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Author: James Pycroft

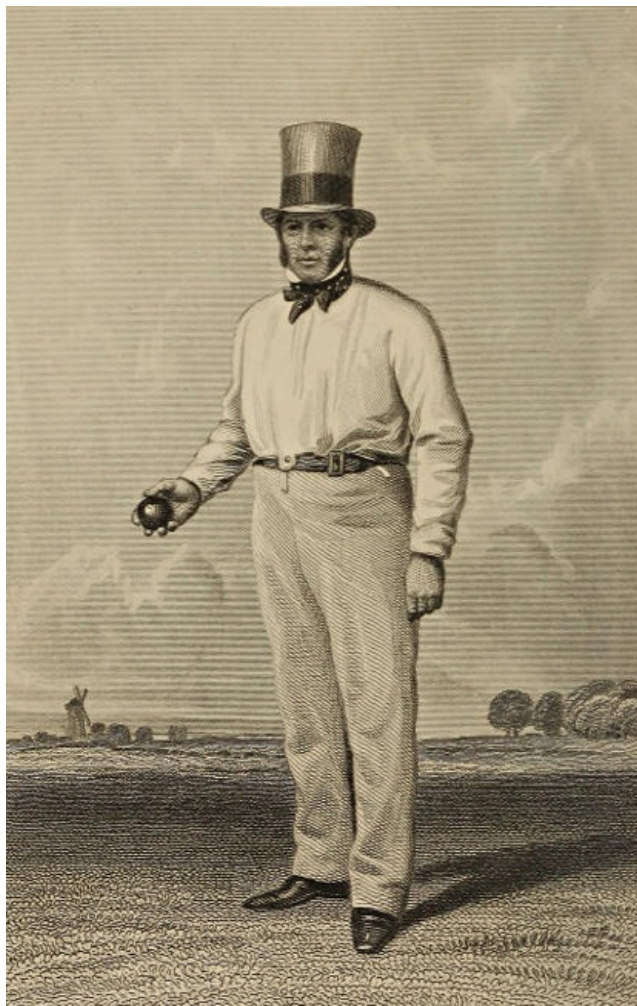
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE CRICKET FIELD: OR, THE HISTORY
AND SCIENCE OF THE GAME OF CRICKET ***

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H. Adlard sc.

THE BOWLER.

*William Clarke. The Slow Bowler & Sec'y to the All
England Eleven.*

London. Longman, Brown, Green & Longmans.

THE
CRICKET FIELD:
OR,
THE HISTORY AND THE SCIENCE
OF THE
GAME OF CRICKET.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "THE PRINCIPLES OF SCIENTIFIC BATTING,"
"RECOLLECTIONS OF COLLEGE DAYS,"
ETC. ETC.

"Gaudet ... aprici gramine campi."

"Pila velox,
Molliter austerum studio fallente laborem."—HOR.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS
1854.

"'Twas in the prime of summer time,
An evening calm and cool,
And five and twenty happy boys
Came bounding out of school.
Away they sped with gamesome minds
And souls untouched with sin;
To a level mead they came, and there
They drove the wickets in."

HOOD.

[ii]

LONDON:
A. and G. A. SPOTTISWOODE,
New-street-Square.

DEDICATED

TO

J. A. B. MARSHALL, ESQ.,

AND THE

MEMBERS OF THE LANSDOWN CRICKET CLUB,

BY ONE OF THEIR OLDEST MEMBERS

AND SINCERE FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

This Edition is greatly improved by various additions and corrections, for which we gratefully acknowledge our obligations to the Rev. R. T. King and Mr. A. Haygarth, as also once more to Mr. A. Bass and Mr. Whateley of Burton. For our practical instructions on Bowling, Batting, and Fielding, the first players of the day have been consulted, each on the point in which he respectively excelled. More discoveries have also been made illustrative of the origin and early history of Cricket; and we trust nothing is wanting to maintain the high character now accorded to the "Cricket Field," as the Standard Authority on every part of our National Game.

J. P.

May, 18. 1854.

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

The following pages are devoted to the history and the science of our National Game. Isaac Walton has added a charm to the Rod and Line; Col. Hawker to the Dog and the Gun; and Nimrod and Harry Hieover to the "Hunting Field;" but, the "Cricket Field" is to this day untrodden

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ground. We have been long expecting to hear of some chronicler aided and abetted by the noblemen and gentlemen of the Marylebone Club,—one who should combine, with all the resources of a ready writer, traditional lore and practical experience. But, time is fast thinning the ranks of the veterans. Lord Frederick Beauclerk and the once celebrated player, the Hon. Henry Tufton, afterwards Earl of Thanet, have passed away; and probably Sparkes, of the Edinburgh Ground, and Mr. John Goldham, hereinafter mentioned, are the only surviving players who have witnessed both the formation and the jubilee of the Marylebone Club—following, as it has, the fortunes of the Pavilion and of the enterprising Thomas Lord, literally through “three removes” and “one fire,” from White Conduit Fields to the present Lord’s.

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How, then, it will be asked, do we presume to save from oblivion the records of Cricket?

As regards the Antiquities of the game, our history is the result of patient researches in old English literature. As regards its changes and chances and the players of olden time, it fortunately happens that, some fifteen years ago, we furnished ourselves with old Nyren’s account of the Cricketers of his time and the Hambledon Club, and, using Bentley’s Book of Matches from 1786 to 1825 to suggest questions and test the truth of answers, we passed many an interesting hour in Hampshire and Surrey, by the peat fires of those villages which reared the Walkers, David Harris, Beldham, Wells, and some others of the All England players of fifty years since. Bennett, Harry Hampton, Beldham, and Sparkes, who first taught us to play,—all men of the last century,—have at various times contributed to our earlier annals; while Thomas Beagley, for some days our landlord, the late Mr. Ward, and especially Mr. E. H. Budd, often our antagonist in Lansdown matches, have respectively assisted in the first twenty years of the present century.

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But, distinct mention must we make of one most important Chronicler, whose recollections were coextensive with the whole history of the game in its matured and perfect form—WILLIAM FENNEX. And here we must thank our kind friend the Rev. John Mitford, of Benhall, for his memoranda of many a winter’s evening with that fine old player,—papers especially valuable because Fennex’s impressions were so distinct, and his observation so correct, that, added to his practical illustrations with bat and ball, no other man could enable us so truthfully to compare ancient with modern times. Old Fennex, in his declining years, was hospitably appointed by Mr. Mitford to a sinecure office, created expressly in his honour, in the beautiful gardens of Benhall; and Pilch, and Box, and Bayley, and all his old acquaintance, will not be surprised to hear that the old man would carefully water and roll his little cricket-ground on summer mornings, and on wet and wintry days would sit in the chimney-corner, dealing over and over again by the hour, to an imaginary partner, a very dark and dingy pack of cards, and would then sally forth to teach a long remembered lesson to some hob-nailed frequenter of the village ale-house.

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So much for the History: but why should we venture on the Science of the game?

Many may be excellently qualified, and have a fund of anecdote and illustration, still not one of the many will venture on a book. Hundreds play without knowing principles; many know what they cannot explain; and some could explain, but fear the certain labour and cost, with the most uncertain return, of authorship. For our own part, we have felt our way. The wide circulation of our “Recollections of College Days” and “Course of English Reading” promises a patient hearing on subjects within our proper sphere; and that in this sphere lies Cricket, we may without vanity presume to assert. For in August last, at Mr. Dark’s Repository at Lord’s, our little treatise on the “Principles of Scientific Batting” (Slatter: Oxford, 1835) was singled out as “the book which contained as much on Cricket as all that had ever been written, and more besides.” That same day did we proceed to arrange with Messrs. Longman, naturally desirous to lead a second advance movement, as we led the first, and to break the spell which, we had thus been assured, had for fifteen years chained down the invention of literary cricketers at the identical point where we left off; for, not a single rule or principle has yet been published in advance of our own; though more than one author has been kind enough to adopt (thinking, no doubt, the parents were dead) our ideas, and language too!

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“Shall we ever make new books,” asks Tristram Shandy, “as apothecaries make new mixtures, by pouring only out of one vessel into another?” No. But so common is the failing, that actually even this illustration of plagiarism Sterne stole from Burton!

Like solitary travellers from unknown lands, we are naturally desirous to offer some confirmation of statements, depending otherwise too much on our literary honour. We, happily, have received the following from—we believe the oldest player of the day who can be pronounced a good player still—Mr. E. H. Budd:—

“I return the proof-sheets of the History of my Contemporaries, and can truly say that they do indeed remind me of old times. I find one thing only to correct, which I hope you will be in time to alter, for your accuracy will then, to the best of my belief, be wholly without exception:—write *twenty* guineas, and not *twenty-five*, as the sum offered, by old Thomas Lord, if any one should hit out of his ground where now is Dorset Square.

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“You invite me to note further particulars for your second edition: the only omission I can at present detect is this,—the name of Lord George Kerr, son of the Marquis of Lothian, should be added to your list of the Patrons of the Old Surrey Players; for, his lordship lived in the midst of them at Farnham; and, I have often heard Beldham say, used to provide bread and cheese and beer for as many as would come out and practise on a summer’s evening: this is too *substantial* a supporter of the Noble Game to be forgotten.”

We must not conclude without grateful acknowledgments to some distinguished amateurs

representing the science both of the northern and the southern counties, who have kindly allowed us to compare notes on various points of play. In all of our instructions in Batting, we have greatly benefited by the assistance, in the first instance, of Mr. A. Bass of Burton, and his friend Mr. Whateley, a gentleman who truly understands "Philosophy in Sport." Then, the Hon. Robert Grimston judiciously suggested some modification of our plan. We agreed with him that, for a popular work, and one "for play hours," the lighter parts should prevail over the heavier; for, with most persons, a little science goes a long way, and our "winged words," if made too weighty, might not fly far; seeing, as said Thucydides^[1], "men do find it such a bore to learn any thing that gives them trouble." For these reasons we drew more largely on our funds of anecdote and illustration, which had been greatly enriched by the contributions of a highly valued correspondent—Mr. E. S. E. Hartopp. When thus the science of batting had been reduced to its fair proportions, it was happily undertaken by the Hon. Frederick Ponsonby, not only through kindness to ourselves personally, but also, we feel assured, because he takes a pleasure in protecting the interests of the rising generation. By his advice, we became more distinct in our explanations, and particularly careful of venturing on such refinements of science as, though sound in theory, may possibly produce errors in practice.

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"Tantæ molis erat CRICETANUM condere CAMPUM."

For our artist we have one word to say: not indeed for the engravings in our frontispiece,—these having received unqualified approbation; but, we allude to the illustrations of attitudes. In vain did our artist assure us that a foreshortened position would defy every attempt at ease, energy, or elegance; we felt bound to insist on sacrificing the effect of the picture to its utility as an illustration. Our principal design is to show the position of the feet and bat with regard to the wicket, and how every hit, with one exception, the Cut, is made by no other change of attitude than results from the movement of the left foot alone.

J. P.

*Barnstaple,
April 15th, 1851.*

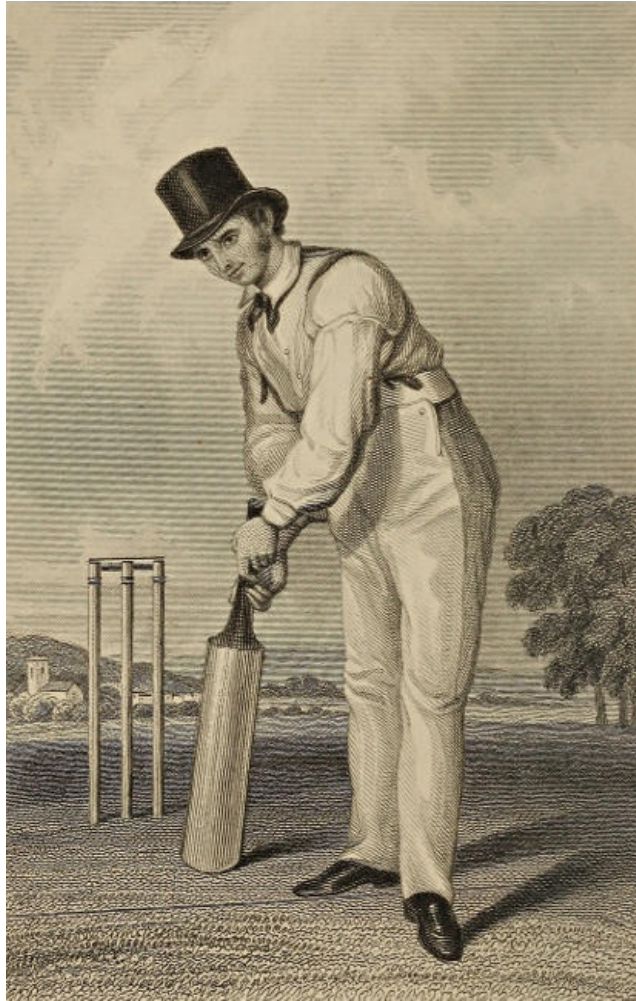
[1] B. i. c. 20.

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H. Adlard sc.

THE BATSMAN.*Fuller Pilch.*

London: Longman, Brown, Green & Longmans.

THE CRICKET FIELD.

[1]

CHAPTER I.**ORIGIN OF THE GAME OF CRICKET.**

The Game of Cricket, in some rude form, is undoubtedly as old as the thirteenth century. But whether at that early date Cricket was the name it generally bore is quite another question. For Club-Ball we believe to be the name which usually stood for Cricket in the thirteenth century; though, at the same time, we have some curious evidence that the term Cricket at that early period was also known. But the identity of the game with that now in use is the chief point; the name is of secondary consideration. Games commonly change their names, as every school-boy knows, and bear different appellations in different places.

Nevertheless, all previous writers acquiescing quietly in the opinion of Strutt, expressed in his "Sports and Pastimes," not only forget that Cricket may be older than its name, but erroneously suppose that the name of Cricket occurs in no author in the English language of an earlier date than Thomas D'Urfey, who, in his "Pills to purge Melancholy," writes thus:—

[2]

"Herr was the prettiest fellow
At foot-ball and at *Cricket*;
At hunting chase or nimble race
How featly Herr could prick it."

The words "How featly" Strutt properly writes in place of a revolting old-fashioned oath in the original.

Strutt, therefore, in these lines quotes the word Cricket as first occurring in 1710.

About the same date Pope wrote,—

"The Judge to dance his brother Sergeants call,
The Senators at *Cricket* urge the ball."

And Duncome, curious to observe, laying the scene of a match near Canterbury, wrote,—

"An ill-timed *Cricket Match* there did
At Bishops-bourne befall."

Soame Jenyns, also, early in the same century, wrote in lines that showed that cricket was very much of a "sporting" amusement:—

"England, when once of peace and wealth possessed,
Began to think frugality a jest;
So grew polite: hence all her well-bred heirs
Gamesters and jockeys turned, and *cricket*-players."
Ep. I. b. ii., *init.*

[3]

However, we are happy to say that even among comparatively modern authors we have beaten Strutt in his researches by twenty-five years; for Edward Phillips, John Milton's nephew, in his "Mysteries of Love and Eloquence" (8vo. 1685), writes thus:—

"Will you not, when you have me, throw stocks at my head and cry, 'Would my eyes
had been beaten out of my head with a *cricket-ball* the day before I saw thee?'"

We shall presently show the word Cricket, in Richelet, as early as the year 1680.

A late author has very sensibly remarked that Cricket could not have been popular in the days of Elizabeth, or we should expect to find allusions to that game, as to tennis, foot-ball, and other sports, in the early poets; but Shakspeare and the dramatists who followed, he observes, are silent on the subject.

As to the silence of the early poets and dramatists on the game of cricket—and no one conversant with English literature would expect to find it except in some casual allusion or illustration in an old play—this silence we can confirm on the best authority. What if we presumed to advance that the early dramatists, one and all, ignore the very name of cricket. How bold a negative! So rare are certain old plays that a hundred pounds have been paid by the Duke of Devonshire for a single copy of a few loose and soiled leaves; and shall we pretend to have dived among such hidden stores? We are so fortunate as to be favoured with the assistance of the Rev. John Mitford and our loving cousin John Payne Collier, two English scholars, most deeply versed in early literature, and no bad judges of cricket; and since these two scholars have never met with any mention of cricket in the early dramatists, nor in any author earlier than 1685, there is, indeed, much reason to believe that "Cricket" is a word that does not occur in any English author before the year 1685.

[4]

But though it occurs not in any English author, is it found in no rare manuscript yet unpublished? We shall see.

