the cause of innocent people being found guilty till he remembered that he had been equally fortunate in the case of the guilty being found innocent, justice is done. But the lofting shot is often, from no fault of the striker, badly punished, and this is especially trying to the good player.

On inland greens there is a very great difference between the putting-green and what is not putting-green. On the sea-side links there is some difference, but not nearly to the same extent. At Westward Ho and Machrihanish the whole course outside bunkers is practically putting-green, only the ground is rolled near the hole. But on the clay common, which many of us know so well, the greens are small, and the player in the approach shot is met with the difficulty that if he lofts so that the ball pitches short of the green it may kick to the right or left, and ultimately be almost as far from the hole as a foozled shot. If, on the other hand, he pitches the ball on the green he overruns the hole. On the sea-side you may be short of the green, but the ball will generally run true.

As to the play through the green with the brassey or cleek at the sea-side links, the player is unlucky if he finds himself in a bad lie, unless he has previously driven the ball off the course. Though a great deal may be done by horserolling the inland links, there are times in dry or frosty weather when the roller has little if any effect, and then the lies must be seen to be appre-

ciated. It is in this point of bad lies through the green that the real disadvantage of inland greens comes in. At St. Andrews, in several instances, and at the second and seventeenth holes at North Berwick, you will often find the ball in a bad lie, because there is so much play that the turf has been unduly cut up. But frequently these bad lies are caused by the ball lying in a scrape, or place where the turf has been scraped away and not replaced, and though this may be said to lie badly it can be hit a long way. But when horses and cattle are allowed to walk and gallop at their own sweet will, as they often are on inland greens, you will frequently find lies that are practically unknown at the sea-side. The niblick has often to be used, and at the sea-side this ugly-looking club is never used except to play out of a bunker or hazard, and there is no fun or sport to be got by playing a niblick through the green. Some players find a brassey easy to play with, others the cleek; but it seems generally to be essential to the ordinary player that to play the brassey he should have a good-lying ball. It is comparatively rare to find any but a really good player hit a bad-lying ball with any certainty with the

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brassey. Inland players ought therefore to learn to play a cleek or driving mashie, which will be found most useful in the case of bad-lying balls, or even balls that are not in a really good lie.

Putting-greens are also very different in inland links. At certain times of the year, when not too hard, at any time in short except during a hard frost or a hot summer, they may be made as good as the sea-side greens, though far smaller. But to keep them good, labour in the shape of rolling must be expended. There are some inland greens with chalky subsoil, and in dry weather the grass here becomes a vanishing quantity. There are some first-rate sea-side links where occasional holes are found with clayey soils: these are very much akin to our inland courses, like the seventh hole at Sandwich and several greens at Littlestone, and it needs very little to cause lumps and excrescences to make their appearance on such greens. But, as a general rule, the sea-side puttinggreens are far superior, they are smoother and faster, and the grass grows far more evenly. The good putter meets an inferior putter on more equal terms on greens which are rather rough;

the crooked putt may go in, the straight one go crooked, the same tendency which I have just remarked on in the case of approaching. It is remarkable, however, how completely off it a seaside player can be, and frequently is, when he finds himself inland, especially if he plays with a wooden putter. A wooden putter makes the ball run closer to the ground; on inland putting-greens, if you can get accustomed to a very slightly-lofted iron club, you can make the ball go straighter by means of a series of microscopic jumps than if you made it travel right along the ground the whole way, which it does when played with a wooden putter. In ordinary weather there is more grass on inland greens, and you can putt firmer than on sea-side links, especially those on the east coasts of England, where, on the whole, there is a short supply of water and rain. Such greens become painfully keen, and such putting is not the real art that it is when you can hit the ball harder, for you are not so afraid of running the ball out of holing distance.

From what has been said it may be inferred that the real great player is not relatively so great on a roughish inland green as he is on the links

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of the Sandwich. Westward Ho, and St. Andrews type. I am inclined to think this is the case, for one or two reasons which I have already discussed. The inferior player is not so much bothered by wind, has not the same crowd of bunkers to avoid, has more chance of being helped by luck in the way of devious strokes being kicked the right way by lumps of clay or stones, and may find himself putting fairly well compared with the strong player. There are few inland greens of very great length. It is not easy in the country to get long stretches like those of the sea-side, and yet the scoring, in consequence of the bad lies and inequalities of ground, is far higher than on much longer sea-side links. A player with a big handicap, if he has any intelligence, is an awkward customer to give long odds to on an inland course. He finds it far easier to keep out of difficulties, and this is what kills him at North Berwick. By playing with the clubs he knows and is accustomed to, like the cleek and putter, by having no pride in his constitution and never attempting any risks, he may find himself doing pretty well. His opponent, on

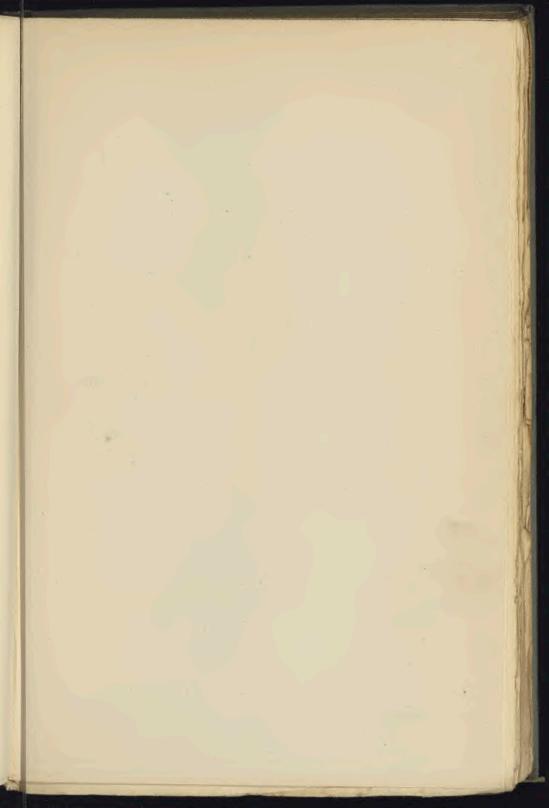
the other hand, may not be accustomed to such lies, and his temper becomes a little ruffled, and the putting-greens surprise him, for he finds it so difficult to get the strength. The inferior player is in no way surprised at anything unless a ball almost teed through the green should by some chance await him. He accepts a horse-shoe mark and a niblick stroke as part of the day's work, and is not astonished when his approach shot bounds off at right angles to the hole. When the hedge is 130 yards from the ball he takes his cleek and plays short; the St. Andrews man has a poor lie, but he is too proud to play short, tries to carry it with his brassey, and an ominous crashing of wood is heard.

It is perfectly true that nobody would play on an inland links who could possibly play on the sandy sea-shore; but many of us have had the keenest enjoyment whom fate has compelled to be content with a clay common. You would almost learn to enjoy golf in Piccadilly itself, if you played often enough there. The lies are often bad, but you do enjoy the casual good lie when it comes. You know the course by heart, and have a soft spot in your heart for

the very disadvantages. One of the charms of golf is its uncertainty, and on inland greens the uncertainty of the lies may almost be described as a charm. To make a good stroke is always delightful; but the most delightful form of good stroke is when it is played under unfavourable circumstances, out of a bad lie for instance. If you do happen to hit a bad-lying ball, you remember it when you shut your eyes at night; it banishes the office ledger which you cannot get to balance. The man of abundant means and leisure who can afford to go to the sea-side whenever he likes, may not like to play on inland greens; he has in his mind the splendid air and the glorious links of Sandwich and Prestwick. But in regard to the toiler who, nolens volens, must pass ten months of the year inland—the only time he possibly may not enjoy the golf on the old clay common is when he returns to it after a month's uninterrupted play at North Berwick. Then he may wonder if he ever will be able to enjoy the game there again; but in a short time the old affection will return to him

Lastly, there is the intense enjoyment of a

month's sea-side golf. The joy of finding the ball always in a first-rate lie, the capacity of running the ball true and straight to the hole, the sea air—to enjoy these to the full you must have come straight from eight months' play on a clay common with the lumps as hard as stones, and the soil cracked with the heat. Contrast is the essence of enjoyment; the inhabitant of North Berwick has nothing like the same fascination at the game in October as the inland golfer who is there for his holiday. All honour, therefore, to the old clay common which can provide him with the means of play, though it may be of an inferior kind. It has at any rate given him exercise, and the capacity for enjoyment of better things.





A FAMOUS CADDY of Bruntsfield Links.



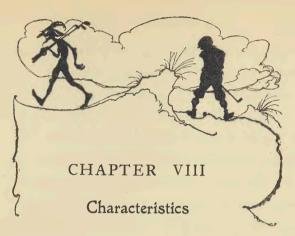
I II seewhere remarked, that golf is a bad game to schools. It is a game for individuals, but not for a side. No golfer ever became first rate who did not begin the game early. The boy, however, should learn not at school, but in the bolidays. He can learn how to swing and get a true and good style, and having got this it will no him no harm to put the same aside for a time; and in the meanwhile the games suitable for youths, where the games suitable for youths, where will be the games suitable for youths, where will be the games suitable for youths, where the games suitable for youths, where

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Golfers of the old school scorn the idea that golf is a game for middle age and old age. If the question is sifted to the bottom, it may

readily be said that inasmuch as golf can be played by men and women to really an advanced age, it is a game for age as opposed to youth. Rowing, football, hockey, and polo are really for the period of life that ends at thirty. Cricket in moderation may go on to forty, but golf may be played in foursomes, and one round a day style by men as long as they can walk. The drives become shorter and the handicap gets longer; but as the famous old St. Andrews player, Tom Morris, and the late Mr. Whyte Melville show, you can play to eighty years of age if lumbago and rheumatism, and active disease, which of course prevents everything, does not interfere. Golf is a very great game on account of its elasticity. The youth may play it in such a way that it becomes a test of physical endurance that only youth can supply; but the old and comparatively feeble can also play it, and play it well, with intense enjoyment, because the game adapts itself to practically every physical condition. I know no other outdoor game of which this can be said. There are men who play country cricket after fifty years of age, but they are very few in number,

and to field out all day in hot weather at that age is weariness and a burden. Here is one of the reasons why golf has been taken to in England with a vigour and force that certainly is the most astonishing feature in the history of games that I have any experience of at all.

I have said that nobody can become a really first-rate golfer who has not begun the game early in life. I believe this to be absolutely true; but it is equally true that a very respectable skill can be acquired by men whose eye and muscles are attuned to games, if they have never handled a club till thirty years old. Mr. Charles Hutchings of Hoylake, I believe, began when he was well over thirty years of age, and he became good enough to win a St. Andrews medal, but this is a very exceptional case, and I dare believe that Mr. Hutchings himself would admit that he could not be put quite in the same class with Messrs. Ball, Laidlay, Tait, and Hutchinson. Football cannot be played at all after thirty: I know of no one instance where anybody ever took to cricket at that time of life, and I am absolutely certain that

if any enthusiast were to try, the result would be failure and abandonment.

One reason why a moderate and more than fair skill is possible to the golfer who begins late is that quickness and agility of eye are not indispensable qualities for the game any more than are rapidity and suppleness of limb. The golfer is never obliged to run or jump, and he has not to stoop to an inordinate extent. In one sense it is a game of repose: to hit a ball ninety or a hundred times in two hours may be said to be a somewhat leisurely performance. Some of the strokes are given with scarcely an effort, such as all putts and little quarter shots. An analysis of the game will prove that a fair player will only have to put forth his full strength on an average about thirty-six times during a round, or twice per hole, a first-rate player less. Vardon and Mr. Tait, I suppose, only find a minority of holes where it is necessary to do more than a full shot, and then a three-quarter or half shot, and some holes they can drive off the tee with a half-swing.1 An inferior player wastes a super-

¹ Since this was written Mr. Tait has, alas, been killed whilst gallantly serving in South Africa.—Eds.

human amount of muscle with singularly little result of distance, though often the ball goes a long way, but off the line. The worse, however, a player is, the greater is the effort; he is often in bunkers and the niblick has generally to be wielded with all the force at his command; playing a hole of over 300 yards and foozling one or more strokes cost the bad player far more exertion than Vardon has to expend at the same holes. But every player, good, bad, and indifferent, will find that the hitting of the ball is what gives the fatigue and makes the exercise. You will find the difference at once if you walk round and follow a match, when the distance covered is exactly the same as that traversed by the players; the players will be more or less fatigued, the spectator not at all.