Now as regards the silence of the early poets, a game like cricket might certainly exist without falling in with the allusions or topics of poetical writers. Still, if we actually find distinct catalogues and enumerations of English games before the date of 1685, and Cricket is omitted, the suspicion that Cricket was not then the popular name of one of the many games of ball (not that the game itself was positively unknown) is strongly confirmed.

Six such catalogues are preserved; one in the "Anatomy of Melancholy," a second in a well-known treatise of James I., and a third in the "Cotswold Games," with three others.

[5]

I. For the first catalogue, Strutt reminds us of the set of rules from the hand of James I. for the "nurture and conduct of an heir-apparent to the throne," addressed to his eldest son, Henry Prince of Wales, called the ΒΑΣΙΛΙΚΟΝ ΔΩΡΟΝ, or a "Kinge's Christian Dutie towards God." Herein the king forbids gaming and rough play: "As to diceing, I think it becometh best deboshed souldiers to play on the heads of their drums. As to the foote-ball, it is meeter for laming, than making able, the users thereof." But a special commendation is given to certain games of ball; "playing at the catch or tennis, palle-malle, and *such like other* fair and pleasant *field-games*." Certainly cricket may have been included under the last general expression, though by no means a fashionable game in James's reign.

II. For the second catalogue of games, Burton in his "Anatomy of Melancholy," "the only book," said Dr. Johnson, "that ever took me out of bed two hours sooner than I wished to rise,"—gives a view of the sports most prevalent in the seventeenth century. Here we have a very full enumeration: it specifies the pastimes of "great men," and those of "base inferior persons;" it mentions "the rocks on which men lose themselves" by gambling; how "wealth runs away with their hounds, and their fortunes fly away with their hawks." Then follow "the sights and shows of the Londoners," and the "May-games and recreations of the country-folk." More minutely still, Burton speaks of "rope dancers, cockfights," and other sports common both to town and country; still, though Burton is so exact as to specify all "winter recreations" separately, and mentions even "foot-balls and ballowns," saying "Let the common people play at ball and barley-brakes," there is in all this catalogue no mention whatever of Cricket.

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III. As a third catalogue, we have the "Cotswold Games," but cricket is not among them. This was an annual celebration which one Captain Dover, by express permission and command of James I., held on the Cotswold Hills, in Gloucestershire.

IV. Fourthly: cricket is not mentioned in "The compleat Gamester," published by Charles Browne, in 1709.

V. "I have many editions of Chamberlayne's 'State of England,'" kindly writes Mr. T. B. Macaulay, "published between 1670 and 1700, and I observe he never mentions cricket among the national games, of which he gives a long list."

VI. The great John Locke wrote in 1679, "The sports of England for a curious stranger to see, are horse-racing, hawking, hunting, and Bowling: at Marebone and Putney he may see several persons of quality bowling two or three times a week: also, wrestling in Lincoln's Inn Fields every evening; bear and bull-baiting at the bear garden; shooting with the long bow, and stob-ball, in Tothill Fields; and cudgel playing in the country, and hurling in Cornwall." Here again we have no Cricket. Stob-ball is a different game. [7]

Nevertheless we have a catalogue of games of about 1700, in Stow's "Survey of London," and there Cricket is mentioned; but, remarkably enough, it is particularised as one of the amusements of "the lower classes." The whole passage is curious:—

"The modern sports of the citizens, *besides drinking*(!), are cock-fighting, bowling upon greens, backgammon, cards, dice, billiards, also musical entertainments, dancing, masks, balls, stage-plays, and club-meetings in the evening; they sometimes ride out on horseback, and hunt with the lord mayor's pack of dogs, when the common hunt goes on. The *lower classes* divert themselves at foot-ball, wrestling, cudgels, nine-pins, shovel-board, *cricket*, stow-ball, ringing of bells, quoits, pitching the bar, bull and bear baitings, throwing at cocks, and lying at ale-houses."(!)

The lawyers have a rule that to specify one thing is to ignore the other; and this rule of evidence can never be more applicable than where a sport is omitted from six distinct catalogues; therefore, the conclusion that Cricket was unknown when those lists were made would indeed appear utterly irresistible, only—*audi semper alteram partem*—in this case the argument would prove too much; for it would equally prove that Club-ball and Trap-ball were undiscovered too, whereas both these games are confessedly as old as the thirteenth century! [8]

The conclusion of all this is, that the oft-repeated assertions that Cricket is a game no older than the eighteenth century is erroneous: for, first, the thing itself may be much older than its name; and, secondly, the "silence of antiquity" is no conclusive evidence that even the name of Cricket was really unknown.

Thus do we refute those who assert a negative as to the antiquity of cricket: and now for our affirmative; and we are prepared to show—

First, that a single-wicket game was played as early as the thirteenth century, under the name of Club-ball.

Secondly, that it might have been identical with a sport of the same date called "Handyn and Handoute."

Thirdly, that a genuine double-wicket game was played in Scotland about 1700, under the name of "Cat and Dog." [9]

Fourthly, that "Creag,"—very near "Cricce," the Saxon term for the crooked stick, or bandy, which we see in the old pictures of cricket,—was the name of a game played in the year 1300.

First, as to a single-wicket game in the thirteenth century, whatever the name of the said game might have been, we are quite satisfied with the following proof:—

"In the Bodleian Library at Oxford," says Strutt, "is a MS. (No. 264.) dated 1344, which represents a figure, a female, in the act of bowling a ball (of the size of a modern cricket-ball) to a man who elevates a straight bat to strike it; behind the bowler are several figures, male and female, waiting to stop or catch the ball, their attitudes grotesquely eager for a 'chance.' The game is called Club-ball, but the score is made by hitting and running, as in cricket."

Secondly, Barrington, in his "Remarks on the More Ancient Statutes," comments on 17 Edw. IV. A.D. 1477, thus:—

"The disciplined soldiers were not only guilty of pilfering on their return, but also of the vice of gaming. The third chapter therefore forbids playing at cloish, ragle, half-bowle, quekeborde, *handyn and handoute*. Whosoever shall permit these games to be played in their house or yard is punishable with three years' imprisonment; those who play at any of the said games are to be fined 10*l.*, or lie in jail two years." [10]

"This," says Barrington, "is the most severe law ever made in any country against gaming; and, some of those forbidden seem to have been manly exercises, particularly the "handyn and handoute," which I should suppose to be a kind of *cricket*, as the term *hands* is still (writing in 1740) retained in that game."

Thirdly, as to the double-wicket game, Dr. Jamieson, in his Dictionary, published in 1722, gives the following account of a game played in Angus and Lothian:—

"This is a game for three players at least, who are furnished with clubs. They cut out two holes, each about a foot in diameter and seven inches in depth, and twenty-six feet apart; one man guards each hole with his club; these clubs are called Dogs. A piece of wood, about four inches long and one inch in diameter, called a Cat, is pitched, by a third person, from one hole towards

the player at the other, who is to prevent the cat from getting into the hole. If it pitches in the hole, the party who threw it takes his turn with the club. If the cat be struck, the club-bearers change places, and each change of place counts one to the score, *like club-ball.*"

The last observation shows that in the game of Club-ball above-mentioned, the score was made by "runs," as in cricket. [11]

In what respect, then, do these games differ from cricket as played now? The only exception that can be taken is to the absence of any wicket. But every one familiar with a paper given by Mr. Ward, and published in "Old Nyren," by the talented Mr. C. Cowden Clarke, will remember that the traditionary "blockhole" was a veritable hole in former times, and that the batsman was made Out in running, not, as now, by putting down a wicket, but by popping the ball into the hole before the bat was grounded in it. The same paper represents that the wicket was two feet wide,—a width which is only rendered credible by the fact that the said hole was not like our mark for guard, four feet distant from the stumps, but cut like a basin in the turf between the stumps; an arrangement which would require space for the frequent struggle of the batsman and wicket-keeper, as to whether the bat of the one, or the hand of the other, should reach the blockhole first.

The conclusion of all is, that Cricket is identical with Club-ball,—a game played in the thirteenth century as single-wicket, and played, if not then, somewhat later as a double-wicket game; that where balls were scarce, a Cat, or bit of wood, as seen in many a village, supplied its place; also that "handyn and handoute" was probably only another name. Fosbroke, in his Dictionary of Antiquities, said, "club-ball was the ancestor of cricket:" he might have said, "club-ball was the old name for cricket, the games being the same." [12]

The points of difference are not greater than every cricketer can show between the game as now played and that of the last century.

But, lastly, as to the name of Cricket. The bat, which is now straight, is represented in old pictures as crooked, and "cricce" is the simple Saxon word for a crooked stick. The derivation of Billiards from the Norman *billart*, a cue, or from *ball-yard*, according to Johnson, also Nine-pins and Trap-ball, are obvious instances of games which derived their names from the implements with which they are played. Now it appears highly probable that the crooked stick used in the game of Bandy might have been gradually adopted, especially when a wicket to be bowled down by a rolling ball superseded the blockhole to be pitched into. In that case the club having given way to the bandy or crooked bat of the last century, the game, which first was named from the club "club-ball," might afterwards have been named from the bandy or crooked stick "cricket."

Add to which, the game might have been played in two ways,—sometimes more in the form of Club-ball, sometimes more like Cricket; and the following remarkable passage proves that a term very similar to Cricket was applied to some game as far back as the thirteenth century, the identical date to which we have traced that form of cricket called club-ball and the game of handyn and handoute. [13]

From the Gentleman's Magazine, vol. lviii. p. 1., A.D. 1788, we extract the following:—

"In the wardrobe account of the 28th year of King Edward the First, A.D. 1300, published in 1787 by the Society of Antiquaries, among the entries of money paid one Mr. John Leek, his chaplain, for the use of his son Prince Edward in playing at different games, is the following:—

"'Domino Johanni de Leek, capellano Domini Edwardi fil' ad *Creag'* et alios ludos per vices, per manus proprias, 100 s. Apud Westm. 10 die Aprilis, 1305.'"

The writer observes, that the glossaries have been searched in vain for any other name of a pastime but cricket to which the term *Creag'* can apply. And why should it not be Cricket? for, we have a singular evidence that, at the same date, Merlin the Magician was a cricketer!

In the romance of "Merlin," a book in very old French, written about the time of Edward I., is the following:—

"Two of his (Vortiger's) emissaries fell in with certain children who were playing at *cricket.*"—Quoted in Dunlop's "History of Fiction." [14]

The word here rendered *cricket* is *la crosse*; and in Richelet's Dict. of Ant. 1680, are these words:

"*Crosse*, à Crosier. Bâton de bois courbé par le bout d'en haut, dont on se sert pour jouer ou pousser quelque balle."

"*Crosseur*, qui pousse—'Cricketer.'"

Creag' and Cricket, therefore, being presumed identical, the cricketers of Warwick and of Gloucester may be reminded that they are playing the same game as was played by the dauntless enemy of Robert Bruce, afterwards the prisoner at Kenilworth, and eventually the victim of Mortimer's ruffians in the dark tragedy of Berkeley Castle.

To advert to a former observation that cricket was originally confined to the lower orders, Robert Southey notes, C. P. Book. iv. 201., that cricket was not deemed a game for gentlemen in the middle of the last century. Tracing this allusion to "The Connoisseur," No. 132. dated 1756, we are introduced to one Mr. Toby Bumper, whose vulgarities are, "drinking purl in the morning, eating black-puddings at Bartholomew Fair, boxing with Buckhorse," and also that "he is frequently engaged at the Artillery Ground with Faulkner and Dingat *at cricket*, and is esteemed as good a bat as either of the Bennets." Dingat will be mentioned as an All-England player in our

third chapter.

And here we must observe that at the very date that a cricket-ground was thought as low as a modern skittle-alley, we read that even [15]

“Some Dukes at Mary’bone *bowled* time away;”

and also that a Duchess of Devonshire could be actually watching the play of her guests in the skittle-alley till nine o’clock in the evening.

Our game in later times, we know, has constituted the pastime and discipline of many an English soldier. Our barracks are now provided with cricket grounds; every regiment and every man-of-war has its club; and our soldiers and sailors astonish the natives of every clime, both inland and maritime, with a specimen of a British game: and it deserves to be better known that it was at a cricket match that “some of our officers were amusing themselves on the 12th June, 1815,” says Captain Gordon, “in company with that devoted cricketer the Duke of Richmond, when the Duke of Wellington arrived, and shortly after came the Prince of Orange, which of course put a stop to our game. Though the hero of the Peninsula was not apt to let his movements be known, on this occasion he made no secret that, if he were attacked from the south, Halle would be his position, and, if on the Namur side, WATERLOO.” [16]

CHAP II.

THE GENERAL CHARACTER OF CRICKET.

The game of cricket, philosophically considered, is a standing panegyric on the English character: none but an orderly and sensible race of people would so amuse themselves. It calls into requisition all the cardinal virtues, some moralist would say. As with the Grecian games of old, the player must be sober and temperate. Patience, fortitude, and self-denial, the various bumps of order, obedience, and good-humour, with an unruffled temper, are indispensable. For intellectual virtues we want judgment, decision, and the organ of concentrativeness—every faculty in the free use of all its limbs—and every idea in constant air and exercise. Poor, rickety, and stunted wits will never serve: the widest shoulders are of little use without a head upon them: the cricketer wants wits down to his fingers’ ends. As to physical qualifications, we require not only the volatile spirits of the Irishman *Rampant*, nor the phlegmatic caution of the Scotchman *Couchant*, but we want the English combination of the two; though, with good generalship, cricket is a game for Britons generally: the three nations would mix not better in a regiment than in an eleven; especially if the Hibernian were trained in London, and taught to enjoy something better than what Father Prout terms his supreme felicity, “*Otium cum dig-gin-taties.*” [17]

It was from the southern and south-eastern counties of England that the game of Cricket spread—not a little owing to the Propaganda of the metropolitan clubs, which played chiefly first at the Artillery Ground, then at White Conduit Fields, and thirdly at Thomas Lord’s Grounds, (of which there were two before the present “Lord’s,”) as well as latterly at the Oval, Kennington, and on all sides of London—through all the southern half of England; and during these last twenty years the northern counties, and even Edinburgh, have sent forth distinguished players. But considering that the complement of the game is twenty-two men, besides two Umpires and two Scorers; and considering also that cricket, unlike every other manly contest, by flood or field, occupies commonly more than one day; the railways, as might be expected, have tended wonderfully to the diffusion of cricket,—giving rise to clubs depending on a circle of some thirty or forty miles, as also to that club in particular under the canonised saint, John Zingari, into whom are supposed to have migrated all the erratic spirits of the gipsy tribe. The Zingari are a race of ubiquitous cricketers, exclusively gentlemen-players; for cricket affords to a race of professionals a merry and abundant, though rather a laborious livelihood, from the time the first May-fly is up to the time the first pheasant is down. Neither must we forget the All England and United Elevens, who, under the generalship of Clarke or Wisden, play numbers varying from fourteen to twenty-two in almost every county in England. So proud are provincial clubs of this honour that, besides a subscription of some 70*l.*, and part or all of the money at the field-gate being willingly accorded for their services, much hospitality is exercised wherever they go. This tends to a healthy circulation of the life’s blood of cricket, vaccinating and inoculating every wondering rustic with the principles of the national game. Our soldiers, we said, by order of the Horse Guards, are provided with cricket-grounds adjoining their barracks; and all of her Majesty’s ships have bats and balls to astonish the cockroaches at sea, and the crabs and turtles ashore. Hence it has come to pass that, wherever her Majesty’s servants have “carried their victorious arms” and legs, wind and weather permitting, cricket has been played. Still the game is essentially Anglo-Saxon. Foreigners have rarely, very rarely, imitated us. The English settlers and residents everywhere play; but of no single cricket club have we ever heard dieted either with frogs, sour crout, or macaroni. But how remarkable that cricket is not naturalised in Ireland! the fact is very striking that it follows the course rather of ale than whiskey. Witness Kent, the land of hops, and the annual antagonists of “All England.” Secondly, Farnham, which, as we shall presently show, with its adjoining parishes, nurtured the finest of the old players, as well as the finest hops,—*cunabula Trojæ*, the infant school of cricketers. Witness also the Burton Clubs, assisted by our excellent friend next akin to bitter ale. Witness again Alton ale, on which old [18]

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Beagley throw so well, and the Scotch ale of Edinburgh, on which John Sparkes, though commencing with the last generation, has carried on his instructions, in which we ourselves once rejoiced, into the middle of the present century. The mountain mists and "mountain dew" suit better with deer-stalking than with cricket: our game disdains the Dutch courage of ardent spirits. The brain must glow with Nature's fire, and not depend upon a spirit lamp. *Mens sana in corpore sano*: feed the body, but do not cloud the mind. You, sir, with the hectic flush, the fire of your eyes burnt low in their sockets, with beak as sharp as a woodcock's from living upon suction, with pallid face and shaky hand,—our game disdains such ghostlike votaries. Rise with the lark and scent the morning air, and drink from the bubbling rill, and then, when your veins are no longer fevered with alcohol, nor puffed with tobacco smoke,—when you have rectified your illicit spirits and clarified your unsettled judgment,—"come again and devour up my discourse." And you, sir, with the figure of Falstaff and the nose of Bardolph,—not Christianly eating that you may live, but living that you may eat,—one of the *nati consumere fruges*, the devouring caterpillar and grub of human kind—our noble game has no sympathy with gluttony, still less with the habitual "diner out," on whom outraged nature has taken vengeance, by emblazoning what was his face (*nimum ne crede colori*), encasing each limb in fat, and condemning him to be his own porter to the end of his days. "Then I am your man—and I—and I," cry a crowd of self-satisfied youths: "sound are we in wind and limb, and none have quicker hand or eye." Gently, my friends, so far well; good hands and eyes are instruments indispensable, but only instruments. There is a wide difference between a good workman and a bag of tools, however sharp. We must have heads as well as hands. You may be big enough and strong enough, but the question is whether, as Virgil says,

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*"Spiritus intus alit, totamque infusa per artus
Mens agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet."*

And, in these lines, Virgil truly describes the right sort of man for a cricketer: plenty of life in him: not barely soul enough, as Robert South said, to keep his body from putrefaction; but, however large his stature, though he weigh twenty stone, like (we will not say Mr. Mynn), but an olden wicket-keeper, named Burt, or a certain *infant* genius in the same line, of good Cambridge town,—he must, like these worthies aforesaid, have *vouç* in perfection, and be instinct with sense all over. Then, says Virgil, *igneus est ollis vigor*: "they must always have the steam up," otherwise the bard would have agreed with us, they are no good in an Eleven, because—

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*"Noxia corpora tardant,
Terrenique hebetant artus, moribundaque membra;"*

that is, you must suspend the laws of gravitation before they can stir,—dull clods of the valley, and so many stone of carrion; and then Virgil proceeds to describe what discipline will render those, who suffer the penalties of idleness or intemperance, fit to join the chosen *few* in the cricket-field:

*"Exinde per amplum
Mittimur Elysium et pauci læta arva tenemus."*

Of course *Elysium* means "Lords," and *læta arva*, "the shooting fields." We make no apology for classical quotations. At the Universities, cricket and scholarship very generally go together. When, in 1836, we played victoriously on the side of Oxford against Cambridge, seven out of our eleven were classmen; and, it is doubtless only to avoid an invidious distinction that "Heads *v.* Heels," as was once suggested, has failed to be an annual University match; though the *seri studiorum*—those put to school late—would not have a chance. We extract the following:—

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"In a late Convocation holden at Oxford, May 30, 1851, it was agreed to affix the University seal to a power of attorney authorising the sale of 2000*l.* three per cent. consols, for the purpose of paying for and enclosing certain allotments of land in Cowley Common, used as cricket grounds by members of the University, in order to their being preserved for that purpose, and let to the several University cricket clubs in such manner as may hereafter appear expedient."

From all this we argue that, on the authority of ancient and the experience of modern times, cricket wants mind as well as matter, and, in every sense of the word, a good understanding. How is it that Clarke's slow bowling is so successful? ask Bayley or Caldecourt; or say Bayley's own bowling, or that of Lillywhite, or others not much indebted to pace. "You see, sir, they bowl with their heads." Then only is the game worthy the notice of full-grown men. "A rubber of whist," says the author of the "Diary of a late Physician," in his "Law Studies," "calls into requisition all those powers of mind that a barrister most needs;" and nearly as much may be said of a scientific game of cricket. Mark that first-rate bowler: the batsman is hankering for his favourite cut—no—leg stump is attacked again—extra man on leg side—right—that's the spot—leg stump, and not too near him. He is screwed up, and cannot cut away; Point has it—persevere—try again—his patience soon will fail. Ah! look at that ball;—the bat was more out of the perpendicular—now the bowler alters his pace—good. A dropping ball—over-reached and all but a mistake;—now a slower pace still, with extra twist—hits furiously to leg, too soon. Leg-stump is grazed, and bail off. "You see, sir," says the veteran, turning round, "an old player, who knows what is, and what is not, on the ball, alone can resist all the temptations that leg-balls involve. Young players are going their round of experiments, and are too fond of admiration and brilliant hits; whereas it is your upright straight players that worry a bowler—twenty-two inches of wood, by four and a quarter—every inch of them before the stumps, hitting or blocking, is rather disheartening; but the moment a man makes ready for a leg hit, only about five inches by four of

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wood can cover the wicket; so leg-hitting is the bowler's chance: cutting also for a similar reason. If there were no such thing as leg-hitting, we should see a full bat every time, the man steady on his legs, and only one thing to think of; and what a task a bowler would have. That was Mr. Ward's play—good for something to the last. First-rate straight play and free leg-hitting seldom last long together: when once exulting in the luxurious excitement of a leg volley, the muscles are always on the quiver to swipe round, and the bowler sees the bat raised more and more across wicket. So, also, it is with men who are yearning for a cut: forming for the cut, like forming for leg-hit—aye, and almost the idea of those hits coming across the mind—set the muscles off straight play, and give the bowler a chance. There is a deal of head-work in bowling: once make your batsman set his mind on one hit, and give him a ball requiring the contrary, and he is off his guard in a moment."

Certainly, there is something highly intellectual in our noble and national pastime. But the cricketer must possess other qualifications; not only physical and intellectual, but moral qualifications also. Of what avail is the head to plan and hand to execute, if a sulky temper paralyses exertion, and throws a damp upon the field; or if impatience dethrones judgment, and the man hits across at good balls, because loose balls are long in coming; or, again, if a contentious and imperious disposition leaves the cricketer all 'alone in his glory,' voted the pest of every eleven?

The pest of the hunting-field is the man always thinking of his own horse and own riding, galloping against MEN and not after HOUNDS. The pest of the cricket-field is the man who bores you about his average—his wickets—his catches; and looks blue even at the success of his own party. If unsuccessful in batting or fielding, he gives up all—"the wretch concentrated all in self." No! Give me the man who forgets himself in the game, and, missing a ball, does not stop to exculpate himself by dumb show, but rattles away after it—who does not blame his partner when he is run out—who plays like play and not like a painful operation. Such a chilly, bleak, northwest aspect some men do put on—it is absurd to say they are enjoying themselves. We all know it is trying to be out first ball. "Oh! that first look back at rattling stumps—why, I couldn't have had right guard!"—that conviction that the ball turned, or but for some unaccountable suspension of the laws of motion (the earth perhaps coming to a hitch upon its ungreased axis) it had not happened! Then there's the spoiling of your average, (though some begin again and reckon anew!) and a sad consciousness that every critic in the three tiers of the Pavilion, as he coolly speculates "*quis cuique dolor victo, quæ gloria palmæ,*" knows your mortification. Oh! that sad walk back, a "returned convict;" we must all pace it, "*calcanda semel via leti.*" A man is sure never to take his eyes off the ground, and if there's a bit of stick in the way he kicks it instinctively with the side of his shoe. Add, that cruel *post mortem* examination into your "case," and having to answer the old question, How was it? or perhaps forced to argue with some vexatious fellow who imputes it to the very fault on which you are so sore and sensitive. All this is trying; but since it is always happening, an "inseparable accident" of the game, it is time that an unruffled temper should be held the "differentia" of the true cricketer and bad temper voted bad play. Eleven good-tempered men, other points equal, would beat eleven sulky or eleven irritable gentlemen out of the field. The hurling of bats and angry ebullitions show inexperience in the game and its chances; as if any man in England could always catch, or stop, or score. This very uncertainty gives the game its interest. If Pilch or Parr were sure of runs, who would care to play? But as they make sometimes five and sometimes fifty, we still contend with flesh and blood. Even Achilles was vulnerable at the heel; or, mythologically, he could not stop a shooter to the leg stump. So never let the Satan icagency of the gaming-table brood on those "happy fields" where, *strenua nos exercet inertia*, there is an energy in our idle hours, not killing time but enjoying it. Look at good honest James Dean; his "patient merit" never "goes Out sighing" nor In, either—never in a mumbling, though a "melting mood." Perspiration may roll off him, like bubbles from a duck's back, but it's all down to the day's work. He looks, as every cricketer should look, like a man out for a holiday, shut up in "measureless content." It is delightful to see such a man make a score.

Add to all this, perseverance and self-denial, and a soul above vain-glory and the applause of the vulgar. Aye, perseverance in well-doing—perseverance in a straightforward, upright, and consistent course of action.—See that player practising apart from the rest. What an unpretending style of play—a hundred pounds appear to depend on every ball—not a hit for these five minutes—see, he has a shilling on his stumps, and Hillyer is doing his best to knock it off. A question asked after every ball, the bowler being constantly invited to remind him of the least inaccuracy in hitting or danger in defence. The other players are hitting all over the field, making every one (but a good judge) marvel. Our friend's reward is that in the first good match, when some supposed brilliant Mr. Dashwood has been stumped from leg ball—(he cannot make his fine hits in his ground)—bowled by a shooter or caught by that sharpest of all Points Ἀναξ ἄνδρων, then our persevering friend—ball after ball dropping harmless from his bat, till ever and anon a single or a double are safely played away—has two figures appended to his name; and he is greeted in the Pavilion as having turned the chances of the game in favour of his side.

Conceit in a cricketer, as in other things, is a bar to all improvement—the vain-glorious is always thinking of the lookers-on, instead of the game, and generally is condemned to live on the reputation of one skying leg-hit, or some twenty runs off three or four overs (his merriest life is a short one) for half a season.

In one word, there is no game in which amiability and an unruffled temper is so essential to success, or in which virtue is rewarded, half as much as in the game of cricket. Dishonest or shuffling ways cannot prosper; the umpires will foil every such attempt—those truly

constitutional judges, bound by a code of written laws—and the public opinion of a cricket club, militates against his preferment. For cricket is a social game. Could a cricketer play a solo, or with a dummy (other than the catapult), he might play in humour or out of humour; but an Eleven is of the nature of those commonwealths of which Cicero said that, without some regard to the cardinal virtues, they could not possibly hold together.

Such a national game as cricket will both humanise and harmonise the people. It teaches a love of order, discipline, and fair play for the pure honour and glory of victory. The cricketer is a member of a wide fraternity: if he is the best man in his club, and that club is the best club in the county, he has the satisfaction of knowing his high position, and may aspire to represent some large and powerful constituency at Lord's. How spirit-stirring are the gatherings of rival counties! And I envy not the heart that glows not with delight at eliciting the sympathies of exulting thousands, when all the country is thronging to its battle-field studded with flags and tents. Its very look makes the heart beat for the fortune of the play; and for miles around the old coachman waves his whip above his head with an air of infinite importance if he can only be the herald of the joyous tidings, "We've won the day."

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Games of some kind men must have, and it is no small praise of cricket that it occupies the place of less innocent sports. Drinking, gambling, and cudgel-playing, insensibly disappear as you encourage a manly recreation which draws the labourer from the dark haunts of vice and misery to the open common, where

"The squire or parson o' the parish,
Or the attorney,"

may raise him, without lowering themselves, by taking an interest, if not a part, in his sports. "Nature abhors a vacuum," especially of mirth and merriment, resenting the folly of those who would disdain her bounties by that indifference and apathy which mark a very dull boy indeed. Nature designed us to sport and play at cricket as truly as to eat and drink. Without sport you have no healthful exercise: to refresh the body you must relax the mind. Observe the pale dyspeptic student ruminating on his logic, algebra, or political economy while describing his periodical revolutions around his college garden or on Constitution Hill: then turn aside and gladden your eyes and ears with the buoyant spirits and exulting energies of Bullingdon or Lord's. See how nature rebels against "an airing," or a milestone-measured walk! While following up a covey, or the windings of a trout-stream, we cross field after field unconscious of fatigue, and retain so pleasing a recollection of the toil, that years after, amidst the din and hum of men, we brighten at the thought, and yearn as did the poet near two thousand years ago, in the words,

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*"O rus, quando te aspiciam, quandoque licebit,
Ducere sollicitæ jucunda oblivia vitæ."*

That an intelligent and responsible being should live only for amusement, is an error indeed, and one which brings its own punishment in that sinking of the heart when the cup is drained to the dregs, and pleasures cease to please.

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"Nec luisse pudet sed non incidere ludum."

Still field-sports, in their proper season, are Nature's kind provision to smooth the frown from the brow, to allay "life's fitful fever," to—

"Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And by some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the stuffed bosom from that perilous stuff,
Which weighs upon the heart."

And words are these, not a whit too strong for those who live laborious days, in this high-pressure generation. And, who does not feel his daily burthen lightened, while enjoying, *pratorum viva voluptas*, the joyous spirits and good fellowship of the cricket-field, those sunny hours when "the valleys laugh and sing," and, between the greensward beneath and the blue sky above, you hear a hum of happy myriads enjoying their brief span too!

Who can describe that tumult of the breast, described by Æschylus,

—νεαρὸς μυελὸς στέρνων
ἐντὸς ἀνάσσω—

those yearning energies which find in this sport their genial exercise!

How generous and social is our enjoyment! Every happy moment,—the bail springing from the bat, the sharp catch sounding in the palm, long reach or sudden spring and quick return, the exulting throw, or bails and wicket flying,—these all are joys enhanced by sympathy, purely reflected from each other's eyes. In the cricket-field, as by the cover's side, the sport is in the free and open air and light of heaven. No incongruity of tastes nor rude collision interferes. None minds that another, how "unmannerly" soever, should "pass betwixt the wind and his nobility." One common interest makes common feeling, fusing heart with heart, thawing the frostwork of etiquette, and strengthening those silken ties which bind man to man.

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Society has its ranks and classes. These distinctions we believe to be not artificial, but natural, even as the very courses and strata of the earth itself. Lines there are, nicely graduated, ordained to separate, what Burns calls, the tropics of nobility and affluence, from the temperate zones of a

comfortable independence, and the Arctic circles of poverty: but these lines are nowhere less marked, because nowhere less wanted, than in the cricket-field. There we can waive for awhile the precedence of birth,—

“Contented with the rank that merit gives.”

And many an humble spirit, from this temporary preferment, learning the pleasure of superiority and well-earned applause, carries the same honest emulation into his daily duties. The cricket-field suggests a new version of the words

*“Æqua tellus
Pauperi recluditur
Regumque pueris.”*

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“A fair stage and no favour.” Kerseymere disdains not corduroys, nor fine clothes fustian. The cottager stumps out his landlord; scholars dare to beat their masters; and sons catch out those fathers who so often *catch out* them. William Beldham was many hours in the day “as good a man” as even Lord Frederick Beauclerk; and the gallant Duke of Richmond would descend from his high estate to contest the palm of manly prowess with his humblest tenantry, so far acknowledging with Robert Burns,—

“The rank is but the guinea stamp.
The man’s the gowd for a’ that.”

Cricket forms no debasing habits: unlike the bull-fights of Spain, and the earlier sports of England, it is suited to the softer feelings of a refined age. No living creature suffers for our sport: no frogs or minnows impaled, or worms writhing upon fish-hooks,—no hare screaming before the hounds,—no wounded partridge cowering in its agony, haunts the imagination to qualify our pleasure.

Cricket lies within the reach of average powers. A good head will compensate for hand and heels. It is no monopoly for a gifted few, nor are we soon superannuated. It affords scope for a great diversity of talent. Bowling, fielding, wicket-keeping, free hitting, safe and judicious play, and good generalship—in one of these points many a man has earned a name, though inferior in the rest. There are good batsmen and the best of fields among near-sighted men, and hard hitters among weak and crippled men; in weight, nine stone has proved not too little for a first-rate, nor eighteen stone too much; and, as to age, Mr. Ward at sixty, Mr. E. H. Budd at sixty-five, and old John Small at seventy years of age, were useful men in good elevens.

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Cricket is a game available to poor as well as rich; it has no privileged class. Unlike shooting, hunting, or yachting, there is no leave to ask, licence to buy, nor costly establishment to support: the game is free and common as the light and air in which it is played,—the poor man’s portion: with the poorer classes it originated, played “after hours” on village greens, and thence transplanted to patrician lawns.

We extract the following:—

“The judge of the Brentford County Court has decided that cricket is a legal game, so as to render the stakeholder liable in an action for the recovery of the stakes, in a case where one of the parties had refused to play.”