Another charm of golf to the beginner of thirty years of age "which leads him to pursue the game with the ardour of youth" is in the fact he can progress and improve. This would be impossible in cricket, for even slight progress would be out of the question. At golf, however, I believe it to be quite possible to improve your game till you get to fifty, whilst from fifty

to sixty you may not go back even if you do not go forward. From sixty onwards you can find refuge in foursomes as long as you can walk and lumbago and rheumatism are absent. Nobody will really get enthusiastic about any game or pursuit where the element of progress is impos-The sportsman whose shooting deteriorates gradually but surely, will transfer his licence to his son; the cricketer who cannot raise ten runs, and whose function is watching his own side from the tent and his opponent under a hot sun and fielding out, will give up the game and become a spectator. But improvement at golf is quite within the reach of many, because agility and quickness are not requisite, but rather the reverse. This element of progress is a highly important feature, and largely accounts for the popularity of the game.

As years go on, a man's golf undergoes changes. A player's stance has to be altered gradually when his rapidly-changing figure makes a view of his feet not always easy. When younger he prided himself on the length of his drive, but golf provides compensation for the very material abbreviation that inevitably comes

to the drive of the middle-aged. Experience is a great thing in all games, but in none more than in golf. The older player frequently finds that it is possible to improve with the irons and putter if he deteriorates with the driver and brassey. Nothing appears to me to be more true than that to win a match the short game must be good. I have watched several great matches and read about them also, and in nine cases out of ten the man who putts well is the man who wins. I do not say that this is always the case. Vardon, for instance, who must be the first player the world has ever seen, seems to me to be no better than several others in putting and lifting shots, but he wins his matches by his steady long drive, and by the still more tremendous length of his second shot through the green, and the consequence is that Vardon is always playing the like on the putting-green. But the histories of matches are very much the same. A was short in his approach putt, and took three to hole out; B on the contrary laid a long putt dead and won the hole. It seems to me that the compensation an older player gets from his younger rival is in the fact that the older man plays with greater steadiness on the putting-green, and this superiority takes away all the advantage that is gained by greater length in the drives. The golfer who, when on the green, is always down in two strokes except when he is down in one, is the player who wins matches.

The game of golf should be played in a sportsmanlike and in a gentlemanly manner. One drawback to the game is that, on the whole, more than any other game, it seems to attract a great many who fail to come up to the ideal in either of these respects. Some of the rules seem to be drawn as if this was recognised to be the fact. Two men, both gentlemen, play a friendly game, and it would not occur to either of them to pay any attention to some of these absurd rules. Others play and angry discussions arise as to moving a bit of grass that may be growing, and therefore cannot be moved; or one man claims the hole because his opponent has pressed down the turf with his knuckles. In a high wind the ball moves before the player has touched it with his club, but after he has addressed it, this counts a stroke against the unfortunate player. These are instances of what I

call absurd and pettifogging low-attorney sort of rules. It would be far better that the rule about brushing the green lightly with the hand on the line of the putt were abolished altogether. If there are players who take a mean advantage and flatten down a lump when they should only be brushing away loose bits of dust or stones, such players had better be provided for if such a thing can be brought about without hardship to the sportsmanlike golfers. The benefit to the putter of brushing away dust or small stones is, in my opinion, infinitesimal. Greens are kept in good order by the greenkeeper, so let every player take his chance of the green, and make it unlawful to brush away dust or remove what is not growing, and the swindler will be defeated.

The whole question of rules in games is interesting. Some rules there must always be, but if a game is to be played in a right spirit the fewer there are the better. At golf there are so many rules which seem to be both pedantic and absurd that in a friendly game they are quietly ignored. Nobody of proper feeling will claim a hole because his opponent's caddie has sheltered the ball from the wind with his body, or because

the ball has been moved by the wind after the player has put himself in a certain attitude, though he has no more touched it than he has the moon. Golf, indeed, has come to be so much hedged round by rules that these defeat their own object, and by respectable people are ignored. It always appears to me that rules of any game should be such that it is to the advantage of the game that they should be enforced always and by everybody. Whist, for instance, has a code of rules that seem to be so reasonable that they are all of them enforced, and nobody who insists on the letter of the law at whist is thought the worse of, or guilty of sharp practice; and this is the case also at football. But at golf such is not the case, and the man who exacts extreme penalties is a gentleman who is generally to be found searching in vain for an opponent.

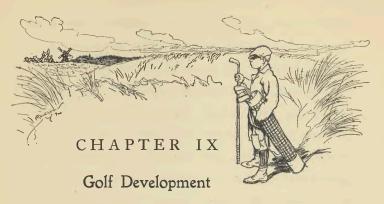
At cricket you may play against any eleven, and you may enjoy your game. But golf is a painful game when played against an opponent of a certain type. The sulky player who is moody and never smiles, the fierce-tempered man who makes you miserable while he curses his caddie who has not the right of reply, the man

who seems to be caring for nothing except for his own welfare and is barely civil to you, and, lastly, the man with a total absence of humour. I am quite aware of the fact that in Scotland it is generally the practice not to talk or utter a sound during any part of the game. I can only say on this point that a game is a game, and if a reasonable amount of cheerful conversation can be indulged in without injury to the play so much the better.

When everything has been said, however, the fact remains that golf is a splendid game, and has, moreover, a charm impossible to describe or exaggerate. Why this is, what it consists of, is not easy to say. In the first place there is the glorious sensation of making a true hit. This is not only true of the drive. There is a right or wrong way of hitting a yard putt. The right way is bliss, the wrong purgatory. Of course the pleasure of the long drive or second shot through the green gives as fine an emotion as is possible for any sinner to receive on this earth, but there is satisfaction to be got out of every true hit of whatever length.

Then there is the charm of scenery, though I

admit that to many the game is so engrossing that if eighteen holes could be found in the desert of Sahara as good as at North Berwick, some would as soon play on one as the other. Lastly, there is the indescribable charm of uncertainty. If a foxhunter knew for a certainty that a fox would always be found in the same place, take the same line, and be killed in the same spot, hunting would lose nearly all its charm. You cannot in golf ever be quite certain how the ball will lie except on the tee and putting-green. You experience during your walk of 150 yards to the ball alternate feelings of hope and fear, hope that the ball is lying on a smooth place and easy to hit, fear that it is in a cup or has a lump behind it. There is also the uncertainty that has a twinge of agony about it, and that is the question how you are going to hit it; even the best players foozle sometimes. Without uncertainty there is no really first-class game where a ball is concerned; and to the charm of a fine hit, picturesque scenery, and uncertainty, the charm of companionship has still to be added. Nobody can wonder that golf has added to the gaiety of nations.



I CAN only speak of the development of golf from what I have heard, not from what I have seen, but it is not difficult to see and understand certain things which govern the development of all games: I may mention improvement of weapons and balls, the huge increase in the number of golf links and players, and to a certain extent the superior knowledge of turf, and the widening of the links which a lot of golf always produces. In cricket, as I have endeavoured to show, these principles have combined to bring the great game to a condition of impotence; the ingenuity of man has improved the bat and the grounds to such an extent that the ingenuity of man must now set its wits to work to restore the balance; the bat must be

handicapped or the game must suffer. There is no necessity for this in golf. If nature did not provide bunkers, the game would be so dull without them, and it would be so easy to make them, that made they would be, and made difficult. With a sufficient number of bunkers and hazards, however good the greens and lies through the greens may be, you nevertheless find that golf is not an easy game except when you are at the top of your form, and when that rare event happens, everything is easy in games and sports of all kinds. The links at Westward Ho afford a very practical illustration of a magnificent course made difficult by careful use of natural and artificial bunkers and hazards. The links, where not bunker or hazard, are all putting-green; every lie is good, but the golfer has to use all his skill to avoid these bunkers. Golf is therefore unlike cricket in this important respect, that the pitch or ground where you play the game can never be as a rule unduly easy; you can always remedy this to the great advantage of the game.

When we come to the question of clubs and balls, the state of things seems to be very diffe-

rent, but even on this point it is by no means easy to say whether the modern appliances have made very much difference, or had much effect in making the game easier. Some people deny altogether that the game is easier, and the wonderful scoring that is now so common they put down altogether to the individual; the player, these critics remark, is the cause, not the weapons. The old school of players, on the other hand, say that the superior balls and clubs and greater width of course produced by the removal of whins and bushes, and much horse-rolling, all these facts have tended to make the game easier. I must here confess that I do not know enough of the game to express a decided opinion on these matters, but there are one or two points that ought to be kept in view, and which I cannot help thinking are too often lost sight of not only in golf, but in every game and sport when the weighing and comparison of the old and new is attempted.

At cricket we all know our old friend who shakes his head and makes comparisons between George Parr and Maclaren, much to the disadvantage of the latter. He saw both these

distinguished players when in their prime, but his preference for the older player is so marked and so general, that I think another explanation than mere merit must be found. The reason is, I believe, entirely subjective; it lies in the critic himself. When he saw George Parr bat he was one individual, when he saw Maclaren he was another: he was young in the first case and old in the second. Many of us can remember the state of mind we were in when in our early youth we saw first-class cricketers and first-class cricket; we had looked forward to some particular match for weeks, and what was our frame of mind when the great day arrived? It was one of boundless admiration and delight, but there was no criticism and knowledge. In cricket I can speak with experience on this matter. When I was twelve years old, illness prevented me from being at school at Eton, but did not prevent me from being taken to see Gentlemen v. Players, both at Lords and the Oval, and I saw both matches. I can remember many things in both those matches still, but I can see how it all appeared couleur de rose; there was not a bad ball bowled, there was not a bad hit made. Youthful

enthusiasm only sees the good; if it does indeed see the bad the impression is transitory and soon passes off. When we get old our enthusiasm is tempered by judgment, and criticism makes its appearance; it is true that we note what is good, but we note what is bad also, and when this is realised, it can be seen at once that as far as the thing to be judged is considered, the conditions are so different that our judgment ought to be carefully weighed and balanced by the sifting of facts and figures.

Is the game of golf as played now easier than it was thirty or forty years ago, and are the players now better or worse than they were then? I cannot express a decided opinion; it seems to me probable that when the far larger number of players is taken into consideration, as well as the keen competition that is the inevitable result, the performances of Vardon in 1898 and 1899 must make a golfer of judicial mind give him the first place among golfers of all ages or times. But I have talked with several golfers of great experience and calm judgment, who say that they are quite unable to decide in their own minds whether, putting Vardon out of the question, young Tommy

Morris, Bob Ferguson, and David Strath were better or worse than Taylor, Herd, and Park. A genius at any game is not, and cannot be available for purposes of comparison, for he is sui generis; and I am inclined to think that Vardon, Roberts, and Grace must be placed on three equal pedestals as geniuses at golf, billiards, and cricket. But in considering the question as to the top players outside those on whom is stamped genius, there is not very much to choose. At any rate, I have heard men of undoubted fairness and every qualification to judge, admit they cannot say. If there is any merit in mashies, bullet-headed drivers, and brasseys and bulgers, it must be remembered that the old players had not the advantage of using these, and some of the greater length of drive that is undoubtedly possessed by modern players must be put down to the credit of the club, and not of the player. It would be absolutely impossible to play a good game with the feather balls which are exhibited as curiosities in some club rooms, as it would be at cricket to play a good innings with Robinson's bat, of colossal weight in the blade and very thin handle, which you may see at Lords. But the very old players had to

play with feather balls, while the modern player has had every imaginable choice of the finest gutta-percha to choose from. There is another point also to be thought of. When young Tommy Morris was in his prime, you might say, if I remember rightly, that all the important matches were played at St. Andrews, Musselburgh, Prestwick, and North Berwick, and those matches were comparatively few in number. Now links are to be found in nearly every place where it is possible to put them, and a great many where the critical would say it was impossible, and express trains connect them. If constant play in tournaments and for medals against strong and numerous competitors, on every sort of links, is good for a player, and tends to improve his game—which I think it must —the modern player is in this respect at a great advantage. I cannot speak with certainty, but I should think that Vardon played more important money matches in 1898 and 1899 than young Tom played during his whole career, which was, however, a very short one. In 1860 the field for the championship would number perhaps twenty; in 1899, one hundred. these facts tend to show that though the scoring is lower now, and the play perhaps better, it is quite impossible to say dogmatically that if the same conditions had prevailed forty years ago, the best players of that date would not have been equally good.