Cricket is not solely a game of skill—chance has sway enough to leave the vanquished an *if* and a *but*. A long innings bespeaks good play; but “out the first ball” is no disgrace. A game, to be really a game, really playful, should admit of chance as well as skill. It is the bane of chess that its character is too severe—to lose its games is to lose your character; and most painful of all, to be outwitted in a fair and undeniable contest of long-headedness, tact, manœuvring, and common sense—qualities in which no man likes to come off second best. Hence the restless nights and unforgiving state of mind that often follows a checkmate. Hence that “agony of rage and disappointment from which,” said Sydney Smith, “the Bishop of — broke my head with a chess-board fifty years ago at college.”

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But did we say that ladies, famed as some have been in the hunting field, know anything of cricket too? Not often; though I could have mentioned two,—the wife and daughter of the late William Ward, all three now no more, who could tell you—the daughter especially—the forte and the failing of every player at Lord’s. I accompanied them home one evening, to see some records of the game, to their humble abode in Connaught Terrace, where many an ornament reminded me of the former magnificence of the Member for the City, the Bank Director, and the great Russia merchant; and I thought of his mansion in the once not unfashionable Bloomsbury Square, the banqueting room of which many a Wykehamist has cause to remember; for when famed, as the Wykehamists were, for the quickest and best of fielding, they had won their annual match at Lord’s (and twenty years since they rarely lost), Mr. Ward would bear away triumphantly the winners to end the day with him. But, talking of the ladies, to say nothing of Miss Willes, who revived overhand bowling, their natural powers of criticism, if honestly consulted, would, we think, tell some home truths to a certain class of players who seem to forget that, to be a Cricketer one must still be a man; and that a manly, graceful style of play is worth something independently of its effect on the score. Take the case of the Skating Club. Will they elect a man because, in spite of arms and legs centrifugally flying, he can do some tricks of a posture-master, however wonderful? No! elegance in simple movements is the first thing: without elegance nothing counts. And so should it be with cricket. I have seen men, accounted players, quite as bad as some of the cricketers in Mr. Pips’s diary. “Pray, Lovell,” I once heard, “have I the right

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guard?" "Guard indeed! Yes! keep on looking as ugly and as awkward as you are now, and no man in England can bowl for fright!" *Apropos*, one of the first hints in archery is, "don't make faces when you pull your bow." Now we do seriously entreat those young ladies, into whose hands this book may fall, to profess, on our authority, that they are judges of the game as far as appearance goes; and also that they will quiz, banter, tease, lecture, never-leave-alone, and otherwise plague and worry all such brothers or husbands as they shall see enacting those anatomical contortions, which too often disgrace the game of cricket.

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Cricket, we said, is a game chiefly of skill, but partly of chance. Skill avails enough for interest, and not too much for friendly feeling. No game is played in better humour—never lost till won—the game's alive till the last ball. For the most part, there is so little to ruffle the temper, or to cause unpleasant collision, that there is no place so free from temptation—no such happy plains or lands of innocence—as our cricket-fields. We give bail for our good behaviour from the moment that we enter them. Still, a cricket-field is a sphere of wholesome discipline in obedience and good order; not to mention that manly spirit which faces danger without shrinking, and bears disappointment with good nature. Disappointment! and say where is there more poignant disappointment, while it lasts, than, after all your practice for a match, and anxious thought and resolution to avoid every chance, and score off every possible ball, to be balked and run out, caught at the slip, or stumped even off a shooter. "The course of true love (even for cricket) never did run smooth." Old Robinson, one of the finest batsmen of his day, had six unlucky innings in succession: once caught by Hammond, from a draw; then bowled with shooters, or picked up at short slip: the poor fellow said he had lost all his play, thinking "the fault is in ourselves, and not our stars;" and was with difficulty persuaded to play one match more, in which—whose heart does not rejoice to hear?—he made one hundred and thirty runs!

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"But, as to stirring excitement," writes a friend, "what can surpass a hardly-contested match, when you have been manfully playing an uphill game, and gradually the figures on the telegraph keep telling a better and a better tale, till at last the scorers stand up and proclaim a tie, and you win the game by a single and rather a nervous wicket, or by five or ten runs! If in the field with a match of this sort, and trying hard to prevent these few runs being knocked off by the last wickets, I know of no excitement so intense for the time, or which lasts so long afterwards. The recollection of these critical moments will make the heart jump for years and years to come; and it is extraordinary to see the delight with which men call up these grand moments to memory; and to be sure how they will talk and chatter, their eyes glistening and pulses getting quicker, as if they were again finishing 'that rattling good match.' People talk of the excitement of a good run with the Quorn or Belvoir hunt. I have now and then tumbled in for these good things; and, as far as my own feelings go, I can safely say that a fine run is not to be compared to a good match; and the excitement of the keenest sportsman is nothing either in intensity or duration to that caused by a 'near thing' at cricket. The next good run takes the place of the other; whereas hard matches, like the snow-ball, gather as they go. This is my decided opinion; and that after watching and weighing the subject for some years. I have seen men tremble and turn pale at a near match,

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*'Quum spes arrectæ juvenum exultantiaque haurit
Corda pavor pulsans'—*

while, through the field, the deepest and most awful silence reigns, unbroken but by some nervous fieldsman humming a tune or snapping his fingers to hide his agitation."

"What a glorious sensation it is," writes Miss Mitford, in 'Our Village,' "to be winning, winning, winning! Who would think that a little bit of leather and two pieces of wood had such a delightful and delighting power?"

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CHAP. III.

THE HAMBLEDON CLUB AND THE OLD PLAYERS.

What have become of the old scores and the earliest records of the game of cricket? Bentley's Book of Matches gives the principal games from the year 1786; but where are the earlier records of matches made by Dehaney, Paulet, and Sir Horace Mann? All burnt!

What the destruction of Rome and its records by the Gauls was to Niebuhr,—what the fire of London was to the antiquary in his walk from Pudding Lane to Pie Corner, such was the burning of the Pavilion at Lord's, and all the old score books—it is a mercy that the old painting of the M.C.C. was saved—to the annalist of cricket. "When we were built out by Dorset Square," says Mr. E. H. Budd, "we played for three years where the Regent's Canal has since been cut, and still called our ground 'Lord's,' and our dining-room 'the Pavilion.'" Here many a time have I looked over the old papers of Dehaney and Sir H. Mann; but the room was burnt, and the old scores perished in the flames. The following are curious as the two oldest scores preserved,—one of the North, the other of the South:—

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NAMES OF THE PERSONS WHO PLAYED AGAINST SHEFFIELD.

In 1771 at NOTTINGHAM, and 1772 at SHEFFIELD.

Nottingham, Aug. 26, 1771.

Huthwayte
Turner
Loughman
Coleman
Roe
Spurr
Stocks
Collishaw
Troop
Mew
Rawson.

Sheffield.		Nottingham.	
1st inn.	81	1st inn.	76
2nd	62	2nd	112
3rd	105		
	<u>248</u>		<u>188</u>

Tuesday, 9 o'clock, a.m. commenced, 8th man 0, 9th 5, 1 to come in, and only 60 ahead, when the Sheffield left the field.

Sheffield, June 1, 1772.

Coleman
Turner
Loughman
Roe
Spurs
Stocks
Collishaw
Troop
Mew
Bamford
Gladwin.

Nottingham.		Sheffield.	
1st inn.	14		Near 70

Nottingham gave in.

KENT AGAINST ALL ENGLAND.

[42]

Played in the Artillery-Ground, London, 1746.

ENGLAND.

<i>1st Innings.</i>			<i>2nd Innings.</i>		
	RUNS.			RUNS.	
Harris	0	b by Hadswell		4	b by Mills.
Dingate	3	b Ditto		11	b Hadswell.
Newland	0	b Mills		3	b Ditto.
Cuddy	0	b Hadswell		2	b Danes.
Green	0	b Mills		5	b Mills.
Waymark	7	b Ditto		9	b Hadswell.
Bryan	12	s Kips		7	c Kips.
Newland	18	— not out		15	c Ld. J. Sackville.
Harris	0	b Hadswell		1	b Hadswell.
Smith	0	c Bartrum		8	b Mills.
Newland	0	b Mills		5	— not out.
Byes	<u>0</u>		Byes	<u>0</u>	
	40			70	

KENT.

	<i>1st Innings.</i>	<i>2nd Innings.</i>
	RUNS.	RUNS.
Lord Sackville	5 c by Waymark	3 b by Harris.
Long Robin	7 b Newland	9 b Newland.
Mills	0 b Harris	6 c Ditto.
Hadswell	0 b Ditto	5 — not out.
Cutbush	3 c Green	7 — not out.
Bartrum	2 b Newland	0 b Newland.
Danes	6 b Ditto	0 c Smith.
Sawyer	0 c Waymark	5 b Newland.
Kips	12 b Harris	10 b Harris.
Mills	7 — not out	2 b Newland.
Romney	11 b Harris	8 c Harris.
	Byes <u>0</u>	Byes <u>3</u>
	53	58

Cricket was introduced into Eton early in the last century. Horace Walpole was sent to Eton in the year 1726. Playing cricket, as well as thrashing bargemen, was common at that time. For in Walpole's Letters, vol. i. p. 4., he says,— [43]

"I can't say I am sorry I was never quite a school-boy; an expedition against bargemen, or a *match at cricket*, may be very pretty things to recollect; but, thank my stars, I can remember things that are very near as pretty."

The fourth Earl of Carlisle learnt cricket at Eton at the same time. The Earl writes to George Selwyn, even from Manheim, that he was up, playing at cricket, before Selwyn was out of his bed.

And now, the oldest chronicler is Old Nyren, who wrote an account of the cricketers of his time. The said Old Nyren borrowed the pen of our kind friend Charles Cowden Clarke, to whom John Keats dedicated an epistle, and who rejoiced in the friendship of Charles Lamb; and none but a spirit akin to Elia could have written like "Old Nyren." Nyren was a fine old English yeomen, whose chivalry was cricket; and Mr. Clarke has faithfully recorded his vivid descriptions and animated recollections. And, with this charming little volume in hand, and inkhorn at my button, in 1837 I made a tour among the cottages of William Beldham, and the few surviving worthies of the same generation; and, having also the advantage of a MS. by the Rev. John Mitford, taken from many a winter's evening with Old Fennex, I am happy to attempt the best account that the lapse of time admits, of cricket in the olden time. [44]

From a MS. my friend received from the late Mr. William Ward, it appears that the wickets were placed twenty-two yards apart as long since as the year 1700; that stumps were then only one foot high, but two feet wide. The width some persons have doubted; but it is rendered credible by the auxiliary evidence that there was, in those days, width enough between the two stumps for cutting the wide blockhole already mentioned, and also because—whereas now we hear of stumps and bails—we read formerly of "two stumps with one stump laid across."

We are informed, also, that putting down the wickets to make a man out in running, instead of the old custom of popping the ball into the hole, was adopted on account of severe injuries to the hands, and that the wicket was changed at the same time—1779-1780—to the dimensions of twenty-two inches by six, with a third stump added.

Before this alteration the art of defence was almost unknown: balls often passed over the wicket, and often passed through. At the time of the alteration Old Nyren truly predicted that the innings would not be shortened but better played. The long pod and curved form of the bat, as seen in the old paintings, was made only for hitting, and for ground balls too. Length balls were then by no means common; neither would low stumps encourage them: and even upright play was then practised by very few. Old Nyren relates that one Harry Hall, a gingerbread baker of Farnham, gave peripatetic lectures to young players, and always insisted on keeping the left elbow well up; in other words, on straight play. "Now-a-days," said Beldham, "all the world knows that; but when I began there was very little length bowling, very little straight play, and little defence either." Fennex, said he, was the first who played out at balls; before his day, batting was too much about the crease. Beldham said that his own supposed tempting of Providence consisted in running in to hit. "You do frighten me there jumping out of your ground, said our Squire Paulet:" and Fennex used also to relate how, when he played forward to the pitch of the ball, his father "had never seen the like in all his days;" the said days extending a long way back towards the beginning of the century. While speaking of going in to hit, Beldham said, "My opinion has always been that too little is attempted in that direction. Judge your ball, and, when the least over-pitched, go in and hit her away." In this opinion Mr. C. Taylor's practice would have borne Beldham out: and a fine dashing game this makes; only, it is a game for none but practised players. When you are perfect in playing in your ground, then, and then only, try how you can play out of it, as the best means to scatter the enemy and open the field. [45]

"As to bowling," continued Beldham, "when I was a boy (about 1780), nearly all bowling was fast, and all along the ground. In those days the Hambledon Club could beat all England; but our three parishes around Farnham at last beat Hambledon." [46]

It is quite evident that Farnham was the cradle of cricketers. "Surrey," in the old scores, means nothing more than the Farnham parishes. This corner of Surrey, in every match against All England, was reckoned as part of Hampshire; and, Beldham truly said "you find us regularly on

the Hampshire side in Bentley's Book."

"I told you, sir," said Beldham, "that in my early days all bowling was what we called fast, or at least a moderate pace. The first lobbing slow bowler I ever saw was Tom Walker. When, in 1792, England played Kent, I did feel so ashamed of such baby bowling; but, after all, he did more than even David Harris himself. Two years after, in 1794, at Dartford Brent, Tom Walker, with his slow bowling, headed a side against David Harris, and beat him easily." [47]

"Kent, in early times, was not equal to our counties. Their great man was Crawte, and he was taken away from our parish of Alresford by Mr. Amherst, the gentleman who made the Kent matches. In those days, except around our parts, Farnham and the Surrey side of Hampshire, a little play went a long way. Why, no man used to be more talked of than Yalden; and, when he came among us, we soon made up our minds what the rest of them must be. If you want to know, sir, the time the Hambledon Club was formed, I can tell you by this;—when we beat them in 1780, I heard Mr. Paulet say, 'Here have I been thirty years raising our club, and are we to be beaten by a mere parish?' so, there must have been a cricket club, that played every week regularly, as long ago as 1750. We used to go as eagerly to a match as if it were two armies fighting; we stood at nothing if we were allowed the time. From our parish to Hambledon is twenty-seven miles, and we used to ride both ways the same day, early and late. At last, I and John Wells were about building a cart: you have heard of tax carts, sir; well, the tax was put on then, and that stopped us. The members of the Hambledon Club had a caravan to take their eleven about; they used once to play always in velvet caps. Lord Winchelsea's eleven used to play in silver laced hats; and always the dress was knee-breeches and stockings. We never thought of knocks; and, remember, I played against Browne of Brighton too. Certainly, you would see a bump heave under the stocking, and even the blood come through; but I never knew a man killed, now you ask the question, and I never saw any accident of much consequence, though many an *all but*, in my long experience. Fancy the old fashion before cricket shoes, when I saw John Wells tear a finger nail off against his shoe-buckle in picking up a ball!" [48]

"Your book, sir, says much about old Nyren. This Nyren was fifty years old when I began to play; he was our general in the Hambledon matches; but not half a player, as we reckon now. He had a small farm and inn near Hambledon, and took care of the ground."

"I remember when many things first came into the game which are common now. The law for Leg-before-wicket was not passed, nor much wanted, till Ring, one of our best hitters, was shabby enough to get his leg in the way, and take advantage of the bowlers; and, when Tom Taylor, another of our best hitters, did the same, the bowlers found themselves beaten, and the law was passed to make leg-before-wicket Out. The law against jerking was owing to the frightful pace Tom Walker put on, and I believe that he afterwards tried something more like the modern throwing-bowling, and so caused the words against throwing also. Willes was not the inventor of that kind of round bowling; he only revived what was forgotten or new to the young folk." [49]

"The umpires did not formerly pitch the wickets. David Harris used to think a great deal of pitching himself a good-wicket, and took much pains in suiting himself every match day."

"Lord Stowell was fond of cricket. He employed me to make a ground for him at Holt Pound."

In the last century, when the waggon and the packhorse supplied the place of the penny train, there was little opportunity for those frequent meetings of men from distant counties that now puzzle us to remember who is North and who is South, who is Surrey or who is Kent. The matches then were truly county matches, and had more of the spirit of hostile tribes and rival clans. "There was no mistaking the Kent boys," said Beldham, "when they came staring in to the Green Man. A few of us had grown used to London, but Kent and Hampshire men had but to speak, or even show themselves, and you need not ask them which side they were on." So the match seemed like Sir Horace Mann and Lord Winchelsea and their respective tenantry—for when will the feudal system be quite extinct? and there was no little pride and honour in the parishes that sent them up, and many a flagon of ale depending in the farms or the hop grounds they severally represented, as to whether they should, as the spirit-stirring saying was, "prove themselves the better men." "I remember in one match," said Beldham, "in Kent, Ring was playing against David Harris. The game was much against him. Sir Horace Mann was cutting about with his stick among the daisies, and cheering every run,—you would have thought his whole fortune (and he would often bet some hundreds) was staked upon the game; and, as a new man was going in, he went across to Ring, and said, 'Ring, carry your bat through and make up all the runs, and I'll give you 10*l.* a-year for life.' Well, Ring was out for sixty runs, and only three to tie, and four to beat, and the last man made them. It was Sir Horace who took Aylward away with him out of Hampshire, but the best bat made but a poor bailiff, we heard." [50]

"Cricket was played in Sussex very early, before my day at least; but, that there was no good play I know by this, that Richard Newland, of Slinden in Sussex, as you say, sir, taught old Richard Nyren, and that no Sussex man could be found to play him. Now, a second-rate player of our parish beat Newland easily; so you may judge what the rest of Sussex then were. But before 1780 there were some good players about Hambledon and the Surrey side of Hampshire. Crawte, the best of the Kent men, was stolen away from us; so you will not be wrong, sir, in writing down that Farnham, and thirty miles round, reared all the best players up to my day, about 1780." [51]

"There were some who were then called 'the old players,'"—and here Fennex's account quite agreed with Beldham's,—"including Frame and old Small. And as to old Small, it is worthy of observation, that Bennett declared it was part of the creed of the last century, that Small was the man who 'found out cricket,' or brought play to any degree of perfection. Of the same school was Sueter, the wicket-keeper, who in those days had very little stumping to do, and Minshull and

Colshorn, all mentioned in Nyren." "These men played puddling about their crease and had no freedom. I like to see a player upright and well forward, to face the ball like a man. The Duke of Dorset made a match at Dartford Brent between 'the Old Players and the New.'—You laugh, sir," said this tottering silver-haired old man, "but we all were New once;—well, I played with the Walkers, John Wells, and the rest of our men, and beat the Old ones very easily."

Old John Small died, the last, if not the first of the Hambledonians, in 1826. Isaac Walton, the father of Anglers, lived to the age of ninety-three. This father of Cricketers was in his ninetieth year. John Small played in all the great matches till he was turned of seventy. A fine skater and a good musician. But, how the Duke of Dorset took great interest in John Small, and how his Grace gave him a fiddle, and how John, like a modern Orpheus, beguiled a wild bull of its fury in the middle of a paddock, is it not written in the book of the chronicles of the playmates of Old Nyren?—In a match of Hambledon against All England, Small kept up his wicket for three days, and was not out after all. A pity his score is unknown. We should like to compare it with Mr. Ward's.

"Tom Walker was the most tedious fellow to bowl to, and the slowest runner between wickets I ever saw. Harry was the hitter,—Harry's half-hour was as good as Tom's afternoon. I have seen Noah Mann, who was as fast as Tom was slow, in running a four, overtake him, pat him on the back, and say, 'Good name for you is *Walker*, for you never was a runner.' It used to be said that David Harris had once bowled him 170 balls for one run! David was a potter by trade, and in a kind of skittle alley made between hurdles, he used to practise bowling four different balls from one end, and then picking them up he would bowl them back again. His bowling cost him a great deal of practice; but it proved well worth his while, for no man ever bowled like him, and he was always first chosen of all the men in England."—*Nil sine labore*, remember, young cricketers all.—"Lambert' (not the great player of that name), said Nyren, 'had a most deceitful and teasing way of delivering the ball; he tumbled out the Kent and Surrey men, one after another, as if picked off by a rifle corps. His perfection is accounted for by the circumstance that when he was tending his father's sheep, he would set up a hurdle or two, and bowl away for hours together.'

"There was some good hitting in those days, though too little defence. Tom Taylor would cut away in fine style, almost after the manner of Mr. Budd. Old Small was among the first members of the Hambledon Club. He began to play about 1750, and Lumpy Stevens at the same time. I can give you some notion, sir, of what cricket was in those days, for Lumpy, a very bad bat, as he was well aware, once said to me, 'Beldham, what do you think cricket must have been in those days when I was thought a good batsman?' But fielding was very good as far back as I can remember."—Now, what Beldham called good fielding must have been good enough. He was himself one of the safest hands at a catch. Mr. Budd, when past forty, was still one of the quickest men I ever played with, taking always middle wicket, and often, by swift running, doing part of long field's work. Sparks, Fennex, Bennett, and young Small, and Mr. Parry, were first rate, not to mention Beagley, whose style of long stopping in the North and South Match of 1836, made Lord Frederick and Mr. Ward justly proud of so good a representative of the game in their younger days. Albeit, an old player of seventy, describing the merits of all these men, said, "put Mr. King at point, Mr. C. Ridding long-stop, and Mr. W. Pickering cover, and I never saw the man that could beat either of them."

"John Wells was a most dangerous man in a single wicket match, being so dead a shot at a wicket. In one celebrated match, Lord Frederick warned the Honourable H. Tufton to beware of John; but John Wells found an opportunity of maintaining his character by shying down, from the side, little more than the single stump. Tom Sheridan joined some of our matches, but he was no good but to make people laugh. In our days there were no padded gloves. I have seen Tom Walker rub his bleeding fingers in the dust! David used to say he liked to *rind* him."

"The matches against twenty-two were not uncommon in the last century. In 1788 the Hambledon Club played two-and-twenty at Cold Ash Hill. 'Drawing' between leg and wicket is not a new invention. Old Small, (b. 1737, d. 1826,) was famous for the draw, and, to increase his facility he changed the crooked bat of his day for a straight bat. There was some fine cutting before Saunders' day. Harry Walker was the first, I believe, who brought cutting to perfection. The next genuine cutter—for they were very scarce (I never called mine cutting, not like that of Saunders at least)—was Robinson. Walker and Robinson would wait for the ball till all but past the wicket, and then cut with great force. Others made good Off-hits, but did not hit late enough for a good Cut. I would never cut with slow bowling. I believe that Walker, Fennex, and myself, first opened the old players' eyes to what could be done with the bat; Walker by cutting, and Fennex and I by forward play: but all improvement was owing to David Harris's bowling. His bowling rose almost perpendicular: it was once pronounced a jerk; it was altogether most extraordinary.—For thirteen years I averaged forty-three a match, though frequently I had only one innings; but I never could half play unless runs were really wanted."

CHAP. IV.

CRICKET GENERALLY ESTABLISHED AS A NATIONAL GAME BY THE END OF THE LAST CENTURY.

Little is recorded of the Hambledon Club after the year 1786. It broke up when Old Nyren left it, in 1791; though, in this last year, the true old Hambledon Eleven all but beat twenty-two of

Middlesex at Lord's. Their cricket-ground on Broadhalfpenny Down, in Hampshire, was so far removed from the many noblemen and gentlemen who had seen and admired the severe bowling of David Harris, the brilliant hitting of Beldham, and the interminable defence of the Walkers, that these worthies soon found a more genial sphere for their energies on the grounds of Kent, Surrey, and Middlesex. Still, though the land was deserted, the men survived; and imparted a knowledge of their craft to gentles and simples far and near.

Most gladly would we chronicle that these good men and true were actuated by a great and a patriotic spirit, to diffuse an aid to civilisation—for such our game claims to be—among their wonder-stricken fellow-countrymen; but, in truth, we confess that “reaping golden opinions” and coins, “from all kinds of men,” as well as that indescribable tumult and those joyous emotions which attend the ball, vigorously propelled or heroically stopped, while hundreds of voices shout applause,—that such stirring motives, more powerful far with vain-glorious man than any “dissolving views” of abstract virtue, tended to the migration of the pride of Hambledon. Still, doubtful though the motive, certain is the fact, that the old Hambledon players did carry their bats and stumps out of Hampshire into the adjoining counties, and gradually, like all great commanders, taught their adversaries to conquer too. In some instances, as with Lord Winchelsea, Mr. Amherst, and others, noblemen combined the *utile dulci*, pleasure and business, and retained a great player as a keeper or a bailiff, as Martingell once was engaged by Earl Ducie. In other instances, the play of the summer led to employment through the winter; or else these busy bees lived on the sweets of their sunshine toil, enjoying *otium cum dignitate*—that is, living like gentlemen, with nothing to do.

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This accounts for our finding these Hampshire men playing Kent matches; being, like a learned Lord in Punch's picture, “naturalised everywhere,” or “citizens of the world.”

[58]

Let us trace these Hambledonians in all their contests, from the date mentioned (1786 to 1800), the eventful period of the French Revolution and Nelson's victories; and let us see how the Bank stopping payment, the mutiny of the fleet, and the threatened invasion, put together, did not prevent balls from flying over the tented field, in a far more innocent and rational way on this, than on the other side, of the water.

Now, what were the matches in the last century—“eleven gentlemen against the twelve Cæsars?” No! these, though ancient names, are of modern times. Kent and England was as good an annual match in the last, as in the present century. The White Conduit Fields and the Artillery Ground supplied the place of Lord's, though in 1787 the name of Lord's is found in Bentley's matches, implying, of course, the old Marylebone Ground, now Dorset Square, under Thomas Lord, and not the present by St. John's Wood, more properly deserving the name of Dark's than Lord's. The Kentish battlefields were Sevenoaks—the land of Clout, one of the original makers of cricket-balls,—Coxheath, Dandelion Fields, in the Isle of Thanet, and Cobham Park; also Dartford Brent and Pennenden Heath: there is also early mention of Gravesend, Rochester, and Woolwich.

Next in importance to the Kent matches were those of Hampshire and of Surrey, with each of which counties indifferently the Hambledon men used to play. For it must not be supposed that the whole county of Surrey put forth a crop of stumps and wickets all at once: we have already said that malt and hops and cricket have ever gone together. Two parishes in Surrey, adjoining Hants, won the original laurels for their county; parishes in the immediate vicinity of the Farnham hop country. The Holt, near Farnham, and Moulsey Hurst, were the Surrey grounds. The match might truly have been called “Farnham's hop-gatherers *v.* those of Kent.” The former, aided occasionally by men who drank the ale of Alton, just as Burton-on-Trent, life-sustainer to our Indian empire, sends forth its giants, refreshed with bitter ale, to defend the honour of the neighbouring towns and counties. The men of Hampshire, after Broadhalfpenny was abandoned to docks and thistles, pitched their tents generally either upon Windmill Downs or upon Stoke Downs; and once they played a match against T. Assheton Smith, whose mantle has descended on a worthy representative, whether on the level turf or by the cover side. Albeit, when that gentleman has a “meet” (as occasionally advertised) at Hambledon, he must unconsciously avoid the spot where “titch and turn”—the Hampshire cry—did once exhilarate the famous James Aylward, among others, as he astonished the Farnham waggoner, by continuing one and the same innings as the man drove up on the Tuesday afternoon and down on the Wednesday morning! This match was played at Andover, and the surnames of most of the Eleven may be read on the tombstones (with the best of characters) in Andover Churchyard. Bourne Paddock, Earl Darnley's estate, and Burley Park, in Rutlandshire, constituted often the debateable ground in their respective counties. Earl Darnley, as well as Sir Horace Mann and Earl Winchelsea, Mr. Paulet and Mr. East, lent their names and patronage to Elevens; sometimes in the places mentioned, sometimes at Lord's, and sometimes at Perriam Downs, near Luggershal, in Wiltshire.

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[60]

Middlesex also, exclusively of the Marylebone Club, had its Eleven in these days; or, we should say, its *twenty-two*, for that was the number then required to stand the disciplined forces of Hampshire, Kent, or England. And this reminds us of an “Uxbridge ground,” where Middlesex played and lost; also, of “Hornchurch, Essex,” where Essex, in 1791, was sufficiently advanced to win against Marylebone, an occasion memorable, because Lord Frederick Beauclerk there played nearly his first recorded match, making scarce any runs, but bowling four wickets. Lord Frederick's first match was at Lord's, 2nd June, 1791. “There was also,” writes the Hon. R. Grimston, “the Bowling-green' at Harrow-on-the-Hill, where the school played: Richardson, who subsequently became Mr. Justice Richardson, was the captain of the School Eleven in 1782.”

[61]

Already, in 1790, the game was spreading northwards, or, rather, proofs exist that it had long before struck far and wide its roots and branches in northern latitudes; and also that it was a game as popular with the men of labour as the men of leisure, and therefore incontestably of

home growth: no mere exotic, or importation of the favoured few, can cricket be, if, like its namesake, it is found "a household word" with those whom Burns aptly calls "the many-aproned sons of mechanical life."

In 1791 Eton, that is, the old Etonians, played Marylebone, four players given on either side; and all true Etonians will thank us for informing them, not only that the seven Etonians were more than a match for their adversaries, but also that this match proves that Eton had, at that early date, the honour of sending forth the most distinguished amateurs of the day; for Lord Winchelsea, Hon. H. Fitzroy, Earl Darnley, Hon. E. Bligh, C. Anguish, Assheton Smith—good men and true—were Etonians all. This match was played in Burley Park, Rutlandshire. On the following day, June 25th, 1791, the Marylebone played eleven yeomen and artisans of Leicester; and though the Leicestrians cut a sorry figure, still the fact that the Midland Counties practised cricket sixty years ago is worth recording. Peter Heward, of Leicester, a famous wicket-keeper, of twenty years since, told me of a trial match in which he saw his father, quite an old man, with another veteran of his own standing, quickly put out with the old-fashioned slow bowling a really good Eleven for some twenty runs—good, that is, against the modern style of bowling; and cricket was not a new game in this old man's early days (say 1780) about Leicester and Nottingham, as the score in [page 41](#) alone would prove; for such a game as cricket, evidently of gradual development, must have been played in some primitive form many a long year before the date of 1775, in which it had excited sufficient interest, and was itself sufficiently matured in form, to show the two Elevens of Sheffield and of Nottingham. Add to this, what we have already mentioned, a rude form of cricket as far north as Angus and Lothian in 1700, and we can hardly doubt that cricket was known as early in the Midland as in the Southern Counties. The men of Nottingham—land of Clarke, Barker, and Redgate—next month, in the same year (1791) threw down the gauntlet, and shared the same fate; and next day the Marylebone, "adding," in a cricketing sense, "insult unto injury," played twenty-two of them, and won by thirteen runs.

In 1790, the shopocracy of Brighton had also an Eleven; and Sussex and Surrey, in 1792, sent an eleven against England to Lord's, who scored in one innings 453 runs, the largest score on record, save that of Epsom in 1815—476 in one innings! "M.C.C. v. twenty-two of Nottingham," we now find an annual match; and also "M.C.C. v. Brighton," which becomes at once worthy of the fame that Sussex long has borne. In 1793, the old Westminster men all but beat the old Etonians: and Essex and Herts, too near not to emulate the fame of Kent and Surrey, were content, like second-rate performers, to have, though playing twenty-two, one Benefit between them, in the shape of defeat in one innings from England. And here we are reminded by two old players, a Kent and an Essex man, that, being schoolboys in 1785, they can respectively testify that, both in Kent and in Essex, cricket appeared to them more of a village game than they have ever seen it of late years. "There was a cricket-bat behind the door, or else up in the bacon rack, in every cottage. We heard little of clubs, except around London; still the game was played by many or by few, in every school and village green in Essex and in Kent, and the field placed much as when with the Sidmouth I played the Teignbridge Club in 1826. Mr. Whitehead was the great hitter of Kent; and Frame and Small were names as often mentioned as Pilch and Parr by our boys now." And now (1793) the game had penetrated further West; for eleven yeomen at Oldfield Bray, in Berkshire, had learned long enough to be able to defeat a good eleven of the Marylebone Club.

In 1795, the Hon. Colonel Lennox, memorable for a duel with the Duke of York, fought—where the gallant Colonel had fought so many a less hostile battle—on the cricket ground at Dartford Brent, headed Elevens against the Earl of Winchelsea; and now, first the Marylebone eleven beat sixteen Oxonians on Bullingdon Green.

In 1797, the Montpelier Club and ground attract our notice. The name of this club is one of the most ancient, and their ground a short distance only from the ground of Hall of Camberwell.

Swaffham, in Norfolk, is now mentioned for the first time. But Norfolk lies out of the usual road, and is a county which, as Mr. Dickens said of Golden Square, before it was the residence of Cardinal Wiseman, "is nobody's way to or from any place." So, in those slow coach and packhorse days, the patrons of Kent, Surrey, Hants, and Marylebone, who alone gave to what else were "airy nothing, a local habitation and a name," could not so easily extend their circuit to the land of turkeys, lithotomy, and dumplings. But it happened once that Lord Frederick Beauclerk was heard to say, his eleven should beat any three elevens in the county of Norfolk; whence arose a challenge from the Norfolk men, whom, sure enough, his Lordship did beat, and that in one innings; and a print, though not on pocket-handkerchiefs, was struck off to perpetuate this honourable achievement.