I have said that it is by no means clear whether modern improvements in clubs have made very much difference in scoring. In one club no improvement or change has been made, and the old wooden putter is still used by some of our great players; nor, as far as I know, is there any difference between the modern and ancient cleek. The mashie, however, is a new club, and has largely superseded the old-fashioned iron; while the driver is different in shape, and the brassey and mashie have driven the old wooden spoons out of the field altogether. But how far these changes have made the game easier is difficult to say. There can be no question but that the driving is longer, even considerably longer, and I think also that evidence seems to show that as far as mere force is concerned, the modern player can give points to his rivals in ancient days, and for this the modern bullet-headed play club must be held largely responsible. On looking through a set

of old clubs, it has seemed to me obvious that the modern player requires altogether more powerful, heavier, and stiffer clubs than our forefathers did. He cultivates the art of distance more than was the case formerly, he is always trying to be up in two strokes, where the older player would be content to be within lofting distance for his third shot. Perhaps the newer links have been laid out to encourage this method. Sandwich, for instance, which ranks as high as any English links, seems to have been specially laid out to promote the interests of the long driver, and St. Andrews, perhaps more than formerly, seems to be laid out not only to encourage long driving, but long second shots as well. If this is the case, it would seem natural to infer that the scientific short lofting shot was better played formerly than it is now; and judging from what I hear, I should think that such is the case. Putting is a matter of nerve, as is remarked in a previous chapter, and was the same yesterday as it is to-day, and as it will be for ever.

The development of golf appears to me to be quite unlike the development of cricket. Cricket has changed in all its features simply and solely because modern methods of the treatment of grounds has revolutionised the wicket, which has become so easy that almost any fool can bat. In golf, on the other hand, the links are very much the same, so are some of the clubs also; and if balls are considered, it is so long since the feather sorts were used, that for purposes of comparison we may begin from the year when gutta-percha superseded the old feather ball. The only basis to start from, which may account for the development of golf, is that of numbers, the increase, that is, of golf links and the golf invasion of England. We are all wearied with statistics in these days, so I certainly shall not encumber these pages with figures. I leave it to any casual reader to fix in his own mind how many golf links there are in England and Wales now, and merely quote the single figure I, as representing the exact number of links outside Scotland in 1868. What this means and how this affects the whole game of golf it is impossible to say, but affect it enormously it must. Thirty years ago there were hundreds of undeveloped golfers who never had an opportunity

of grasping a club. Outside Scotland, except a few Englishmen who lived wholly or partly in Scotland, there were probably not many more than a hundred golfers. There is hardly any one spot in England where a game of golf cannot be played somehow. The links may be laid out on heavy, wet, clayey fields in Warwickshire, or among the fortifications at Chatham, on the cliffs at Brighton, on the Downs of Guildford, or among the coal-pits of Dudley and West Bromwich; but holes are cut, and more or less of a golf links made, and each links has its club; whilst each club has its prizes, medals, and spring and autumn meetings.

The multiplication of golf clubs and golf prizes has caused a large increase in the number of rounds that are played for score as opposed to hole play. It is impossible for thirty or more players to meet for one day to compete for a prize in any way except by score. The ball has to be hit into nine or eighteen different holes in the fewest possible number of strokes—that is the object of every one of the competitors. Every golfer, good, bad, and indifferent, knows the difference of match play and medal play.

Some players seem far better when they are playing for a score than when playing by holes: Mr. Hilton, for instance, who has twice won the open championship, is reputed to be a better medal player than match player, while Andrew Kirkaldy, I hear, expresses his contempt for medal play in no uncertain language. think, on the whole, there can be no question but that match or hole play is not only the better game, but produces, as a rule, the higher and superior golf. Medals are won by the player who, while he plays fine golf, still contents himself with safe play: he makes no mistake from one point of view, but this is because he does not often attempt anything that is very difficult. There are a few exceptional cases when a great player is on the top of his form, goes for everything and brings off everything, and makes a phenomenal score; but I notice that generally these marvellous scores come off when he is playing an ordinary single or best of two balls, and merely counting the strokes. In medal play you are fighting an invisible phantom, in match play your opponent is by no means invisible. You regulate your

play by what he is doing; if he is in a bunker, by attempting a long carry off the tee, you play short and run no risks, but that is for that hole only; the position is reversed the next hole, and you have to go for a gallery stroke, for your rival is on the green in two, and unless you are also, you probably lose the hole. The apostolic precept that you are to forget the things that are behind, and press forward to those that are before, is to be observed in all golf, but it is far easier to carry this into practice in hole play than it is in medal play. If you play one hole so badly that it takes ten strokes to hole out, you have probably put yourself out of the reckoning as far as winning the medal is concerned, but the same play in a match only means the loss of one hole, a mere trifle. In medal play, consequently, though it may not be difficult to press forward, it is very difficult to forget what is behind if you have played one hole so badly.

This is the chief reason why medal play is neither so interesting to watch nor so pleasant to engage in as hole or match play—the one produces a dull, level style of game, with few flashes of brilliancy, while the other encourages both safety and brilliancy: and in my humble opinion, the increase of medals necessary because of the increase of clubs and players is not a development towards improvement, but the reverse. Golfers now seem to take not enough interest in the healthy match play, but to be endlessly keen about score. Even in a match you find your opponent has a little book where his score is put down after every hole, and there is a tendency to subordinate everything to score, and considerable pressure to have the rules altered in order to meet the wishes of score players. It is one of the rules of medal play that your opponent's ball should not interfere with yours; stymies therefore are unknown. The medal players, or at any rate many of them, are urging that stymies should be abolished. I do not deny that a great deal may be said in favour of this; it is unlucky to be stymied, and it is a fluke, but on the other hand, it is a rule of the game, and in the long run no one player can say that he has not gained so much as he has lost by the stymie; if it has been against him one day, it has operated in his favour on another. But there are other considerations. To begin with, players are often apt to consider themselves stymied when such is not the case. A scientifically hit ball with lofting iron or putter will hole the ball out in the hands of a skilful player in many a case where an ordinary player, angry at being what he thinks stymied, gives up the hole or plays wildly. A ball can be lofted neatly and can be made to curve round the opponent's ball in many a case, and the main objection I have to the abolition of the stymie is that if finally abolished, a very beautiful stroke will be abolished with it. I always find in these days there is far too great a tendency to sacrifice "form" to something which people call effectiveness, but which to my mind has a sordid and vulgar element about it. There is no doubt but that a pretty lofted shot on the putting-green into the hole is a beautiful stroke, and I fail to see why it should be sacrificed because another player finds that his score, which he is keeping when he should not, suffers by being stymied. I do not say that I blame the player who is always keeping his score when he plays matches—everybody can do what he likes-but I do protest against a lovely shot being sacrificed on the ground of score.

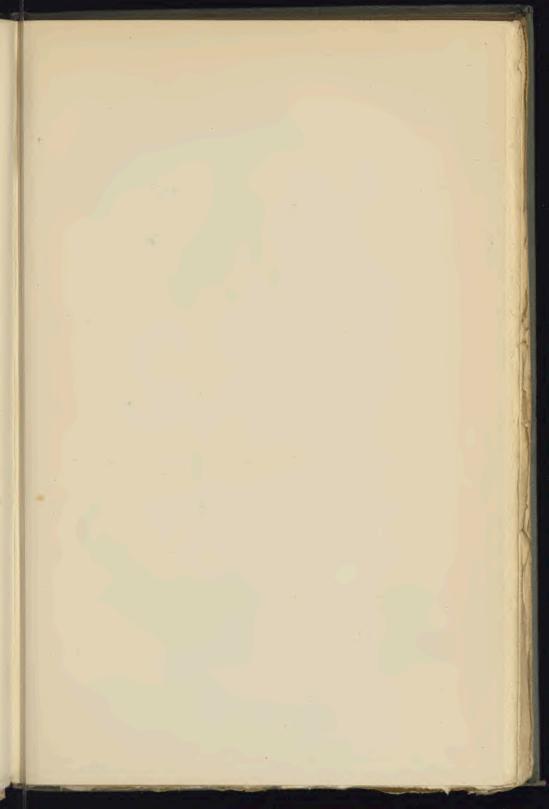
The one dangerous and unhealthy development of golf then, to my mind, consists of the too great prominence given to score. I have seen some players who really almost seem indifferent about what the result of the hole play is, provided they are not taking more than five to every hole, and are doing a good score. I am also painfully aware that our likes and dislikes, our partiality for medal or match play, our being in favour or the contrary of this, that, and the other rule, is largely determined by the effect it has on our own individual play. Mr. Hilton, for instance, has twice won the open championship by strokes, but up to 1900 he has not pulled off the amateur championship, which is played by tournament. He would possibly argue that the best type of golf is to be found when playing for a score, and human nature being what it is, nobody could wonder at this.

I am trying to put forward what I cannot help thinking tends to the good of the game, and I think that anything which promotes medal or score play unduly and depresses match play is not to be encouraged. It is easy to say it, but I implore everybody who plays golf to remember that it is a game and not a business. A singularly charming form of golf is a foursome suitable for all ages and links, and can there exist any golfer who would prefer playing a foursome by strokes and not by holes? The thing I fear is that the system of playing for scores may so permeate the whole golfing spirit, that match play may become relegated to the subordinate position. If ever this comes to be brought about golf will suffer and become more selfish and individual a game, and, to be critical, this is the one drawback to golf already.

The Amateur Championship is played by tournament or hole play, and long may it continue so. I am in hope that what I suppose is essentially the blue ribbon of the golfing world—namely, the open championship—may become a hole game too. It cannot, perhaps, be entirely by holes, but something may be done by devoting the first day to score play. Let two rounds be given to this, and then take the ten highest scorers and fight it to a finish by match play. It is not easy in these days to abolish score play altogether

when there are such crowds of golfers, but it may be possible to keep the scoring to a certain point, and have the crucial, final, and penultimate finals played by holes. If this could be worked it would have a great effect in promoting the finer, less selfish, and higher game of golf, namely, the golf played by holes and not by strokes.







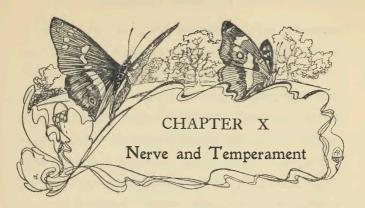
OLD ALICK, Hole Maker.



I HAVE remarked before that to the golfer as he gets older there are compensating advantages to set off against the diminished power and length of the long strokes off the tee, and through the green. One of these compensations is in the shape of better putting and approaching. The young player is strong and feels capable of anything as far as distance and power are concerned; he might remove mountains with his driver and brassey, but in his heart he would not object to let his caddie approach and hole out for him. I have played many games in my time, but I confidently say that for a test of nerve, golf is far the most trying game in the world, and next to it billiards. I know perfectly well that a man may feel un-



Total Makers



I HAVE remarked before that to the golfer as he gets older there are compensating advantages to set off against the diminished power and length of the long strokes off the tee, and through the green. One of these compensations is in the shape of better putting and approaching. The young player is strong and feels capable of anything as far as distance and power are concerned: he might remove mountains with his driver and brassey, but in his heart he would not object to let his caddie approach and hole out for him. I have played many games in my time, but I confidently say that for a test of nerve, golf is far the most trying game in the world, and next to it billiards. I know perfectly well that a man may feel unutterably nervous before he goes in to bat at cricket, but his nervousness goes when he has scored twenty runs, and been in half-an-hour. If you get out, well you have no further opportunity of getting nervous till your second innings comes round, and under no circumstances ought a bowler to be nervous, as one bad ball may always be redeemed by a wicket next ball. But putting has to be gone through every hole, and no golfer exists who does not know that putting is more than half a matter of nerve and nerve only. "I've faced battle and tigers," an elderly major is reported to have said, "with equanimity, but this putt of a yard and half fills me with dread unspeakable."

I have mentioned golf and billiards together as the two games that give the hardest test of nerve, and the reason is this, that in both games strength is the all-important matter: strokes that require calculation of strength want nerve, but frequently are played without it. In cricket you either hit a ball as hard as you like or you merely stop; that at any rate is the case when you first go in, and when you are nervous. In football you run your hardest and

kick your hardest, and few spectators are much the wiser; and a nervous man can always hit hard at golf off the tee and through the green, for as he has not got to think of strength, he is less likely to fidget and foozle the ball. But when you are fifty yards from the hole, and a bunker yawning between you and it, or when you have to lay an approach putt of twenty yards more or less dead to win or halve a hole, then the question of nerve becomes everything, because strength is everything. The lofted fifty yards shot is perhaps the most difficult shot in golf, and what does the nervous golfer do in most cases? He either cuts it too fine and is very short in the attempt to lay it dead, or else, frightened of the bunker that lies so dangerously near to him, he determines to get over at all risks and overruns the green by forty or fifty yards. If you watch an amateur billiard-player in a handicap before a crowd, you will soon see whether he is nervous by the way he judges the strength. The most common failing of such players is that they hit too hard; an easy stroke is one which will be succeeded by another easy stroke if the proper strength is applied, but the striker is afraid of missing the stroke and hits too hard, and the balls are scattered and the break lost.