Lord F. Beauclerk was now one of the best players of his day; as also were the Hon. H. and I. Tufton. They frequently headed a division of the Marylebone, or some county club, against Middlesex, and sometimes Hampstead and Highgate.

In this year (1798) these gentlemen aforesaid made the first attempt at a match between the Gentlemen and the Players; and on this first occasion the players won; though when we mention that the Gentlemen had three players given, and also that T. Walker, Beldham, and Hammond were the three, certainly it was like playing England, "the part of England being left out by particular desire."

Kent attacked England in 1798, but, being beaten in about *half* an innings, we find the Kentish men in 1800, though still hankering after the same cosmopolitan distinction, modestly accept the odds of nineteen, and afterwards twenty-three, men to twelve.

The chief patronage, and consequently the chief practice, in cricket, was beyond all comparison

in London. There, the play was nearly all professional: even the gentlemen made a profession of it; and therefore, though cricket was far more extensively spread throughout the villages of Kent than of Middlesex, the clubs of the metropolis figure in the score books as defying all competition. Professional players, we may observe, have always a decided advantage in respect of judicious choice and mustering their best men. The best eleven on the side of the Players is almost always known, and can be mustered on a given day. Favour, friendship, and etiquette interfere but little with their election; but the eleven gentlemen of England are less easy to muster,—

*“Linguenda Parish et domus et placens
Uxor;”—*

and they are never anything more than the best eleven known to the party who make the match. Besides, by the time an amateur is at his best, he has duties which bid him retire.

Having now traced the rise and progress of the game from the time of its general establishment to the time that Beldham had shown us the full powers of the bat, and Lord Frederick had (as Fennex always declared) formed his style upon Beldham’s; and since now we approach the era of a new school, and the forward play of Fennex,—which his father termed an innovation and presumption “contrary to all experience,”—till the same forward play was proved effectual by Lambert, and Hammond had shown that, in spite of wicket keepers, bowling, if uniformly slow, might be met and hit away at the pitch;—now, we will wait to characterise, in the words of eye-witnesses, the heroes of the contests already mentioned.

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On “the Old Players” I may be brief; because, the few old gentlemen (with one of whom I am in daily communication) who have heard even the names of the Walkers, Frame, Small, and David Harris, are passing away, full of years, and almost all the written history of the Old Players consists in indiscriminating scores.

In point of style the Old Players did not play the steady game, with maiden overs, as at present. The defensive was comparatively unknown: both the bat and the wicket, and the style of bowling too, were all adapted to a short life and a merry one. The wooden substitute for a ball, as in Cat and Dog, before described, evidently implied a hitting, and not a stopping game.

The Wicket, as we collect from a MS. furnished by an old friend to the late William Ward, Esq., was, in the early days of the Hambledon Club, one foot high and two feet wide, consisting of two stumps only, with one stump laid across. Thus, straight balls passed between, and, what we now call, well pitched balls would of course rise over. Where, then, was the encouragement to block, when fortune would so often usurp the place of science? And, as to the bat, look at the picture of cricket as played in the old Artillery Ground; the bat is curved at the end like a hockey stick, or the handle of a spoon, and—as common implements usually are adapted to the work to be performed—you will readily believe that in olden time the freest hitter was the best batsman. The bowling was all along the ground, hand and eye being everything, and judgment nothing; because, the art originally was to bowl under the bat. The wicket was too low for rising balls; and the reason we hear sometimes of the Blockhole was, not that the blockhole originally denoted guard, but because between these two-feet-asunder stumps there was cut a hole big enough to contain the ball, and (as now with the school boy’s game of rounders) the hitter was made out in running a notch by the ball being popped into this hole (whence popping crease) before the point of the bat could reach it.

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Did we say Running a Notch? *unde* Notch? What wonder ere the days of useful knowledge, and Sir William Curtis’s three R’s,—or, reading, writing, and arithmetic,—that natural science should be evolved in a truly natural way: what wonder that notches on a stick, like the notches in the milk-woman’s tally in Hogarth’s picture, should supply the place of those complicated papers of vertical columns, which subject the bowling, the batting, and the fielding to a process severely and scrupulously just, of analytical observation, or differential calculus! Where now there sit on kitchen chairs, with ink bottle tied to a stump the worse for wear, Messrs. Caldecourt and Bayley (’tis pity two such men should ever not be umpires), with an uncomfortable length of paper on their knees, and large tin telegraphic letters above their heads; and where now is Lillywhite’s printing press, to hand down every hit as soon as made on twopenny cards to future generations; there, or in a similar position, old Frame, or young Small (young once: he died in 1834, aged eighty) might have placed a trusty yeoman to cut notches with his bread-and-bacon knife on an ashen stick. Oh! ’tis enough to make the Hambledon heroes sit upright in their graves with astonishment to think, that in the Gentlemen and Players’ Match, in 1850, the cricketers of old Sparkes’ Ground, at Edinburgh, could actually know the score of the first innings in London, before the second had commenced!

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But when we say that the old players had little or nothing of the defensive, we speak of the play before 1780, when David Harris flourished: for William Beldham distinctly assured us that the art of bowling over the bat by “length balls” originated with the famous David; an assertion, we will venture to say, which requires a little, and only a little, qualification. Length bowling, or three-quarter balls, to use a popular, though exploded, expression, was introduced in David’s time, and by him first brought to perfection. And what rather confirms this statement is, that the early bowlers were very swift bowlers,—such was not only David, but the famous Brett, of earlier date, and Frame of great renown: a more moderate pace resulted from the new discovery of a well pitched bail ball.

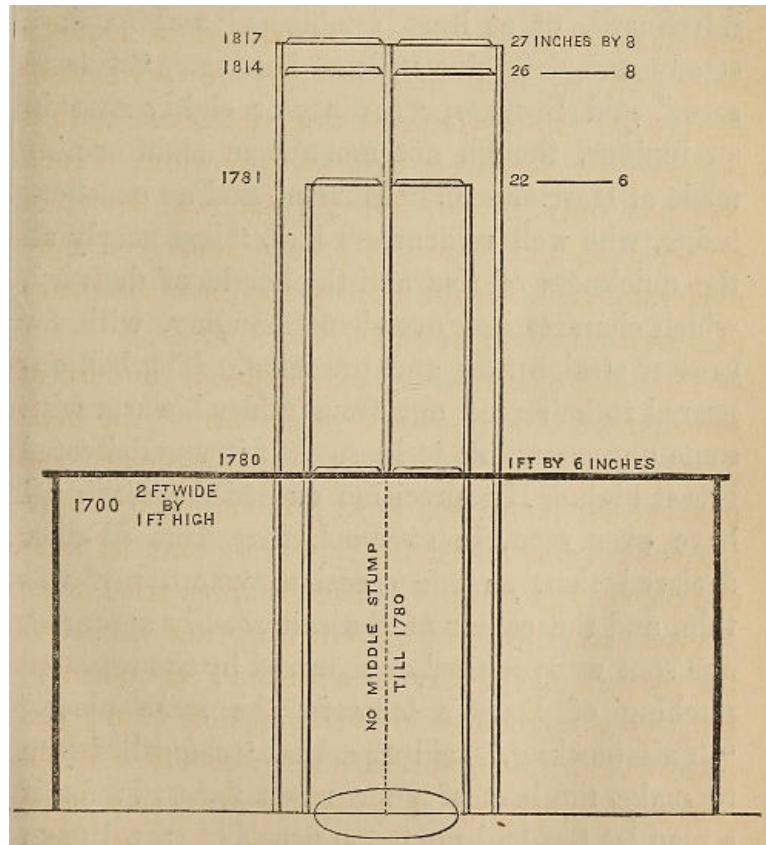
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The old players well understood the art of twisting, or bias bowling. Lambert, “the little farmer,” says Nyren, “improved on the art, and puzzled the Kent men in a great match, by

twisting the reverse of the usual way,—that is, from the off to leg stump.” Tom Walker tried what Nyren calls the throwing-bowling, and defied all the players of the day to withstand this novelty; but, by a council of the Hambledon Club, this was forbidden, and Willes, a Kent man, had all the praise of inventing it some twenty years later. In a match of the Hambledon Club in 1775, it was observed, at a critical point of the game, that the ball passed three times between Small’s two stumps without knocking off the bail; and then, first, a third stump was added; and, seeing that the new style of balls which rise over the bat rose also over the wickets, then but one foot high, the wicket was altered to the dimensions of 22 inches by 6, at which measure it remained till about 1814, when it was increased to 26 inches by 8, and again to its present dimensions of 27 inches by 8 in 1817; when, as one inch was added to the stumps, two inches were added to the width between the creases. The changes in the wicket are represented in the foregoing woodcut. In the year 1700, the runner was made out, not by striking off the transverse stump—we can hardly call it a bail—but by popping the ball in the hole therein represented.

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David Harris’ bowling, Fennex used to say, introduced, or at least established and fixed, a steady and defensive style of batting. “I have seen,” said Sparkes, “seventy or eighty runs in an innings, though not more than eight or nine made at Harris’s end.” “Harris,” said an excellent judge, who well remembers him, “had nearly all the quickness of rise and the height of delivery, which characterises overhand bowling, with far greater straightness and precision. The ball appeared to be forced out from under his arm with some unaccountable jerk, so that it was delivered breast high. His precision exceeded anything I have ever seen, in so much that Tom Walker declared that, on one occasion, where turf was thin, and the colour of the soil readily appeared, one spot was positively uncovered by the repeated pitching of David’s balls in the same place.”

“This bowling,” said Sparkes, “compelled you to make the best of your reach forward; for if a man let the ball pitch too near and crowd upon him, he very rarely could prevent a mistake, from the height and rapidity with which the ball cut up from the ground.”—This account agrees with the well-known description of Nyren. “Harris’s mode of delivering the ball was very singular. He would bring it from under his arm by a twist, and nearly as high as his arm-pit, 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. His balls were very little beholden to the ground; it was but a touch and up again; and woe be to the man who did not get in to block them, for they had such a peculiar curl they would grind his fingers against the bat.”

And Nyren agrees with my informants in ascribing great improvement in batting, and he specifies, “particularly in stopping” (for the act of defence, we said, was not essential to the batsman in the ideas of one of the old players), to the bowling of David Harris, and bears testimony to an assertion, that forward play, that is meeting at the pitch balls considerably short of a half volley, was little known to the oldest players, and was called into requisition chiefly by the bowling of David Harris. Obviously, with the primitive fashion of ground bowling, called sneakers, forward play could have no place, and even well-pitched balls, like those of Peter Stevens, *alias* Lumpy, of moderate pace might be played with some effect, even behind the crease; but David Harris, with pace, pitch, and rapid rise combined, imperatively demanded a new invention, and such was forward play about 1800. Old Fennex, who died, alas! in a Middlesex workhouse, aged eighty, in 1839 (had his conduct been as straightforward and upright as his bat, he would have known a better end), always declared that he was the first, and

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remained long without followers; and no small praise is due to the boldness and originality that set at nought the received maxims of his forefathers before he was born or thought of; daring to try things that, had they been ordinarily reasonable, would not, of course, have been ignored by Frame, by Purchase, nor by Small. The world wants such men as Fennex; men, who will shake off the prejudices of birth, parentage, and education, and boldly declare that age has taught them wisdom, and that the policy of their predecessors, however expensively stereotyped, must be revised and corrected and adapted to the demands of a more inquiring generation. "My father," said Fennex, "asked me how I came by that new play, reaching out as no one ever saw before." The same style he lived to see practised, not elegantly, but with wonderful power and effect by Lambert, "a most severe and resolute hitter;" and Fennex also boasted that he had a most proficient disciple in Fuller Pilch: though I suspect that, as "*poeta nascitur non fit*,"—that is, that all great performers appear to have brought the secret of their excellence into the world along with them, and are not the mere puppets of which others pull the strings—Fuller Pilch may think he rather coincided with, than learnt from, William Fennex.

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Now the David Harris aforesaid, who wrought quite a revolution in the game, changing cricket from a backward and a slashing to a forward and defensive game, and claiming higher stumps to do justice to his skill—this David, whose bowling was many years in advance of his generation, having all the excellence of Lillywhite's high delivery, though free from all imputation of unfairness—this David rose early, and late took rest, and ate the bread of carefulness, before he attained such distinction as—in these days of railroads, Thames tunnels, and tubular gloves and bridges—to deserve the notice of our pen. "For," said John Bennett, "you might have seen David practising at dinner time and after hours, all the winter through;" and "many a Hampshire barn," said Beagley, "has been heard to resound with bats and balls as well as threshing."

*"Nil sine magno,
Vita labore dedit mortalibus."*

And now we must mention the men, who, at the end of the last century, represented the Pilch, the Parr, the Wenman, and the Wisden of the present day.

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Lord Beauclerk was formed on the style of Beldham, whom, in brilliancy of hitting, he nearly resembled. The Hon. H. Bligh and Hon. H. Tufton were of the same school. Sir Peter Burrell was also a good hitter. And these were the most distinguished gentlemen players of the day. Earl Winchelsea was in every principal match, but rather for his patronage than his play: and the Hon. Col. Lennox for the same reason. Mr. R. Whitehead was a Kent player of great celebrity. But Lord F. Beauclerk was the only gentleman who had any claim in the last century to play in an All England eleven. He was also one of the fastest runners. Hammond was the great wicket-keeper; but then the bowling was slow: Sparkes said he saw him catch out Robinson by a draw between leg and wicket. Freemantle was the first long stop; but Ray the finest field in England; and in those days, when the scores were long, fielding was of even more consideration than at present. Of the professional players, Beldham, Hammond, Tom and Harry Walker, Freemantle, Robinson, Fennex, J. Wells, and J. Small were the first chosen after Harris had passed away; for, Nyren says that even Lord Beauclerk could hardly have seen David Harris in his prime. At this time there was a sufficient number of players to maintain the credit of the left hands. On the 10th of May, 1790, the Left-handed beat the Right by thirty-nine runs. This match reveals that Harris and Aylward, and the three best Kent players, Brazier, Crawe, and Clifford,—Sueter, the first distinguished wicket-keeper,—H. Walker, and Freemantle were all left-handed: so also was Noah Mann.

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The above-mentioned players are quite sufficient to give some idea of the play of the last century. Sparkes is well known to the author of these pages as his quondam instructor. In batting he differed not widely from the usual style of good players, save that he never played forward to any very great extent. Playing under leg, according to the old fashion (we call it old-fashioned though Pilch adopts it), served instead of the far more elegant and efficient "draw." Sparkes was also a fair bias bowler, but of no great pace, and not very difficult. I remember his saying that the old school of slow bowling was beaten by Hammond's setting the example of running in. "Hammond," he said, "on one occasion hit back a slow ball to Lord F. Beauclerk with such frightful force that it just skimmed his Lordship's unguarded head, and he had scarcely nerve to bowl after." Of Fennex we can also speak from our friend the Rev. John Mitford. Fennex was a fair straightforward hitter, and once as good a single-wicket player as any in England. His attitude was easy, and he played elegantly, and hit well from the wrist. If his bowling was any specimen of that of his contemporaries, they were by no means to be despised. His bowling was very swift and of high delivery, the ball cut and ground up with great quickness and precision. Fennex used to say that the men of the present day had little idea of what the old underhand bowling really could effect; and, from the specimen which Fennex himself gave at sixty-five years of age, there appeared to be much reason in his assertion. Of all the players Fennex had ever seen (for some partiality for bygone days we must of course allow) none elicited his notes of admiration like Beldham. We cannot compare a man who played underhand, with those who are formed on overhand, bowling. Still, there is reason to believe what Mr. Ward and others have told us, that Beldham had that genius for cricket, that wonderful eye (although it failed him very early), and that quickness of hand, which would have made him a great player in any age.

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Beldham related to us in 1838, and that with no little nimbleness of hand and vivacity of eye, while he suited the action to the word with a bat of his own manufacture, how he had drawn forth the plaudits of Lords' as he hit round and helped on the bowling of Browne of Brighton, even faster than before, though the good men of Brighton thought that no one could stand against him, and Browne had thought to bowl Beldham off his legs. This match of Hants against England in

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1819 Fennex was fond of describing, and certainly it gives some idea of what Beldham could do. "Osbaldeston," said Mr. Ward, "with his tremendously fast bowling, was defying every one at single wicket, and he and Lambert challenged Mr. E. H. Budd with three others. Just then I had seen Browne's swift bowling, and a hint from me settled the match. Browne was engaged, and Osbaldeston was beaten with his own weapons." A match was now made to give Browne a fair trial, and "we were having a social glass," said Fennex, "and talking over with Beldham the match of the morrow at the 'Green Man,' when Browne came in, and told Beldham, with as much sincerity as good-humour, that he should soon send his stumps a-flying." "Hold there," said Beldham, fingering his bat, "you will be good enough to allow me this bit of wood, won't you?" "Certainly," said Browne. "Quite satisfied," answered Beldham, "so to-morrow you shall see." "Seventy-two runs," said Fennex,—and the score-book attests his accuracy,—"was Beldham's first and only innings;" and, Beagley also joined with Fennex, and assured us, that he never saw a more complete triumph of a batsman over a bowler. Nearly every ball was cut or slipped away till Browne hardly dared to bowl within Beldham's reach.

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We desire not to qualify the praises of Beldham, but when we hear that he was unrivalled in elegant and brilliant hitting, and in that wonderful versatility which cut indifferently, quick as lightning, all round him, we cannot help remarking, that such bowling as that of Redgate or of Wisden renders imperatively necessary a severe style of defence, and an attitude of cautious watchfulness, which must render the batsman not quite such a picture for the artist as might be seen in the days of Beldham and Lord F. Beauclerk.

So far we have traced the diffusion of the game, and the degrees of proficiency attained, to the beginning of the present century. To sum up the evidence, by the year 1800, cricket had become the common pastime of the common people in Hampshire, Surrey, Sussex, and Kent, and had been introduced into the adjoining counties; and though we cannot trace its continuity beyond Rutlandshire and Burley Park, certainly it had been long familiar to the men of Leicester and Nottingham as well as Sheffield;—that, in point of Fielding generally, this was already as good, and quite as much valued in a match, as it has been since; while Wicket-keeping in particular had been ably executed by Sueter, for he could stump off Brett, whose pace Nyren, acquainted as he was with all the bowlers to the days of Lillywhite, called quite of the steam-engine power, albeit no wicket-keeper could shine like Wenman or Box, except with the regularity of overhand bowling; and already Bowlers had attained by bias and quick delivery all the excellence which underhand bowling admits. Still, as regards Batting, the very fact that the stumps remained six inches wide, by twenty-two inches in height, undeniably proves that the secret of success was limited to comparatively a small number of players.

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CHAP. V.

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THE FIRST TWENTY YEARS OF THE PRESENT CENTURY.

Before this century was one year old, David Harris, Harry Walker, Purchase, Aylward, and Lumpy had left the stage, and John Small, instead of hitting bad balls whose stitches would not last a match, had learnt to make commodities so good that Clout's and Duke's were mere toy-shop in comparison. Noah Mann was the Caldecourt, or umpire, of the day, and Harry Bentley also, when he did not play. Five years more saw nearly the last of Earl Winchelsea, Sir Horace Mann, Earl Darnley, and Lord Yarmouth; still Surrey had a generous friend in Mr. Laurell, Hants in Mr. T. Smith, and Kent in the Honourables H. and J. Tufton. The Pavilion at Lord's, then and since 1787 on the site of Dorset Square, was attended by Lord Frederick Beauclerk, then a young man of four-and-twenty, the Honourables Colonel Bligh, Colonel Lennox, H. and J. Tufton, and A. Upton. Also, there were usually Messrs. R. Whitehead, G. Leycester, S. Vigne, and F. Ladbroke. These were the great promoters of the matches, and the first of the amateurs. Cricket was one of Lord Byron's favourite sports, and that in spite of his lame foot: witness the lines,—

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"Together join'd in cricket's manly toil,
Or shared the produce of the river's spoil."

Byron mentions in his letters that he played in the eleven of Harrow against Eton in 1805. The score is given in Lillywhite's Public-School Matches.

The excellent William Wilberforce was fond of cricket, and was laid up by a severe blow on the leg at Rothley while playing with his sons: he says the doctor told him a little more would have broken the bone.

Cricket, we have shown, was originally classed among the games of the lower orders; so we find the yeomen infinitely superior to the gentlemen even before cricket had become by any means so much of a profession as it is now. Tom Walker, Beldham, John Wells, Fennex, Hammond, Robinson, Lambert, Sparkes, H. Bentley, Bennett, Freemantle, were the best professionals of the day. For it was seven or eight years later that Mr. E. H. Budd, and his unequal rival, Mr. Brand, and his sporting friend, Osbaldeston, as also that fine player, E. Parry, Esq., severally appeared; and later still, that Mr. Ward, Howard, Beagley, Thumwood, Caldecourt, Slater, Flavel, Ashby, Searle, and Saunders, successively showed every resource of bias bowling to shorten the scores, and of fine hitting to lengthen them. By the end of these twenty years, all these distinguished players had taught a game in which the batting beat the bowling. "Cricket," said Mr. Ward, "unlike hunting, shooting, fishing, or even yachting, was a

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sport that lasted three days;" the wicket had been twice enlarged, once about 1814, and again in 1817; old Lord had tried his third, the present, ground; the Legs had taught the wisdom of playing rather for love than money; slow coaches had given way to fast, long whist to short; and ultimately Lambert, John Wells, Howard, and Powell, handed over the ball to Broadbridge and Lillywhite.

Such is the scene, the characters, and the performance. "Matches in those days were more numerously attended than now," said Mr. Ward: the old game was more attractive to spectators, because more busy, than the new. Tom Lord's flag was the well known telegraph that brought him in from three to four thousand sixpences at a match. John Goldham, the octogenarian inspector of Billingsgate, has seen the Duke of York and his adversary, the Honourable Colonel Lennox, in the same game, and had the honour of playing with both, and the Prince Regent, too, in the White Conduit Fields, on which spot Mr. Goldham built his present house. For the Prince was a great lover of the game, and caused the "Prince's Cricket Ground" to be formed at Brighton. The late Lord Barrymore, killed by the accidental discharge of a blunderbuss in his phaeton, was an enthusiastic cricketer. The Duke of Richmond, when Colonel Lennox, a nobleman whose life and spirits and genial generous nature made him beloved by all, exulted in this as in all athletic sports: the bite of a fox killed him. Then, as you drive through Russell Square, behold the statue of another patron, the noble-born and noble-minded Duke of Bedford; and in Dorset Square, the site of old Lord's Ground, you may muse and fancy you see, where now is some "modest mansion," the identical mark called the "Duke's strike," which long recorded a hit, 132 yards in the air, from the once famous bat of Alexander, late Duke of Hamilton. Great matches in those days, as in these, cost money. Six guineas if they won and four if they lost, was the player's fee; or, five and three if they lived in town. So, as every match cost some seventy pounds, over the fire-place at Lord's you would see a Subscription List for Surrey against England, or for England against Kent, as the case might be, and find notices of each interesting match at Brookes's and other clubs.

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This custom of advertising cricket matches is of very ancient date. For, in the "British Champion" of Sep. 8. 1743, a writer complains that though "noblemen, gentlemen, and clergymen may divert themselves as they think fit," and though he "cannot dispute their privilege to make butchers, cobblers, or tinkers their companions," he very much doubts "whether they have any right to invite *thousands of people* to be spectators of their agility." For, "it draws numbers of people from their employment to the ruin of their families. It is a most notorious breach of the laws—the advertisements most impudently reciting that great sums are laid." And, in the year following (1744), as we read in the "London Magazine," Kent beat all England in the Artillery Ground, in the presence of "their Royal Highnesses the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Cumberland, the Duke of Richmond, Admiral Vernon, and many other persons of distinction." How pleasing to reflect that those sunny holidays we enjoy at Lord's have been enjoyed by the people for more than a century past!

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But what were the famous cricket Counties in these twenty years? The glory of Kent had for a while departed. Time was when Kent could challenge England man for man; but now, only with such odds as twenty-three to twelve! As to the wide extension of cricket, it advanced but slowly then compared with recent times. A small circle round London would still comprise all the finest players. It was not till 1820 that Norfolk, forgetting its three Elevens beaten by Lord Frederick, again played Marylebone; and, though three gentlemen were given and Fuller Pilch played—then a lad of seventeen years—Norfolk lost by 417 runs, including Mr. Ward's longest score on record, —278. "But he was missed," said Mr. Budd, "the easiest possible catch before he had scored thirty." Still it was a great achievement; and Mr. Morse preserves, as a relic, the identical ball, and the bat which hit that ball about, a trusty friend that served its owner fifty years! Kennington Oval, perhaps, was then all docks and thistles. Surrey still stood first of cricket counties, and Mr. Laurell—Robinson was his keeper; an awful man for poachers, 6 feet 1 inch, and 16 stone, and strong in proportion—most generous of supporters, was not slow to give orders on old Thomas Lord for golden guineas, when a Surrey man, by catch or innings, had elicited applause. Of the same high order were Sir J. Cope of Bramshill Park, and Mr. Barnett, the banker, promoter of the B. matches; the Hon. D. Kinnaird, and, last not least, Mr. W. Ward, who by purchase of a lease saved Lord's from building ground; an act of generosity in which he imitated the good old Duke of Dorset, who, said Mr. Budd, "gave the ground called the Vine, at Sevenoaks, by a deed of trust, for the use of cricketers for ever."

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The good men of Surrey, in 1800, monopolised nearly all the play of England. Lord Frederick Beauclerk and Hammond were the only All England players who were not Surrey men.

Kent had then some civil contests—petty wars of single clans—but no county match; and their great friend R. Whitehead, Esq., depended on the M.C.C. for his finest games. The game had become a profession: a science to the gentlemen, and an art or handicraft to the players; and Farnham found in London the best market for its cricket, as for its hops. The best Kent play was displayed at Rochester, and yet more at Woolwich; but chiefly among our officers, whose bats were bought in London, not at Sevenoaks. These games reflected none such honour to the county as when the Earls of Thanet and of Darnley brought their own tenantry to Lord's or Dartford Brent, armed with the native willow wood of Kent. So, the Honourables H. and A. Tufton were obliged to yield to the altered times, and play two-and-twenty men where their noble father, the Earl of Thanet, had won with his eleven. "Thirteen to twenty-three was the number we enjoyed," said Sparkes, "for with thirteen good men well placed, and the bowling good, we did not want their twenty-three. A third man On, and a forward point, or kind of middle wicket, with slow bowling, or an extra slip with fast, made a very strong field: the Kent men were sometimes

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regularly pounded by our fielding.”

In 1805 we find a curious match: the “twelve best against twenty-three next best.” Lord Frederick was the only amateur among the “best”; but Barton, one of the “next best” among the latter, scored 87; not out. Mr. Budd first appeared at Lord’s in 1802 as a boy: he reappeared in 1808, and was at once among the longest scorers.

The Homerton Club also furnished an annual match: still all within the sound of Bow bells. “To forget Homerton,” said Mr. Ward, “were to ignore Mr. Vigne, our wicket-keeper, but one of very moderate powers. Hammond was the best we ever had. Hammond played till his sixtieth year; but Browne and Osbaldeston put all wicket-keeping to the rout. Hammond’s great success was in the days of slow bowling. John Wells and Howard were our two best fast bowlers, though Powell was very true. Osbaldeston beat his side with byes and slips—thirty-two byes in the B. match.” Few men could hit him before wicket; whence the many single-wicket matches he played; but Mr. Ward put an end to his reign by finding out Browne of Brighton. Beagley said of Browne, as the players now say of Mr. Fellows, they had no objection to him when the ground was smooth.

The Homerton Club also boasted of Mr. Ladbroke, one of the great promoters of matches, as well as the late Mr. Aislabie, always fond of the game, but all his life “too big to play,”—the remark by Lord Frederick of Mr. Ward, which, being repeated, did no little to develop the latent powers of that most efficient player. [90]

The Montpellier Club, also, with men given, annually played Marylebone.

Lord Frederick, in 1803, gave a little variety to the matches by leading against Marylebone ten men of Leicester and Nottingham, including the two Warsops. “T. Warsop,” said Clarke, “was one of the best bowlers I ever knew.” Clarke has also a high opinion of Lambert, from whom, he says, he learnt more of the game than from any other man.

Lambert’s bowling was like Mr. Budd’s, against which I have often played: a high underhand delivery, slow, but rising very high, very accurately pitched, and turning in from leg stump. “About the year 1818, Lambert and I,” said Mr. Budd, “attained to a kind of round-armed delivery (described as Clarke’s), by which we rose decidedly superior to all the batsmen of the day. Mr. Ward could not play it, but he headed a party against us, and our new bowling was ignored.” Tom Walker and Lord Frederick were of the tediously slow school; Lambert and Budd were several degrees faster. Howard and John Wells were the fast underhand bowlers.

Lord Frederick was a very successful bowler, and inspired great confidence as a general: his bowling was at last beaten by men running into him. Sparkes mentioned another player who brought very slow bowling to perfection, and was beaten in the same way. Beldham thought Mr. Budd’s bowling better than Lord Frederick’s; Beagley said the same. [91]

His Lordship is generally supposed to have been the best amateur of his day; so said Caldecourt; also Beagley, who observed his Lordship had the best head and was most valuable as a general. Otherwise, this is an assertion hard to reconcile with acknowledged facts; for, first, Mr. Budd made the best average, though usually placed against Lambert’s bowling, and playing almost exclusively in the great matches. Mr. Budd was a much more powerful hitter. Lord Frederick said, “Budd always wanted to win the game off a single ball.” Beldham observed, “if Mr. Budd would not hit so eagerly, he would be the finest player in all England.” When I knew him his hitting was quite safe play. Still Lord Frederick’s was the prettier style of batting, and he had the character of being the most scientific player. But since Mr. Budd had the largest average in spite of his hitting, Beldham becomes a witness in his favour. Mr. Budd measured five feet ten inches, and weighed twelve stone, very clean made and powerful, with an eye singularly keen, and great natural quickness, being one of the fastest runners of his day. Secondly, Mr. Budd was the better fieldsman. He stood usually at middle wicket. I never saw safer hands at a catch; and I have seen him very quick at stumping out. But, Lord Frederick could not take every part of the field; but was always short slip, and not one of the very best. And, thirdly, Mr. Budd was the better bowler. Mr. Budd hit well from the wrist. At Woolwich he hit a volley to long field for *nine*, though Mr. Parry threw it in. He also hit out of Lord’s old ground. “Lord had said he would forfeit twenty guineas if any one thus proved his ground too small: so we all crowded around Mr. Budd,” said Beldham, “and told him what he might claim. ‘Well then,’ he said, ‘I claim it, and give it among the players.’ But Lord was shabby and would not pay.” Mr. Budd is now (1854) in his sixty-ninth year: it is only lately that any country Eleven could well spare him. [92]

Lambert was also good at every point. In batting, he was a bold forward player. He stood with left foot a yard in advance, swaying his bat and body as if to attain momentum, and reaching forward almost to where the ball must pitch.

Lambert’s chief point was to take the ball at the pitch and drive it powerfully away, and, said Mr. Budd, “to a slow bowler his return was so quick and forcible, that his whole manner was really intimidating to a bowler.” Every one remarked how completely Lambert seemed master of the ball. Usually the bowler appears to attack and the batsman to defend; but Lambert seemed always on the attack, and the bowler at his mercy, and “hit,” said Beldham, “what no one else could meddle with.” [93]

Lord Frederick was formed on Beldham’s style. Mr. Budd’s position at the wicket was much the same: the right foot placed as usual, but the left rather behind and nearly a yard apart, so that instead of the upright bat and figure of Pilch the bat was drawn across, and the figure hung away from the wicket. This was a mistake. Before the ball could be played Mr. Budd was too good a player not to be up, like Pilch, and play well over his off stump. Still Mr. Budd explained to me that this position of the left foot was just where one naturally shifts it to have room for a cut: so

this strange attitude was supposed to favour their fine off hits. I say Off hit because the Cut did not properly belong to either of these players: Robinson and Saunders were the men to cut,—cutting balls clean away from the bails, though Robinson had a maimed hand, burnt when a child: the handle of his bat was grooved to fit his stunted fingers. Talking of his bat, the players once discovered by measurement it was beyond the statute width, and would not pass through the standard. So, unceremoniously, a knife was produced, and the bat reduced to its just, rather than its fair, proportions. "Well," said Robinson, "I'll pay you off for spoiling my bat:" and sure enough he did, hitting tremendously, and making one of his largest innings, which were often near a hundred runs.