In putting, a man is generally so impressed by the fact that a reserve of strength is needful, that a contrary effect is produced, and he is nearly always short—nervousness in putting in nine cases out of ten makes a man hit too softly. He is on a smooth green which looks so fast that it terrifies him, while if it should slope slightly down hill he is more terrified still. For some reason which it is impossible to explain, golfers always seem to be far more frightened at being two yards beyond the hole than they are at being two yards short. To be two yards beyond is far better than to be two yards short, for in the first place you give the ball a chance of holing, and in the second place it relieves the eye somewhat to turn round and putt along a different line.

I watched a final match once in the amateur championship, in which two most distinguished amateurs were struggling for the mastery, and both drove and played through the green as well as could be desired, and both putted in a way that a charity-school boy would have been ashamed of. In one sense it was refreshing for an ordinary mortal to see great men fail in the way they did, for we could all flatter ourselves we could quote this instance as a proof of how hard putting was, when we failed ourselves. But in this case the putting of both these distinguished players was never "up"; they failed where nearly every player who is "off" his putting fails; they were short.

To prove how much nerve is the first, second, and third necessity in putting, you may take a man of thirty years old who has been and perhaps still is a good cricketer, and has a good eye for games generally. Set such a man on a putting-green with a putter and three or four balls, and he will very likely putt as well as the best professional; ask him to drive or play a brassey and he will be nowhere. Experience is nothing in putting; it is everything for the rest in the game. In the one case experience begets fear, in the other confidence. The man of thirty in a few years will very likely develop into a really bad putter, not because he has not the skill—for he proved his skill when a beginner—but because

he has learnt the terrors of putting, and his skill is overpowered by his nerves.

Nerves appear to be absent one day and painfully present another: so there are redletter days when even a nervous man can putt, but the more nervous a man is the worse will he putt, and in no other part of the game will he find nerves play such demoniacal tricks.

Golf is the most nervous game yet invented, because most of the success of the game is a question of strength; it is an interesting question to ask, Why is it more of a trial to nerves than billiards, which is wholly a question of strength with a reasonable amount of accuracy? In a long hole of over four hundred yards, the golfer need not bother his head about strength for the first two strokes; he has to hit both these as hard as he can—there is no nice calculation of less or more. In billiards every stroke requires thought of the question of strength; even a safety miss may easily be altogether defeated in its object if played too hard or too soft. If strength or the consideration of strength be the chief cause of nervousness, billiards ought there-

fore to be more of a test of nerve than golf. I contend, however, that it is not, because of the varying conditions of the greens and turf. In billiards you play for a whole evening or for a whole match on the same table; that is a very small object as compared with a putting-green, and if you have any pretensions to play at all, you ought to gauge the pace of a billiard-table after an hour's play. At golf, however, it may be truly said that no one putting-green is exactly like any other—one is fast, another slow, one smooth, another uneven, one with one sort of turf, another with another. Some holes are in a sort of pot, which, though small just where the hole is, nevertheless has widely expanding sides, and you probably will find your ball dead if you get it into it at all from any distance; but another is on a table-land, where the chief difficulty is not to get the ball on the table-land but to keep it there. You may find one green covered with blown sand, while another has not even much grass on it; while one green may be up-hill on the approach side, and another downhill. Of course it is easy to see if a green is on a level and if on a slope, but it is by no means

easy always to judge by the eye whether a green is faster or slower than its immediate predecessor. One spiky blade of grass may make all the difference in laying a ball dead or holing it, and the eye cannot always be depended on to see such things. To get the strength of every green fixed in your mind is difficult for any man, for a nervous man well-nigh impossible.

There is another reason why golf is a greater test of nerve than billiards, and that is the variety of weapons that you must have for different strokes. You play with the same cue at billiards, with the same bat at cricket, with the same mallet at croquet, with the same racquet at tennis, lawntennis, and racquets; golf is the only game in the world, as far as I know, where it is absolutely necessary to have a minimum number of five or six clubs to play a game with. Now it is only the best players who are masters equally of five or six clubs, and I doubt if this can be said truly even of them. To the huge majority of players there are one or more clubs in which they cannot affect to feel much confidence. I do not pretend to say that an average player is always "off" with this or that club, but as every golfer knows there come times or spells of times when all skill with one class of club seems to vanish. A great player—I may say a very great player once told me that he had been unable to drive off the tee to his satisfaction for no less a period than four years—this player must have been more than human if to a greater or less degree he was not during all that time in an important match troubled with nerves when he took his stand on the tee. Driving off the tee for the majority of players is, I should say, on the whole the stroke where less foozling or bad play takes place than in any other stroke, and yet here is the case of a great player failing at it for four years, when he was very near the prime of life. Mr. Hilton, who has twice won the Championship, has said somewhere that he uses wooden clubs, brasseys, and spooned wooden clubs of sorts all through the green simply because he is absolutely unable to use iron clubs and play a champion's game with them. But Mr. Hilton has to take out an iron club, because there are some occasions when it is absolutely impossible to use any other club. If a man is off his drive he nevertheless has to play with his driver or brassey off the tee, for to drive with a cleek is ignominious and fatiguing withal. The player with only an ordinary capacity perhaps may feel really confident with only one club, and yet has to play with several; so of him it may be said that every stroke—except that played with one club—is a trial to his nerves. A fearless man is fearless because he has confidence, and to feel confidence is impossible when playing with a club that bitter experience has told you you cannot use.

Certain players, therefore, hate and cannot play with certain clubs; perhaps it may be said of a few, very few, that they play equally well or badly with all clubs. But even if this is true of clubs, there is yet another aspect of the question, and that is, the question of distance. I very much doubt whether any player in England could truthfully say that all distances were alike to him, that he played equally well or equally badly at a shot that wanted a 180-yards knock or a thirty. Take a stroke of eighty yards and one of forty, the mashie or some sort of lofted iron would be used for both these shots; and yet a player knows that at one distance he has a good chance of making a good stroke, at

the other distance his heart goes into his boots. But yet the ordeal has to be faced, the stroke must be attempted when it comes, as it assuredly will in due course. In billiards it is equally true to say that only a few men play equally well at different shots, the long losing hazard or the long winner, the screw, follow on, &c.; but at billiards it is far easier to regulate and engineer your game so as to avoid having to attempt a stroke you cannot play. If you dislike long losing hazards, you must and can try and play the cannon and potting game at the top of the table; if you hate those strokes, because you cannot do them, play an open game and go in for losing hazards from baulk. You can do this far more easily at billiards than you can at golf. It is possible to do it to a small extent only at golf. I have seen a player who was bad at lofting a ball over a bunker forty yards from the hole, play the previous stroke short in order, instead of having to play a forty-yards shot, to make one that took eighty yards to get over the bunker. In the same way you may go round a hazard instead of trying to get over it. But it is true of golf that you will find it impossible to avoid being compelled some time or other to play with a club you have little confidence in, and to negotiate distances you hate. I have heard it said that Goethe used to go to the top of a tower every day in order to accustom himself to look down without growing giddy. A golfer by practice may improve his play with a club, but he very likely will find that, during the time he has occupied himself with this club, another has mysteriously failed him; and in any case the terrible ordeal of putting has to be gone through, and it is the painful experience of bad putters that practice does by no means perfect, but only causes new terrors to appear.

Still, I think, on the whole, increasing age does carry some compensation for golfers; and I believe that when a man has played some years, and his handicap, may be, is brought from scratch to three, it is often found that his short game, especially his putting, is rather improved than otherwise. He has lost some of his length, he cannot force a ball out of its bunker as he did formerly, and his eye is not quick at judging the distance of about

eighty yards which he has to carry to get over some danger. But he is somewhat pachydermatous and case-hardened when he gets on the green, and it is astonishing what a difference a deadly long putt can make in the fortunes of a match. The middle-aged player perhaps realises the fact that golf is a game, while to the youngster it is business: the veteran plays philosophically, and if he does this he may very likely find himself putting respectably. It is a trifling blot on a great game that putting, relatively to the rest of the game, is far too important. A man who foozles his drive and slices his approach, but who is nevertheless always down in two strokes after he has got on the putting-green, if not in one, is very hard to beat except his opponent is a really good player.

It has been said, that every match is won by the short game; this, like many much-quoted sayings, is a half-truth. You cannot win a match if you approach and putt badly; but there are some courses, Sandwich, for instance, where you may just as well go home as dream of winning a match or making a respectable score if you are "off" your driving. At Sandwich,

therefore, you can with truth remark that the match cannot be won by the bad driver.

Closely connected with the question of nerve is that of temperament. It is not proposed to make this a treatise on the game: if it were I should begin with the truism that it is wise for a golfer to keep his temper. One great value of games is that they are the finest discipline for the temper. There can be no doubt that golf is terribly trying to a man. The hideous feeling of discomfort that comes over a player when he has topped his ball and made a deep hole in it, the terrible persistency with which ball after ball is sliced, the missing of one or two really short putts, the bad luck that attends him when putting really well, the way the hole is missed by a tenth of an inch, the frequent bad lies -all these combine to make life a burden. But though golf may be more trying to the temper than any other game, every game has its trials. Tennis, for instance, when you first fail to win a short chase, or your opponent keeps on serving nicks; billiards, when your ball is always under a cushion, or the balls dead safe time after time; cricket, when an umpire has given you out by a

mistake of judgment-all these are trials, and they form part of the discipline of life. But on the whole I think that golf is perhaps the greatest trial of all. The bad-tempered golfer is a nuisance and anxiety to himself and his friends; indeed I have seen it come to such a pass that, though a man may have friends anywhere else, they are not to be found on the links. Some men abuse their poor innocent beast of burden, the caddie, in a manner painful to hear. It is far better and more humane to abuse your opponent who has a right of reply, than your caddie who has none. The tempers of some golfers have their humorous side, but there are also some that are painful to witness. We must congratulate ourselves that the glorious element of humour is never quite absent from golf, serious though the game and the Scotch nation be. But the ridiculous exhibition of temper and sulkiness that a great many players show habitually, only begins to be humorous when the game is over and the opponent of the irascible one is telling a congenial friend after dinner about it, and the offender is not present.

We must not judge our friends harshly.

There are some tempers which Satan must have had a hand in forming, and if others are fortunately not afflicted in the same way, they must remember that golf is a very irritating Most players improve in temper, or, rather, a philosophical calm comes over them, as they grow older; but there are some, forming quite a respectable minority, of whom the exact contrary is the truth, and the melancholy fact has to be recorded that they get worse and worse. It is trying perhaps to find oneself beaten by youths, who a few years before used to touch their caps to you, and you presented with a third; but it is odd that everybody does not realise that this development is inevitable, and should therefore have come naturally and not as a violent We all admire the gentlemanlike surprise. courtesy with which some accept their fate, and play with some opponent of about the same age, or in congenial foursomes; but how painful, and yet how humorous is the sight of a man who under similar circumstances becomes irritable, fussy, fidgety, a pitiful sight to men and angels. Such cases, however, are painfully common, and like Jorrocks, we can only implore ingenuous

youth to try and avoid these pitfalls, and realise while still young and in the heyday of his success, that the inevitable hour must come sooner or later, and make it a duty to meet it with philosophic calm.

We all know the golfer with fads. I have played at many games, but golf is played by more faddists than have been returned to the House of Commons during the past ten years. write of these fads, just to state in bold English what they are, is enough to show their absurdity. One man insists on having his caddie and everybody he may be playing with, fixed behind his back and nowhere else-on the absurd ground, I suppose, that if they take up their position in any other spot they catch his eye. The batsman at cricket protests in vain if he asks short-slip and point to move to short-leg because when he plays the ball they catch his eye. There are other players who have a fit if, when they have the honour, they find their opponent's ball teed up before their caddie has put their own on the tee. Why they cannot move their opponent's ball if it is in the way, or if it prevents them from placing their ball in the spot they require, or leave it alone if it does not, it is impossible to say. A funeral is not an exciting or particularly pleasant occupation, but there are many funerals where a dead silence is not more cultivated than at some golf matches; and it is stupid and useless to fly into a passion because somebody thirty or forty yards off who is not playing golf at all, or at any rate has nothing to do with you, talks or laughs so that you must hear him. Unless the green is a private one the talker has as much right to be there and to laugh or talk as you have to play golf, and every player should try and keep this fact in mind. It is advisable that nobody should stand behind a man's club when he hits the ball, but even this, I feel convinced, a man can get accustomed to, if he will only apply his mind to it. If you don't want to talk yourself you can be as dumb as a drum with a hole in it, as Sam Weller says, and you may go farther, and forbid anybody to speak to you; but to stamp and swear because somebody within hearing distance of you chooses to talk to a friend is ridiculous and silly, partly because it is contemptible, and partly because, as you are not in a position to stop all con-

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versation on the links, you must grin and bear it.

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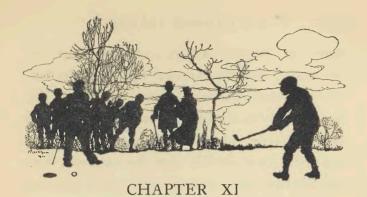
To ingenuous youth I observe that all these fads are absurd, and nobody who possesses any selfdiscipline need fall a victim to them. Don't let a youth suppose that, because a golfer of great skill is a victim to one or more of these fads, it is necessary that he should be so also. Every youth should be told by some candid friend that to be a faddist is silly, and if the desire be resisted when he is young it will never prevail. Drinking is apparently pleasant to many, judging by the Excise returns, but ingenuous youth is told by a wise father that he must not give way to it, and he does not. In like manner, if a young golfer makes up his mind that he will not allow himself to be disturbed if a rook flies across the line of play, or his opponent talks to his caddie, he will find that such things will not disturb him and he will enjoy the game more himself and be a far pleasanter companion and opponent to everybody else. You can let anything grow upon you if you permit it to do so, and why should we expect a man to have disciplined himself in his youth to avoid gluttony or any other pleasing vice,

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and not have feelings of scorn for the golfer who has allowed every absurd fad to take such possession of him that he is a slave to them, and an annoyance to himself and a nuisance to his fellow-creatures. But I suppose such things will always be. One bit of advice may finish this chapter—let faddists play each other and leave the non-faddists to enjoy their game in their own way.





Amateurs and Professionals

IT appears to be the case that the number of amateurs who have apparently no occupation, and who therefore can give their whole time to the pursuit of their favourite enjoyment, has increased and is increasing. There are amateur cricketers who play for a county all through the season, and there are amateur golfers who, living near a links, devote most of the year to their own club and ground, and spend what remains over at some famous Scotch links like North Berwick or St. Andrews. Of course there always have been individuals fortunate enough to be able to do this, but it seems to me the number is increasing, and the result will be that, as far as skill and proficiency at the game are concerned, there will not be

much to choose between amateurs and professionals. For the last few years Messrs. Ball, Tait, Hilton, Laidlay, Hutchinson, and Balfour would have been able to hold their own against Taylor, Herd, Park, the two Kirkaldys, and Braid, and in this case the amateurs have not all been able to give their whole time to golf. As for cricket, it is no good mincing words; we all know that many so-called amateurs are and have been professionals, have been paid indirectly if not directly, and have, in fact, lived by the game. I do not think that this is the case at golf, and I earnestly hope that it never will be. One reason, and a very substantial reason, against it is that golf is a game for individuals, cricket is for a club or county; gate money cannot be charged for one, while the other lives on it. There is no rivalry between St. Andrews and Prestwick, Hoylake and Sandwich, as there is between Surrey and Notts, or Yorkshire and Lancashire. If a man wants to make money at golf, he can only do it by becoming an obvious professional, taking charge of a green, or being employed and paid as a coach. Our so-called amateurs at cricket

carry on quite a different system: they accept money under the disguise of expenses, they are called under-secretaries of the clubs, while they play every match; and finally, a benefit match is not played in their behalf, but a complimentary match is, and I have never yet heard a definition given of these two terms which would establish a difference between them. You may blink at the fact in whatever way you like, but when once any sort of payment is given, whether under the head of expenses or whatever else you like, you then and there make it impossible to have clear and sound principles whereby you may call every man one of two things—an amateur or professional.

I can only explain the very large number of amateurs by the fact that the wealth of the country is being distributed over wider areas. It would not appear to be quite germane to a talk on golf, but it is, I believe, true that the increase in the number of limited liability companies is one cause of the increase of the ranks of the amateurs who can practically devote all their time to golf. Where manufactories, ironworks, and coal-pits were all worked by an individual, or

by an individual and his sons or brothers, each had to take his share of the work, and very hard work it was, too. The hunting, shooting, or cricket had to be pursued as a pastime and as a change. In course of time, however, we find that the family colliery is a public company, with a board of directors, and owned not by two or three, but by hundreds of proprietors, and managed by perhaps one or two managing directors, who practically do all the work, while the profits are scattered all over the country. The result is that the labours of a few men make the profits of many, and the many can play golf, cricket, or anything else they like. Socially, in one sense, this is all to the good: it is far better that when large profits are made they should be distributed amongst many rather than amongst a few. Whether it is good that so large a number of men should be in a position to live not on their own exertions but on that of others, is a question that cannot be discussed here, but it explains to my mind the large increase in the numbers of those who can devote more time to golf and cricket now than the professionals

did forty years ago. At golf, as I have said before, it is impossible to make money as an amateur, at any rate sufficient money to constitute a livelihood. But a professional at golf who is steady, and has been wise enough to learn to make clubs and balls, has now a fine opportunity of leading a healthy life and making a good income. The enormous growth of golf in England and Wales found many clubs in want of greenkeepers, club-makers, and players, and Scotland was denuded of professionals steady and wise enough to take greens some few years back. Now the professional youth of England has learnt the art, and, as far as professionals are concerned, the Scotch monopoly has been broken up. Taylor, Vardon, and many others can now compete with the best, and it is a good illustration of the quickness of Englishmen to pick up games that so many have been found who are first-class players. Golf has indeed taken root in England to a degree that is almost miraculous, and the demand for clubs and balls has made possible the establishment of businesses devoted to their manufacture which would have staggered our forefathers could they have foreseen these things. It really has come to this, that Englishmen, wherever they go, must have golf, and France has to supply their needs, and Italy, and Spain, while America is spending fortunes in the pursuit of the game. All these countries were obliged, in the first instance, to get their clubs and balls from Scotland, and if the canny Scotch club-maker has not done well during the last few years it is surprising.

Cricket can only be played in the summer, football can be played any time of the year except the summer, but golf, though perhaps at its pleasantest in spring and autumn, can be played by the real enthusiast all through the year, and in consequence the professional is more constantly employed in one sense. But for caddies and for professional players who have no other trade golf is somewhat intermittent, and if I could dare to give advice to the nation generally, I should advise those responsible for the education of professional youth to insist on the teaching of something besides the mere playing of golf. If you think of the life of a caddie you will see at once that it is somewhat of an intermittent and loafing

character. The employer plays two rounds a day; this means about four and a half hours' work for the caddie, not enough to keep him constantly employed, but just enough to keep him from engaging himself in any other pursuit for the rest of the day. He is probably handling clubs and mastering the art of the game, but it is nevertheless not by any means a wholesome life, and the wise parent will not hesitate to make him learn a trade if he can get the chance. I also think it wise and right for golf clubs not to encourage the trade of the caddie for youths above fifteen or sixteen years old. The trade may be all very well for a boy, but carrying clubs ought not to be the staple occupation of a man; he is bound to take to drink, for he has so much idle time on his hands. The Scotch are far more particular in the enforcing of the Education Act than the English.

¹ The picture of Alick, an old Scotchman who was employed by the Blackheath Golf Club for the first forty years of this century, is a poetical illustration of the old-fashioned caddie. If the honest truth be told, these old Scotch caddies could not be described as famous for sobriety, though I hope old Alick was an exception.

At a crowded green like North Berwick, for instance, it is almost impossible to get a boy of thirteen and under to act as caddie; they are all at school. In England somehow there seems to be no difficulty at all. The golfer therefore is driven to get somebody, for to carry your own clubs is slavery, so grown-up men are pressed into the service, and as long as the season lasts the man does very well. But when the visitors go there is no longer the same demand, and under ordinary circumstances the man caddie would find himself in a bad way. Employers will not employ a man who wants to come and go just as his services as caddie permit him, so if there were no other means of earning a livelihood the caddie would go on the rates. At many seaside links, however, there are opportunities of fishing, and the dual trade of fisherman and caddie is very common in Scotland. I can see no objection to this system; the fisherman's life is a hard life, and a little variety does the man no harm, but only good. The objection is that winter fishing is the hardest sort of fishing, and it is the time that there is the least golf. Still there is in the case of the fisherman-caddie a double trade, and it is far better that there should be.

If your youthful caddie seems bent on devoting all his life to golf in some shape or other, he should be forced to become apprenticed to the local club-maker, who should initiate him in the mysteries of club-making and club-repairing. If he becomes good at this he stands a better chance of getting employed on a permanent place as professional to a club. If the club is a prosperous one he has plenty of club-making, and will have to employ several men in the shop, while he has only to supervise. This will give him time for playing golf, and there are many cases where a partnership concern is started, and a fine golfer takes into partnership an equally good club-maker, and the result is most profitable, though I may be excused if I think the man who plays has a better time than the man who is in the shop. But there is money in it, as Mr. Gradgrind would say, and there are many more unpleasant ways of earning a livelihood than a club shop. It smells so nice and is so clean, there is so much gossip going on, and the ways of golfers are so varied, and the agonised endeavours of many to get

a club to suit them and make them good players is so profitable to the club-makers, and is moreover an idiosyncrasy so easy to encourage, that, on the whole, these dealers have a very good time.

Cricket and golf are the two games where professionals and amateurs can mix and play with each other with perfect freedom. There are some sports where the thing is impossible. Rowing and athletics are either one thing or the other: if it is desirable to settle the question whether A, a professional runner, or B, the great amateur, is the best over a mile, there is no way of doing it except by A becoming an amateur, or B a professional. But any golf amateur can play a professional if he has no objection to pay them the proper fee, and he may go so far as to bet to a moderate amount with his opponent. It is the case, I hear, that money does not by any means always pass at the end of these games, but a ball is frequently the medium of exchange, and the contango system is frequently adopted without payment of interest. But foursomes and singles are frequently played on the mixed plans, and it is a good thing for the game that such is

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the case. On the whole, I consider the life of a professional golfer, who is steady and can make clubs, is as pleasant a life as can be spent by a man of that class, and is by no means the least profitable.





THERE is a tendency in these days to cultivate in most games a brutal, effective style of play. Our forefathers used to play a gentler game, with more regard to grace and style and form. At cricket it used to be considered bad form and bad play to hit an off-side ball to the on; now it is done whenever there is an opportunity, but it is an ugly stroke. At tennis the railroad service was practically never attempted except when the server had to defend a hazard side chase or a very long one on the service side. The common service was the ordinary side wall pent-house and back wall service, giving the striker-out scope for that lovely and graceful cut stroke into the left or right-hand corner which was a joy to behold.

The whole principle of the game was the chase, and to succeed in making a series of good chases depended either on great knowledge of length or the power of cut. It was finesse and science. There was plenty of opportunity for strong and vigorous hitting when the position of affairs made the dedans and tambour the desired object, but the general character of the game was scientific placing of the ball, accurate length, strong cut, and head play. All this is changed with a vengeance, and our American cousins were the pioneers of a hard, fast, brutal, but terribly effective style of play. Pettitt was the individual who proved to a sorrowing English public that for the purpose of winning games a fast underhand service running along the pent-house, often nicking, and if not a dead nick, sticking to the side wall was more effective than the old graceful method. It was impossible to play the old cut stroke off such services. All that could be done was to boast and force. Similia similibus curantur, and once begin a hard and fast attack, the only way to win the rest is to meet severity with severity. Chases are forgotten, each player rushes all over the court trying to

find a winning opening, and the game as an exposition of scientific graceful play came to an end when Pettitt took this country by storm with the underhand railroad service.

At cricket, as has been said, the reason for the modern style of play is principally to be found in the perfection of modern wickets. Bowlers have to resort to ungainly dodges, the field are all crammed in the slips and on the off-side, and the batsman in order to get the ball away hits across the wicket. There is not altogether the same state of things in the world of golf, but even here there are dangers ahead, and as has been said before, the chief danger is the unhealthy predominance given to playing for a score. But there is another thing which rather strikes an observer of the game, and that is the length of course. The modern clubs, with their odd shapes and sizes and heavy bullet heads, really exist to satisfy the players to whom length seems everything; but it is impossible to wonder at this when the new links seem to be laid out on the principle that the really good hole is one where it is possible for the long player, by a tremendous

drive and very long second shot, to get his ball hole high. It is quite true that these holes may be conceded to be on the whole the best sort to produce the finest golf, but still it should be remembered that if long holes predominate to an undue extent the test of excellence is being confined to the youthful. There is nothing more certain than that in golf, as in cricket, great length of hit is possible to those whose joints are full of oil and supple, and to those only, which in other words means youth. It is possible to lay out a course entirely in the way I have described. Every hole may be at least 400 yards long, and such a links could only tempt the young long-hitting player. The old-fashioned golfer may exaggerate the old-fashioned style of lofting and cutting and approaching, but still he has some argument in his favour. Some practice, of course, is necessary to arrive at a longhitting style of play, but it is far easier to a young man to do this than to learn to play the scientific lofting shot; and if links are laid out with too many long holes in them, some injustice is done to the man who, though not a long driver, is nevertheless, owing to the excellence of his short game, a more scientific player than the slashing youth who finds so many holes laid out to suit his particular game.

There attaches a sort of glamour to the slashers, which is not quite as it should be. The newspapers, for instance, make far more fuss about a phenomenal drive or brassey than they do about a neat, graceful lofted stroke, which demands perhaps the greatest skill that any golfer can attain. The public generally are instructed on the question of driving, which is only a question of length, and there is rather too much pandering to the vulgar taste which has its counterpart in cricket in the "bloomin' igh, bloomin' ard, and bloomin' hoften."

It ought to be possible to lay out links where each style of play should have its turn. There may safely be holes of great length to call forth the utmost strength of the youth to reach in two strokes; there may be others where, however you play them, it is impossible to reach the hole without a skilful loft. One or two holes ought to be of such a length that instead of driving you should be forced to approach them from the tee. Such a stroke is really far harder to do than to

carry a bunker 140 yards from the tee. A course, if perfect, should never be open to the charge that it is no good So-and-so going to play there, because his drive is not far enough. That may be the reason why it is difficult for him to win certain holes, but there ought to be other holes where compensation is possible; and the long-driving youth being forced to use restraint, is punished for attempting this wholesome discipline, and the middle-aged man may smile.

The thing we plead for, therefore, may be said to be the scientific power of restraint as opposed to mere muscle and power. Youth must always have an advantage in so far that it is always within the bounds of possibility that the young man may learn to play the scientific short game; and if he happens to be a long player as well, then he deserves all the success he gets. But it is absolutely true that after forty years of age there is an appreciable diminution in length of drive and power, and though fortunately there is no reason why golf should not be enjoyed as much as ever, it would be a misfortune if the honours of golf should altogether be denied to the man of mature years merely because the stress of time had taken

some yards off his long game. If all links were to be made to suit youth there would not be nearly so much enjoyment for the middle-aged. A great deal may be learned from the grand game of tennis as played before Pettitt so completely changed and, as many think, ruined the game. Mr. Heathcote was amateur champion for twenty-five years, and held it when he was fifty years old; old Barre was the best player in the world when he was fifty years old, and Edmund Tompkins was in the first flight at the same age. Now tennis is all rush and hit, and unless the rules are altered it will become as much a game for youth as football. This is a misfortune both from the point of view of the game itself and for the enjoyment it provides for its followers. Of the bad effect of the game by a too great predominance being given to score play something has already been said; but the time has come for protest when our golfing legislators are called upon to alter the rules in the interests of what I have called the brutal efficiency side of the game.

In golf there is a rule that on the puttinggreen a ball in match play must not be liftedthough it may be between the other ball and the hole—unless the balls are within six inches of each other. This rule has been in existence ever since golf was invented, and for years was accepted without grumbling as part of the game. As time went on, medal play, a bastard and degrading form of play as compared to match play, came into greater prominence, and players generally came to place an exaggerated value on score play: and now there is an increasing agitation in favour of the stimie being abolished even in match play. The one fact I complain of in this agitation is that those in favour of the abolition of the stimie seem to me to base their arguments solely on the fact that it is hard luck on the man who is stimied, and they ignore any other question whatever. If it is a real stimie, that is, if it is impossible to hole the ball by getting roundand I believe it is often said to be impossible when it is not—the player generally has it in his power to hole the ball by taking a laid back club like a mashie, and lofting it over the opponent's ball into the hole. Now, the fact that this is a beautiful stroke and a joy both to do and to look at, seems to be lost sight of by those who desire the abolition of the stimie. They do not consider the niceties of the game, or what may be called its æsthetic side; to them it appears to be a matter of no moment to preserve an artistic and beautiful stroke; all this is nothing in their eyes. Medal or score play is a necessity in these days of competitions and spring and autumn meetings, and stimies no doubt must be abolished in this sort of competition; but I for one object to the spirit of score play being allowed to pervade the whole game of golf. The agitation in favour of the abolition of the stimie is, I believe, largely due to the fact that many players, even when playing match games, are keeping a score, and no doubt stimies do damage a round where every stroke is of importance. Nobody objects to a man keeping his score, provided that he does not stand for some minutes by the hole while he is counting his strokes and putting them down in a book to the great inconvenience of those behind him; but what seems to me pernicious is the idea that a stroke, beautiful to look at and delightful to play, which has been part of the game ever since it was first played, should be sacrificed because it is in some cases hard luck to its

victims and interferes with the score of others. First, on the question of luck. We are all of us apt to take a one-sided view of luck. We remember when it is against us, and forget when it is in our favour. No doubt there are times when it is extremely hard luck to be stimied, but to no one individual is there a monopoly of bad luck. Everybody has his turn of fortune's favours as well as of her blows. The game has not been invented, in which a ball is involved, where luck is not an important feature. The luck of the stimie may be regarded as part of the general element of fortune which is an absolute necessity in every game of ball. Next, as to the question of score. The man who is always trying to make a score has no grievance whatever in medal play, for in such games the stimie has been abolished. In an ordinary game by holes he need not play stimies if he can get his opponent to agree before the match starts, and we are therefore driven to the conclusion that he argues for the abolition of the stimie because in match play where he cannot get his opponent to agree to its abolition he has to play with the stimie to the prejudice of his score. The St. Andrews Committee, if that is the correct way to describe the M.C.C. of the golfing world, is asked to abolish a singularly beautiful stroke because in all tournaments and all games by holes, unless the antagonists agree not to have them, stimies are played. If it were possible I should like to hear from any experienced player what percentage of matches have been lost or won by the stimie. I believe the truth is very few matches have had their results influenced by the stimie in any way.

To begin with, it is never absolutely impossible to negotiate a stimie, except perhaps in the case of the blocking ball being close to the hole and the player's ball a yard or more distant from the hole on the same side. This state of things happens sometimes, but even when it does it may occur to both antagonists equally, and will not affect the match. In all other cases it is possible to hole out when stimied, either by creeping round or by lofting over, and you are justified in accepting with caution the many random statements you hear from aggrieved players that they had cruel luck, having been stimied three times. These players would be

astonished if they could see Taylor or Sayers hole out with the balls in practically the same positions. Such players ask for the stimie to be abolished, not because the interests of the game demand it, but because they are incompetent. The same argument was held in the case of the spot stroke at billiards, but there was this enormous difference—in billiards the spot stroke became so easy to all first-class players that it paid to neglect all the rest of the game. It made the game dull to watch, and even monotonous to the players themselves. The incompetents raised the question in both instances, but the facts and circumstances were quite different.

Reduced to a simple statement it comes to this, that an agitation is started to abolish a very beautiful stroke in the interests generally of a class of players who ought not to be encouraged, those who are eternally playing for a score which is no sort of interest to anybody but themselves. The individual cases of hardship are really very few in number, and when weighed in the balance with the beauty of the lofted stroke over a ball, do not of themselves justify the conclusion that

on this account such a pretty stroke ought to be abolished.

Golf has not, so far, suffered much in the way of sacrifice of style. Other games have, and there are one or two dangers ahead: so a word of pleading may not be in vain. The long player must always have an advantage, but length of drive and play through the green should not be absolutely essential for a man to win championships. Perhaps it is not so at present, but there is a danger that it may become so.

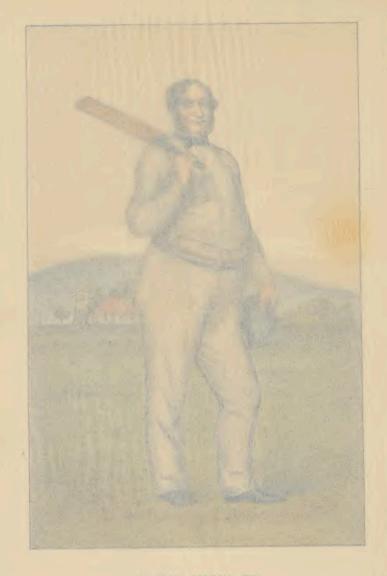




ALFRED MYNN Ese



WE are all conscious of having in our hearts some soft spot for a real hero, and at cricket each man has his hero. If he happens to be a bat, who does not know the sensation that runs through our frame when he is seen walking to the wicket? It may be a difficult bowler's wicket, were somehow we have trust and considerate in the somehow we have trust and considerate in the somehow when there is a soft it on the top; then can show even modelers. He is not a soft men have then there is not a soft men have then the sound when there is a soft men have then the sound with men have the sound with men and sound with men



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WE are all conscious of having in our hearts some soft spot for a real hero, and at cricket each man has his hero. If he happens to be a bat, who does not know the sensation that runs through our frame when he is seen walking to the wicket? It may be a difficult bowler's wicket, yet somehow we have trust and confidence in him, for the first essential of our hero must be that he succeeds where others fail. In these days everybody gets runs except when there is a soft wicket and a sun caking it on the top; then there are few indeed who can show even moderate batting except our hero. He is not a random slogger, though such men have their real uses especially on difficult wickets: our real hero always plays the game, but he has

an eye of a hawk and a brain of a general, a brain which can adapt itself to things as they come, be they rough or smooth. If the wicket pops and hangs, he has got the power of self-restraint; the bat will be in the right place, but held limply and with the left shoulder well up and forward, and his eye will never be off the ball from the second it leaves the bowler's hand; he has observed its hang, its turn, and its pace, and finally he has mastered it; he has either stopped it or else used his wrists at the right second, and, without hesitation, hit it hard. There is no playing at the ball, as so many do in these days, entirely in the hope that the ball will take a certain line and pace; there is no expectation or hope in the mind of our hero; he takes nothing for granted; he knows the wicket is difficult, and he trusts nothing except his own eye, but the eye of a real hero does not fail him in the moment of danger and difficulty. If the difference between a hero and the common herd may be defined, it is that one possesses real genius and the rest do not. When, however, we are asked to define genius, all we have to say is that to do so is impossible; but,

for our present purpose, it is sufficient to say that a batting genius is a man who can adapt his play to circumstances and has the power of watching the ball. If the wicket is fast and easy, the man of genius can play forward and hit all round the ground, but his style is not stereotyped; if the wicket is slow and the ball inclined to hang, he can play back and place the ball for singles, and pull a short ball to leg for four. He will know when to leave his ground and drive a medium pace ball from the pitch; in short, he will prove himself to be a man of infinite resource, who will throw the dogmas of correct play and treatises to the winds, and obey no rule but simply his own genius.

I am tempted to make these remarks in this year of grace 1900, after about seven weeks of the cricket season have gone. During this time cricketers have seen the Haywards, the Abels, and several more score their hundreds when the wickets have been easy and fast and true, but there have been also difficult wickets, and if the truth be told, in the hearts of many of us there is a wish that we may live to see a year in which there will be enough rain mixed with sunshine, to

make the wickets unlike what they have been for the last ten years.

I would ask any fair-minded, impartial observer of the game whether he has seen more than two or three real scientific exhibitions of batting played on wickets favouring the bowlers.

I saw a few weeks ago a match played between the counties of Surrey and Essex, where the wicket was difficult, but where the bowling on both sides was not—with the exception of Mead's for Essex and Lockwood's for Surrey—of a sort that could not indeed have been played by really good batsmen. Yet in the whole match there were only two innings of over fifty played, and it cannot be said that one of those, viz. Abel's, was of a very high class. Of Abel's innings it may be said that it did show one very remarkable capacity, and this capacity Abel shares with another great Surrey batsman of a past generation, viz. Jupp.

Abel, like Jupp, has the being able to run half-way to short-leg and yet hit the ball with a very crooked bat. In the particular match I am referring to, Abel did this to perfection, but how he can do it, I confess is a mystery

to me. Whenever Kortright bowled on the legstump or even the middle and leg-stumps, Abel might have been seen drawing his right foot away from the wicket and yet stopping the ball. Perrin, on the other hand, for Essex, in an innings of over ninety, played sound, scholar-like cricket, both timing the ball and hitting the loose ones in a manner which showed him to be a real cricketer. Hayward, on fast, true wickets, perhaps the best bat in England, showed himself to be a perfect child when playing Mead on a difficult, soft wicket. There was nobody in fact in the whole match, except Perrin, whom a stranger who understood the game would have described as a first-rate bat. There was another match played between Essex and Yorkshire on a soft, difficult wicket, where the same phenomenon might have been observed; in this match it was the oldest player on either side who showed to an experienced looker-on what real scientific batsmen can do. A. P. Lucas, in each innings, played absolutely perfect cricket; he scored runs and was not out in his second innings, and I have no hesitation in saying there was more sound scientific play displayed by Lucas in this match than in any innings of 200 runs that has ever been played on the modern true fast wickets.

Our real heroes in cricket, as far as batting is concerned, are those few players who can show sound cricket on difficult wickets, and it is impossible to deny the fact that the number of such players is very few. Grace, Shrewsbury, Lucas, A. G. Steel, and Webbe—all these could be trusted not to score on every occasion, but to show good cricket more often than the general run of players, many of whom scored their hundreds on easy wickets. But in these days, independently of hitters like Jessop, there is hardly one batsman, except perhaps Jackson, who is as good on difficult wickets as Shrewsbury and Lucas, both of whom are over forty years of age.

The bowling hero is an even rarer article than the batting hero. There are natural bowlers who on any wicket may be relied upon to keep a good length; and on soft difficult wickets, they are certain to meet with success, but they are, as a rule, lacking in variety; and though on easy wickets they keep runs down and on difficult wickets get most batsmen out, they are always apt to be demoralised by the

modern fierce hitter, of whom Jessop is the present conspicuous example. It is not easy to explain the fact, but such hitters seem to prefer the rather fast good-length bowler like Hearne to bowlers who pitch the ball fairly well up but with some break, and can deliver the high-in-the-air dropping ball, but never far enough up for a quick-footed hitter to hit them full pitch.

In the University match of 1899 Jessop scored 42 runs in about twenty minutes, but the Oxford captain with excellent judgment kept on Knox at the Nursery End, who was just such a bowler as I have described. Jessop made fun of all the other bowlers, but though he hit Knox several times to the ropes, he was obliged to hit at the pitch of the ball which had some turn on it, and sooner or later it looked obvious that he would be caught; and he eventually was. To a batsman like Shrewsbury, who plays on really scientific principles, such a bowler as Knox would present no difficulty whatever, but it is a curious fact that such bowlers are more generally successful in getting out what our forefathers would have

called reckless sloggers than Hearne or Mead would be.

The real bowling heroes are those like Spofforth and Lohmann, who could quickly realise the situation, and adapt their methods to various styles of batsmen. They are not bound to any particular length or pace, but seem to have an instinct which tells them which is the particular ball most distasteful to the batsmen to whom they happen to be bowling; and though they may have their off days, they somehow never seem to get demoralised, and even if the big hitter does bring off some strokes for four he never appears comfortable. Bowlers of this class are Spofforth, Lohmann, and Trumble, but England has not had so many as she ought, and Englishmen seem to be slow to learn the lesson that the great Australian has taught.

The last cricket hero that will be discussed is the fierce hitter, and he is a development that mainly belongs to the present day. As long ago as 1880 the Australians brought over Bonner and McDonnell, and to the Australians again we owe the lesson that one or two hitters are essential for a really first-class eleven. The

real founder of the fierce-hitting school, however, was C. J. Thornton, who flourished from 1870 to 1880, and except perhaps Bonner no harder hitter has ever lived. Thornton, Bonner, McDonnell, Lyons, Hewitt, V. T. Hill, O'Brien, A. E. Trott, F. G. J. Ford, and Jessop-these are the names of perhaps the ten greatest hitters, but they are not by any means alike. Bonner, for instance, was a very hard hitter anywhere, including, what is rare in hitters pure and simple, the cut. Thornton, on the other hand, was famous for his big drives, the hardest of which were nearly straight over the bowler's head, and in this particular hit I do not think anybody has ever been quite so hard a hitter. Another characteristic of Thornton was that his biggest hits were made when he jumped out to meet the ball. Bonner, McDonnell, and Lyons, the three Australian hitters, used to hit fast-footed, as also does F. G. J. Ford. But for rapidity of run-getting and ability to hit balls of nearly every conceivable length, I regard Jessop as unequalled. There have been several wonderful Australian feats of hitting, notably one by Bonner at Scarborough in 1884, Lyons against M.C.C.

in 1893, and greatest of all McDonnell against a picked eleven of the North on a mud wicket in 1888, when he scored 82 out of 86, but on each of these occasions Bannerman was batting the other end; he was always a slow player, and when in with hitters hardly tried to score. But I can remember an innings of Jessop in Gentlemen and Players when F. G. J. Ford was in the other end, and it is hardly too much to say that contrasting the two hitters, Jessop made Ford look comparatively a slow player. reason why such hitters may be classed among the heroes of cricket is because not only is it necessary to have a wonderful eye to be able to hit like this, but the match is never safe for the opposite side till the hitter is out. No captain appears willing to run the risk of declaring the innings at an end till to make the runs or to get the side out is practically an impossibility. The hitter strikes a terror that carries a tremendous moral effect with it. In a few minutes after he has gone in both bowlers and field may have become completely demoralised, and the captain have lost his head. Lastly-and this is perhaps the most important point of all

—the big hitter has the power of knocking up 30 or 40 runs on a real difficult bowler's wicket, and such an innings often means bringing about a victory for his side. Sound batsmen like Shrewsbury and A. P. Lucas play splendid and scientific cricket on such a wicket, but they cannot score fast, and often have to carry out their bat because there is nobody to stop in with them; but the big hitter stays there only twenty minutes, and in that time scores 35 runs out of a total of 70, and it is for this reason big hitters are entitled to be numbered among the heroes of the game.

It is not so easy to define the heroes of golf, but in a general way there are certain well-defined characteristics about them. At cricket the real batting genius shows that he understands how to rise superior to difficulties. It is the same with the golfing genius. He has a way of rising to the occasion. He may find his ball anywhere except right under a wall or a railing, and in any of these circumstances you never can be sure that he will not, despite his position, bring off a fine stroke. It may be necessary for him to stuff in a few more yards carry

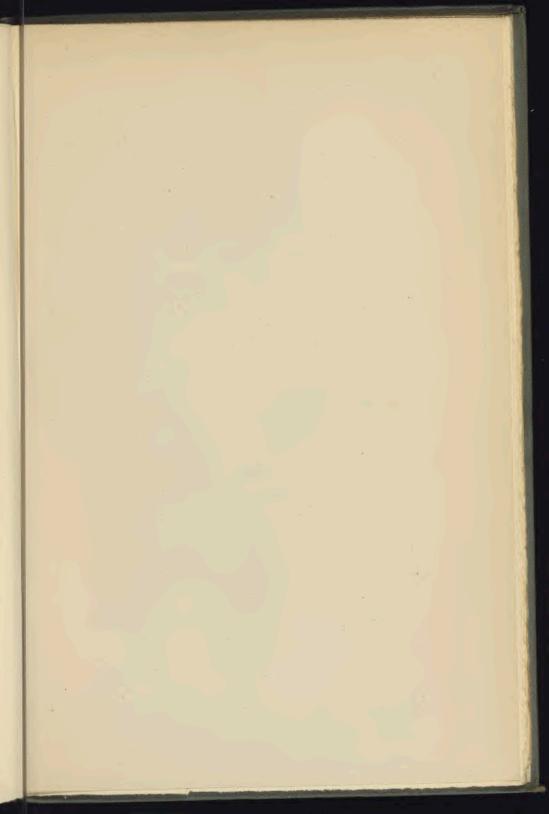
to enable a dangerous bunker or hazard to be "carried." Our golf hero nevertheless brings off the stroke: his adversary is tempted to try and do the same, and the result is disaster. He is not affected by a strong cross wind, and cheerfully takes his brassey and hits a long ball out of a cuppy lie. He may have a ten yards' putt to win or halve a hole; he takes time and care and the ball goes down; and lastly, as has been pointed out before, the golfing hero produces more or less of a paralysis in his opponents. It is the same at all games; the field are nervous when the batting hero is in, and he is more often missed than the ordinary batsman. In golf the genius is always tempting his mediocre rival to imitate him. If the genius drives a long ball, his rival presses to do the same and tops the ball into a bunker; and it is the same with a brassey shot through the green.

It is this nervousness, which all golfers seem to possess when playing against the Vardon and Taylor of the day, that really decides the issue. The golf hero may even be a little "off" his game, but somehow in a match the opponent cannot take advantage of this. He is conscious

of the feeling of the future that is always in him. The hero may have driven off the line: it does not matter; he has a faculty of recovery, his second shot will be an especially great one, and the fault of the drive will be redeemed. Some years ago Mr. J. E. Laidlay shared with Messrs. Ball, Tait, Hutchinson, and Hilton the leading position among amateurs; and if my memory serves me right, he won both spring and autumn medals at St. Andrews. On one of these occasions he was frequently off the line with his drive, but he went round in under 80, and to anybody except the golf hero to be off the line from the tee would mean to be nowhere. The great players have an extraordinary power of getting out of a difficulty: the very sight of one seems to put new vigour into their whole system; and if any definition of a golfing hero be possible, it would seem to be that to them, and to them only, is given the power of getting out of difficulties and the power to do the something extra, the few yards' extra carry, and the laying a ball nearly dead with the iron club.

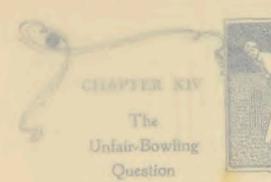
The golf hero has one great advantage over

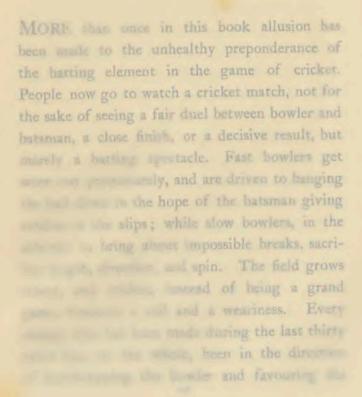
the cricketer hero-he has only to think of himself and his game: the cricketer has to bear the burden of ten colleagues, some of whom may contribute little to the strength of the side. If the great man happens to be a bowler, his most superhuman efforts may be baffled by a field that will not hold catches. The great golfer has only himself to think of, except in a foursome, and in a foursome it is comparatively easy for even a duffer of a partner, if only he is conscious of his own impotence, to do little to handicap his great colleague. Though, as has been said, the great man has a wonderful power of getting out of difficulties, he ought never to find himself in one, for the bad player ought to make it his chief object to avoid bunkers and hazards. If the bad player can succeed in this, the hero will win the match for him

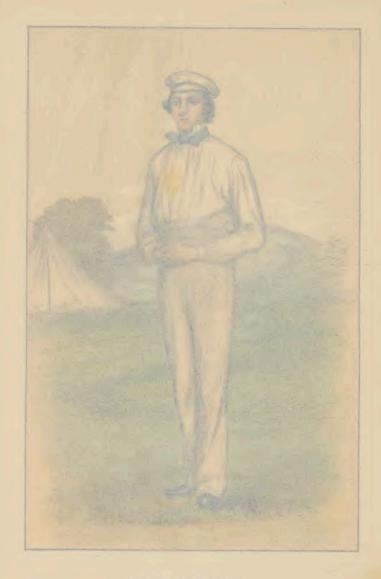




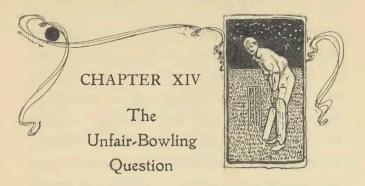
EDGAR WILLSHER.







EDGAR WILLSHER.



MORE than once in this book allusion has been made to the unhealthy preponderance of the batting element in the game of cricket. People now go to watch a cricket match, not for the sake of seeing a fair duel between bowler and batsman, a close finish, or a decisive result, but merely a batting spectacle. Fast bowlers get worn out prematurely, and are driven to banging the ball down in the hope of the batsman giving catches in the slips; while slow bowlers, in the attempt to bring about impossible breaks, sacrifice length, direction, and spin. The field grows weary, and cricket, instead of being a grand game, becomes a toil and a weariness. Every change that has been made during the last thirty years has, on the whole, been in the direction of handicapping the bowler and favouring the

batsman; and, as if this were not enough, the greater knowledge of soils and seeds, heavy rollers and mowing machines, have combined with the alteration of the rules to make mammoth scores the rule and not the exception. The general result has been drawn matches, a bowing down before the hideous power of gatemoney, and a degradation of what once was the grandest game in the world.

O'Connell once said that he could drive a coach and four through any Act of Parliament. Such a feat may not be possible in the case of the rules of cricket, but the rules of any game are so difficult to draft, and so much difference of opinion exists as to the proper way of interpreting them, that to a considerable extent umpires have to hold the scales. Umpires have ultimately to decide and to give a judgment on many points during a match, and, for the time being, against their ruling there is no appeal. To decide a leg-before-wicket question, a run out, a catch at the wicket, is difficult, but to decide the question as to what constitutes throwing as opposed to bowling, is harder still. So great is this difficulty that a body of cricketers, who have no organised legal position, have come to the front and endeavoured in a measure to take the solution of the throwing problem out of the hands of the umpires. This body of amateurs has named and classified certain bowlers. class it has placed bowlers whose delivery is not a matter of doubt, who do not bowl at all, but throw-in the opinion, at least, of the members of this unauthorised body of amateurs. Then there is another class which consists of bowlers about whose delivery there is a doubt, and this unauthorised body in this case, if I understand the question, has graciously allowed the umpires some liberty of action. The result is that umpires will most carefully watch these bowlers of the second class, and, if there is any doubt, "no-ball" them; but, with respect to the bowlers of the first class, it is to be presumed that if the wishes of the Captains are to be observed, they will be driven out of cricket: they have been given the black spot, to adopt a phrase out of "Treasure Island": they are deposed, and their cricket careers as bowlers must be at an end.

I intend no sort of disrespect to the gentlemen who have thus endeavoured to usurp the functions of the umpires. They are the captains of the various county elevens, and the names of Lord Hawke, Messrs. Mason, Jephson, Woods, Ranjitsinghi, Jones, Maclaren, M'Gregor, Jessop, are in themselves guarantees of merit and respect. But it may be asked whether the bowling element is fairly represented as opposed to the batting. Are not all these captains batsmen and only three of them bowlers? And is it not rather ungracious that on such a question, which mainly concerns bowlers, a tribunal consisting almost entirely of batsmen should give a decision on a purely bowling question? This is the first aspect that strikes one on considering the matter; but the whole question is so difficult that it may be well to consider carefully what is bowling and what is throwing.1

¹ It seems to us that in this matter the County Captains have acted quite beyond their powers. Till the rules of cricket are altered by the M.C.C., no one except an umpire has the least right to lay down the law as to who bowls fairly and who does not. The County Captains have constituted themselves a sort of supreme court over the head of the M.C.C. By their action they have struck one of the hardest blows at the true interests

I have said that a definition of throwing is impossible. There are only certain features that must be present whenever throwing exists. It is impossible to throw without bending the arm at the moment of delivery, indeed I have grave doubts whether it is possible to bowl fast with a bent arm without throwing. But this is absolutely certain—it never can be a throw if the ball is delivered with a straight arm: some bend of the arm must accompany every throw. It would seem from this that no so-called bowler, who bowls with a bent arm, must complain if his delivery is regarded with suspicion. If, therefore, the Marylebone Club wants to put the subject absolutely beyond any question, all that is necessary is to make it a rule that the ball must be delivered with a straight arm; and that if the arm is bent the umpire shall call "no ball." For reasons I shall give later, I think that this course would be a mistake; but undoubtedly it would finally abolish throwing, and, though it might be hard upon certain bowlers, it would settle a vexed and difficult

of cricket it is possible to conceive, and have done an injury which it may be difficult to remedy.

question. Is it, however, quite certain that to bend the arm at the moment of delivery is sufficient to make a throw? It is on this point that much difference of opinion exists.

One critic says that there must be a jerk of the elbow, a second that an indefinable something is brought into being by the wrist, a third that the thrower always checks his run before delivering the ball. Everybody attempts a definition, but nobody has succeeded; because to define a throw is impossible. We have all seen bowlers at Lord's whose delivery looks quite above suspicion when viewed from the pavilion behind the bowler's arm, but which looks altogether different when seen from the grand stand; and it is this fact, I suppose, that caused the M.C.C. to empower either umpire to call "no ball." Some critics say that neither umpire is in a position to judge if a ball is thrown or bowled; that this can only be known by the wicket-keeper or batsman, or by somebody, at any rate, who has no voice in the matter. My own opinion is that, though the batsman and wicket-keeper may be in a better position to judge than the umpires, they

cannot be infallible, and that the only man in the world who can know whether the ball is thrown or bowled is the bowler himself. Nobody could convince me that in Utopia, or any other place where all cricketers were sportsmen, and everybody wholly virtuous, there would be any bowling that was not fair. I mean by this, that in its first stages every ball that is thrown and not bowled has been done so intentionally. It is probable that the conscience and perceptions have become dulled by constant repetition of the offence, but I believe it to be a fact that the bowler, and the bowler alone, is the only man who can really know if a ball is bowled or thrown. So we arrive at this position: the power of "no-balling" cannot be given to the one person who really knows whether a throw has or has not been perpetrated, and it has to be given to the umpires, whose opinion must always be only too fallible.

I have said that it is very doubtful if a fast ball can be delivered with a bent arm except by a throw. I cannot back up this opinion by scientific reasons, but it would seem that the longer the leverage the easier is it to bowl fast; if you bend the arm you must lose some swing, and if notwithstanding this you can bowl a fast ball, you must make up the deficiency in swing by something — and that a throw. On this, however, there is a very great difference of opinion.

To sum up the whole controversy, I venture to lay down the following propositions: (1) To define a throw is impossible. (2) Nobody can tell whether a large proportion of doubtfully delivered balls are or are not throws, except the bowler himself. (3) The umpires are the only authorities who ought to adjudicate, as they are put in that position for the purpose, and have as good opportunities of judging as anybody except the bowler himself, the wicket-keeper, and batsman, all of whom are precluded from giving a decision. (4) It is impossible to throw unless the arm is bent; and if, therefore, the authorities want finally to disestablish throwing, let the rule be altered so as to make it obligatory to bowl every ball with a straight arm. The question then being very doubtful, except in a few very obvious cases of throwing, it ought, in my

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opinion, to be decided on broad principles. The point above all to be kept in mind, is how to promote the best interests of cricket.

Too many runs and drawn matches are the curse of modern cricket. It seems fated that every change made in the rules should favour the batsman, and increase the number both of runs and drawn matches. What, then, is the proper attitude to take with regard to this question of throwing? I may be unorthodox in the view I take, but I certainly think that considerable latitude ought to be given in favour of the bowler, and the benefit of the doubt be on his side, with this proviso, that cricket should not be allowed to become dangerous. You cannot lay down a hard and fast rule, but why should not the whole matter be looked at from a common-sense point of view? Why not allow all bowling, unless there can be no possible doubt that it is throwing, for slow and medium pace bowlers? Whilst in the case of very fast bowling, seeing that a throw under these circumstances would be dangerous, let the benefit of the doubt be the other way, and "noball" every doubtful delivery. Why is throwing

not allowed, and why was the rule originally passed that the ball must not be thrown or jerked? Because in the days of rough cricket to throw would have been dangerous to the batsman. It would be dangerous still, though the cricket grounds are so smooth. Yet, does any reasonable being suppose that cricket has suffered because there may be some doubt of the fairness of the delivery of Tyler, Geeson, McKibbin, at the present time, or of Southerton, Watson, David Buchanan, or Nash, in former days? I contend that bowlers of this kind ought never to be "no-balled," unless there is no manner of doubt in the minds of every judge of the game that the ball is thrown, not bowled. You would not damage perfectly legitimate bowling. It is no easier for the general run of cricketers to bowl with a doubtful action than with a fair action; but it is certain that it should be the object of every cricketer to diminish, not increase, the number of runs, and runs will increase if you disestablish a certain number of more or less successful bowlers. because there is some uncertainty about the fairness of their delivery. So easy is it to bat in

these days on the perfect cricket ground, that every encouragement ought to be given to the bowler. Can anybody say that this is done when you advise umpires to "no-ball" Tyler, whose bowling has hurt nobody, but has been of great assistance to Somersetshire? Let there be no manner of doubt as to the perfectly fair delivery of fast bowlers whose bowling is dangerous to the batsman; let the batsman have, as it were, the benefit of the doubt; but in every other case let it be an undoubted throw.

The captains in this case have, I think, acted unfairly and prematurely. They might have communicated privately with the M.C.C., and given it as their opinion that certain bowlers threw, and that there was doubt about the delivery of others. Then the M.C.C., acting on the undoubted weight of the captains' opinion, could have taken some steps. As it is, the captains have endeavoured to force the hands of the M.C.C., and usurped powers which do not belong to them; and this has been unfair to the cricketers named. Considering the grave importance of the step taken, it would have been only right and proper to put on the

agenda-paper notice of the point to be raised, but, if I am correctly informed, this was not done, and one captain at least left the meeting before the discussion was opened. We have also learned since that the meeting was not unanimous, for Mr. Ranjitsinghi wrote to disagree, wholly or in part, with the decision.

When a rule is written and incorporated in the laws of a game, repeal or alteration is always possible, but if a phrase or an epigram comes to have all the power of an unwritten law, repeal or alteration becomes a matter of tradition and sentiment, and is almost impossible to effect. Years ago, when matches were generally finished in two days because the wickets were more difficult, it became an unwritten law that unless the umpire felt no doubt whatever that a man was run out, leg before, stumped, or caught at the wicket or elsewhere, that he was given not out-in other words, the batsman was given the benefit of the doubt. This principle became fixed, and to this day it seems to me umpires are still in favour of the batsmen and against the bowlers. Umpires seem inclined to lean too strictly to the letter of the law, and

an equitable spirit is not theirs. Once again let me urge the importance of keeping in view the best interests of the game. If, when wickets were not so good, the runs not half so numerous, and drawn matches comparatively rare, it was in the best interests of the game that batsmen should be given the benefit of the doubt, surely now, when nearly half the matches on fast wickets are drawn, when one wicket averages nearly twenty runs as opposed to ten in former days, when bowlers get prematurely worn out, it is the bowlers who should have the benefit of the doubt. The rules are even altered as against the bowlers in this matter of throwing, because they lay it down that bowlers are to be "no-balled," unless the umpire is convinced that the delivery is fair; and a short time ago power was given to both umpires to "no-ball" a bowler for throwing. Personally, I think that it would be unjust and detrimental to the game if all bowlers who bowled with a bent arm were to be "no-balled," but if the authorities think that there should be no doubt about the matter, let them make the rule thus: All balls shall be bowled; if jerked, or delivered with a bent arm, the umpire shall call "no ball." If this were the ruling, there would at any rate be a final solution of a great difficulty, which would be far better than what happens now when Mold and Tyler play in one match and are allowed to bowl, and go on next day to another match and are "no-balled." As I said before, I think this course could only add to the horrible plethora of runs, and its advantages would not nearly balance its injustice and evils: but if it is not adopted, let the bowlers have the benefit of the doubt, and let there be no manner of doubt about the ball being thrown before the fatal "no ball" is called. Does any sportsmanlike cricketer who is a good judge of the game really think that cricket would have been any better, if Southerton, Buchanan, Nash, Crossland, Jones, A. H. Evans, McKibbin, Lockwood, Tyler, and Mold had been systematically "no-balled"? I have carefully watched all these bowlers, and though I think that the fastest of them frequently throw or threw, I am well aware that better judges think otherwise. Anyhow it is not an absolute

certainty that any of them has done so. Why should they not have the benefit of the doubt? If such benefit is withheld, it should perhaps be in the case of Mold and Jones, whose bowling might become dangerous owing to its great pace.

One last growl from an old cricketer, and an appeal to batsmen. It seems to me that the broad interests of the game are being overlooked owing to the great preponderance of the batsmen over the bowlers. Batsmen as a class seem to be against any alteration of the law which would tend to diminish the rungetting. This question of throwing is one symptom, the refusal of the captains to sanction any alteration of the rules respecting leg before wicket is another, and speaking generally, the agitation against excessive run-getting and drawn matches seem to arise and be carried on by those whom I will call the enlightened section of the public. I mean those whose memories carry them back for some years, and those cricketers of all ages whose object in going to see cricket is to see a grand game all round; good, and therefore rather difficult batting; true, good-length bowling; smart fielding; a decisive result, and, if possible, a close finish. I cannot help thinking that the County Captains have lost an opportunity. Not one word have they as a body said on the curse of cricket, the abnormal run-getting, but instead of this they attempt by a high-handed usurpation of power to drive certain bowlers out of cricket, driving one more nail into the unfortunate bowlers, to add to the already colossal number of runs.

I warn the batsmen that, if they persist in their opposition to all reform, the interest of the public will ultimately flag, and the reforms will then be brought about by a revolution and not by constitutional methods: if cricketers are wise, they will anticipate this change rather than provoke it.

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