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In the first twenty years of this century, Hampshire, like Kent, had lost its renown, but only because Hambledon was now no more; nor did Surrey and Hampshire any longer count as one. To confirm our assertion that Farnham produced the players,—for in 1808, Surrey had played and beaten England three times in one season, and from 1820 to 1825 Godalming is mentioned as the most powerful antagonist; but whether called Godalming or Surrey, we must not forget that the locality is the same—we observe, that in 1821, M.C.C. plays "The Three Parishes," namely, Godalming, Farnham, and Hartley Row; which parishes, after rearing the finest contemporaries of Beldham, could then boast a later race of players in Flavel, Searle, Howard, Thumwood, Mathews.

"About this time (July 23. 1821)," said Beldham, "we played the Coronation Match; 'M.C.C. against the Players of England.' We scored 278 and only six wickets down, when the game was given up. I was hurt and could not run my notches; still James Bland, and the other Legs, begged of me to take pains, for it was no sporting match, 'any odds and no takers;' and they wanted to shame the gentlemen against wasting their (the Legs') time in the same way another time."

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But the day for Hampshire, as for Kent, was doomed to shine again. Fennex, Small, the Walkers, J. Wells, and Hammond, in time drop off from Surrey,—and about the same time (1815), Caldecourt, Holloway, Beagley, Thumwood, Shearman, Howard, Mr. Ward, and Mr. Knight, restore the balance of power for Hants, as afterwards, Broadbridge and Lillywhite for Sussex.

"In 1817, we went," said Mr. Budd, "with Osbaldeston to play twenty-two of Nottingham. In that match Clarke played. In common with others I lost my money, and was greatly disappointed at the termination. One paid player was accused of selling, and never employed after. The concourse of people was very great: these were the days of the Luddites (rioters), and the magistrates warned us, that unless we would stop our game at seven o'clock, they could not answer for keeping the peace. At seven o'clock we stopped; and, simultaneously, the thousands who lined the ground began to close in upon us. Lord Frederick lost nerve and was very much alarmed; but I said they didn't want to hurt us. No; they simply came to have a look at the eleven men who ventured to play two for one."—His Lordship broke his finger, and, batting with one hand, scored only eleven runs. Nine men, the largest number perhaps on record, Bentley marks as "caught by Budd."

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Just before the establishment of Mr. Will's roundhand bowling, and as if to prepare the way, Ashby came forth with an unusual bias, but no great pace. Sparkes bowled in the same style; as also, Matthews and Mr. Jenner somewhat later. Still the batsmen were full as powerful as ever, reckoning Saunders, Searle, Beagley, Messrs. Ward, Kingscote, Knight. Suffolk became very strong with Pilch, the Messrs. Blake, and others, of the famous Bury Club; while Slater, Lillywhite, King, and the Broadbridges, raised the name of Midhurst and of Sussex.

Against such batsmen every variety of underhand delivery failed to maintain the balance of the game, till J. Broadbridge and Lillywhite, after many protests and discussions, succeeded in establishing what long was called "the Sussex bowling."

"About 1820," said Mr. Budd, "at our anniversary dinner (three-guinea tickets) at the Clarendon, Mr. Ward asked me if I had not said I would play any man in England at single wicket, without fieldsmen. An affirmative produced a match p.p. for fifty guineas. On the day appointed Mr. Brand proved my opponent. He was a fast bowler. I went in first, and scoring seventy runs with some severe blows on the legs,—nankeen knees and silk stockings, and no pads in those days,—I consulted a friend and knocked down my own wicket, lest the match should last to the morrow, and I be unable to play. Mr. Brand was out without a run! I went in again, and making the 70 up to 100, I once more knocked down my own wicket, and once more my opponent failed to score!!"

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The flag was flying—the signal of a great match—and a large concourse were assembled; and, considering Mr. Ward, a good judge, made the match, this is probably the most hollow victory on record.

But Osbaldeston's victory was far more satisfactory. Lord Frederick with Beldham made a p.p. match with Osbaldeston and Lambert. "On the day named," said Budd, "I went to Lord Frederick, representing my friend was too ill to stand, and asked him to put off the match. "No; play or pay," said his Lordship, quite inexorable. "Never mind," said Osbaldeston, "I won't forfeit: Lambert may beat them both; and, if he does, the fifty guineas shall be his."—I asked Lambert how he felt. "Why," said he, "they are anything but safe."—His Lordship wouldn't hear of it. "Nonsense," he said, "you can't mean it." "Yes; play or pay, my Lord, we are in earnest, and shall claim the stakes!" and in fact Lambert did beat them both." For, to play such a man as Lambert, when on his mettle, was rather discouraging; and "he did make desperate exertion," said Beldham: "once he rushed up after his ball, and Lord Frederick was caught so near the bat that he lost his temper, and said it was not fair play. Of course, all hearts were with Lambert."

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"Osbaldeston's mother sat by in her carriage, and enjoyed the match; and then," said Beldham, "Lambert was called to the carriage and bore away a paper parcel: some said it was a gold watch,—some, bank notes. Trust Lambert to keep his own secrets. We were all curious, but no one ever knew:"—nor ever will know. In March, 1851, I addressed a letter to him at Reigate. Soon, a brief paragraph announced the death of "the once celebrated cricket player William Lambert."

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CHAP. VI.

A DARK CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF CRICKET.

The lovers of cricket may congratulate themselves that matches, at the present day, are made at cricket, as at chess, rather for love and the honour of victory than for money.

It is now many years since Lord's was frequented by men with book and pencil, betting as openly and professionally as in the ring at Epsom, and ready to deal in the odds with any and every person of speculative propensities. Far less satisfactory was the state of things with which Lord F. Beauclerk and Mr. Ward had to contend, to say nothing of the earlier days of the Earl of Winchelsea and Sir Horace Mann. As to the latter period, "Old Nyren" bewails its evil doings. He speaks of one who had "the trouble of proving himself a rogue," and also of "the legs of Marylebone," who tried, for once in vain, to corrupt some primitive specimens of Hambledon innocence. He says, also, that the grand matches of his day were always made for 500*l.* a side. Add to this the fact that bets were in proportion; and that Jim and Joe Bland, of turf notoriety, with Dick Whitlom of Covent Garden, Simpson, a gaming-house keeper, and Toll of Esher, as regularly attended at a match as Crockford and Gully at Epsom and Ascot; and the idea that all the Surrey and Hampshire rustics should either want or resist strong temptations to sell, is not to be entertained for a moment. The constant habit of betting will take the honesty out of any man. A half-crown sweepstakes, or betting such odds as lady's long kids to gentleman's short ditto, is all very fair sport; but, if a man, after years of high betting, can still preserve the fine edge and tone of honest feeling he is indeed a wonder. To bet on a certainty all admit is swindling. If so, to bet where you feel it is a certainty, must be very bad moral practice.

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"If gentlemen wanted to bet," said Beldham, "just under the pavilion sat men ready, with money down, to give and take the current odds: these were by far the best men to bet with; because, if they lost, it was all in the way of business: they paid their money and did not grumble." Still, they had all sorts of tricks to make their betting safe. "One artifice," said Mr. Ward, "was to keep a player out of the way by a false report that his wife was dead." Then these men would come down to the Green Man and Still, and drink with us, and always said, that those who backed us, or "the nobs," as they called them, sold the matches; and so, sir, as you are going the round beating up the quarters of the old players, you will find some to persuade you this is true. But don't believe it. That any gentleman in my day ever put himself into the power of these blacklegs, by selling matches, I can't credit. Still, one day, I thought I would try how far these tales were true. So, going down into Kent, with "one of high degree," he said to me, "Will, if this match is won, I lose a hundred pounds!" "Well," said I, "my Lord, you and I *could* order that." He smiled as if nothing were meant, and talked of something else; and, as luck would have it, he and I were in together, and brought up the score between us, though every run seemed to me like "a guinea out of his Lordship's pocket."

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In those days, foot races were very common. Lord Frederick and Mr. Budd were first-rate runners, and bets were freely laid. So, one day, old Fennex laid a trap for the gentlemen: he brought up, to act the part of some silly conceited youngster with his pockets full of money, a first-rate runner out of Hertfordshire. This soft young gentleman ran a match or two with some known third-rate men, and seemed to win by a neck, and no pace to spare. Then he calls out, "I'll run any man on the ground for 25*l.*, money down." A match was quickly made, and money laid on pretty thick on Fennex's account. Some said, "Too bad to win of such a green young fellow!" others said, "He's old enough—serve him right." So the laugh was finely against those who were taken in; "the green one" ran away like a hare!

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"You see, sir," said one fine old man, with brilliant eye and quickness of movement, that showed his right hand had not yet forgot its cunning, "matches were bought, and matches were sold, and gentlemen who meant honestly lost large sums of money, till the rogues beat themselves at last. They overdid it; they spoil their own trade; and, as I said to one of them, 'a knave and a fool makes a bad partnership; so, you and yourself will never prosper.' Well, surely there was robbery enough: and, not a few of the great players earned money to their own disgrace; but, if you'll believe me, there was not half the selling there was said to be. Yes, I can guess, sir, much as you have been talking to all the old players over this good stuff (pointing to the brandy and water I had provided), no doubt you have heard that B—— sold as bad as the rest. I'll tell the truth: one match up the country I did sell,—a match made by Mr. Osbaldeston at Nottingham. I had been sold out of a match just before, and lost 10*l.*, and happening to hear it I joined two others of our eleven to sell, and get back my money. I won 10*l.* exactly, and of this roguery no one ever suspected me; but many was the time I have been blamed for selling when as innocent as a babe. In those days, when so much money was on the matches, every man who lost his money would blame some one. Then, if A missed a catch, or B made no runs,—and where's the player whose hand is always in?—that man was called a rogue directly. So, when a

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man was doomed to lose his character and to bear all the smart, there was the more temptation to do like others, and after 'the kicks' to come in for 'the halfpence.' But I am an old man now, and heartily sorry I have been ever since: because, but for that Nottingham match, I could have said with a clear conscience to a gentleman like you, that all that was said was false, and I never sold a match in my life; but now I can't. But, if I had fifty sons, I would never put one of them, for all the games in the world, in the way of the roguery that I have witnessed. The temptation really was very great,—too great by far for any poor man to be exposed to,—no richer than ten shillings a week, let alone harvest time.—I never told you, sir, the way I first was brought to London. I was a lad of eighteen at this Hampshire village, and Lord Winchelsea had seen us play among ourselves, and watched the match with the Hambledon Club on Broadhalfpenny, when I scored forty-three against David Harris, and ever so many of the runs against David's bowling, and no one ever could manage David before. So, next year, in the month of March, I was down in the meadows, when a gentleman came across the field with Farmer Hilton: and, thought I, all in a minute, now this is something about cricket. Well, at last it was settled I was to play Hampshire against England, at London, in White-Conduit-Fields ground, in the month of June. For three months I did nothing but think about that match. Tom Walker was to travel up from this country, and I agreed to go with him, and found myself at last with a merry company of cricketers—all the men, whose names I had ever heard as foremost in the game—met together, drinking, card-playing, betting, and singing at the Green Man (that was the great cricketer's house), in Oxford Street,—no man without his wine, I assure you, and such suppers as three guineas a game to lose, and five to win (that was then the sum for players) could never pay for long. To go to London by the waggon, earn five guineas three or four times told, and come back with half the money in your pocket to the plough again, was all very well talking. You know what young folk are, sir, when they get together: mischief brews stronger in large quantities: so, many spent all their earnings, and were soon glad to make more money some other way. Hundreds of pounds were bet upon all the great matches, and other wagers laid on the scores of the finest players, and that too by men who had a book for every race and every match in the sporting world; men who lived by gambling; and, as to honesty, gambling and honesty don't often go together. What was easier, then, than for such sharp gentlemen to mix with the players, take advantage of their difficulties, and say, 'your backers, my Lord this, and the Duke of that, sell matches and overrule all your good play, so why shouldn't you have a share of the plunder?'—That was their constant argument. 'Serve them as they serve you.'—You have heard of Jim Bland, the turfsman, and his brother Joe—two nice boys. When Jemmy Dawson was hanged for poisoning the horse, the Blands never felt safe till the rope was round Dawson's neck: to keep him quiet, they persuaded him to the last hour that no one dared hang him; and a certain nobleman had a reprieve in his pocket. Well, one day in April, Joe Bland traced me out in this parish, and tried his game on with me. 'You may make a fortune,' he said, 'if you will listen to me: so much for the match with Surrey, and so much more for the Kent match—' 'Stop,' said I: 'Mr. Bland, you talk too fast; I am rather too old for this trick; you never buy the same man but once: if their lordships ever sold at all, you would peach upon them if ever after they dared to win. You'll try me once, and then you'll have me in a line like him of the mill last year.' No, sir, a man was a slave when once he sold to these folk: 'fool and knave aye go together.' Still, they found fools enough for their purpose; but rogues can never trust each other. One day, a sad quarrel arose between two of them, which opened the gentlemen's eyes too wide to close again to those practices. Two very big rogues at Lord's fell a quarrelling, and blows were given; a crowd drew round, and the gentlemen ordered them both into the pavilion. When the one began, 'You had 20*l.* to lose the Kent match, bowling leg long hops and missing catches.' 'And you were paid to lose at Swaffham.'—'Why did that game with Surrey turn about—three runs to get, and you didn't make them?' Angry words come out fast; and, when they are circumstantial and square with previous suspicions, they are proofs as strong as holy writ. In one single-wicket match," he continued,—“and those were always great matches for the sporting men, because usually you had first-rate men on each side, and their merits known,—dishonesty was as plain as this: just as a player was coming in, (John B. will confess this if you talk of the match,) he said to me, 'You'll let me score five or six, for appearances, won't you, for I am not going to make many if I can?' 'Yes,' I said, 'you rogue, you shall if I can *not* help it.'—But, when a game was all but won, and the odds heavy, and all one way, it was cruel to see how the fortune of the day then would change about. In that Kent match,—you can turn to it in your book (Bentley's scores), played 28th July, 1807, on Penenden Heath,—I and Lord Frederick had scored sixty-one, and thirty remained to win, and six of the best men in England went out for eleven runs. Well, sir, I lost some money by that match, and as seven of us were walking homewards to meet a coach, a gentleman who had backed the match drove by and said, 'Jump up, my boys, we have all lost together. I need not mind if I hire a pair of horses extra next town, for I have lost money enough to pay for twenty pair or more.' Well, thought I, as I rode along, you have rogues enough in your carriage now, sir, if the truth were told, I'll answer for it; and, one of them let out the secret, some ten years after. But, sir, I can't help laughing when I tell you: once, there was a single-wicket match played at Lord's, and a man on each side was paid to lose. One was bowler, and the other batsman, when the game came to a near point. I knew their politics, the rascals, and saw in a minute how things stood; and how I did laugh to be sure. For seven balls together, one would not bowl straight, and the other would not hit; but at last a straight ball must come, and down went the wicket.”

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From other information received, I could tell this veteran that, even in his much-repented Nottingham match, his was not the only side that had men resolved to lose. The match was sold for Nottingham too, and that with less success, for Nottingham won: an event the less difficult to accomplish, as Lord Frederick Beauclerk broke a finger in an attempt to stop an angry and furious throw from Shearman, whom he had scolded for slack play. His Lordship batted with one

hand. Afterwards lock-jaw threatened; and Lord Frederick was, well nigh, a victim to Cricket!

It is true, Clarke, who played in the match, thought all was fair: still, he admits, he heard one Nottingham man accused, on the field, by his own side of foul play. This confirms the evidence of the Rev. C. W., no slight authority in Nottingham matches, who said he was cautioned before the match that all would not be fair.

"This practice of selling matches," said Beldham, "produced strange things sometimes. Once, I remember, England was playing Surrey, and, in my judgment, Surrey had the best side; still I found the Legs were betting seven to four against Surrey! This time, they were done; for they betted on the belief that some Surrey men had sold the match: but, Surrey then played to win." [109]

"Crockford used to be seen about Lord's, and Mr. Gully also occasionally; but, only for the society of sporting men: they did not understand the game, and I never saw them bet. Mr. Gully was often talking to me about the game for one season; but," said the old man, as he smoothed down his smockfrock, with all the confidence in the world, "I could never put any sense into him! He knew plenty about fighting, and afterwards of horse-racing; but a man cannot learn the odds of cricket unless he is something of a player." [110]

CHAP. VII.

Βαττολογία, OR THE SCIENCE AND ART OF BATTING.

A writer in "Blackwood" once attributed the success of his magazine to the careful exclusion of every bit of science, or reasoning, above half an inch long. The Cambridge Professors do not exclusively represent the mind of Parker's Piece; so, away with the stiffness of analysis and the mysteries of science: the laws of dynamics might puzzle, and the very name of *physics* alarm, many an able-bodied cricketer; so, invoking the genius of our mother tongue, let us exhibit science in its more palatable form.

All the balls that can be bowled may, for all practical purposes, be reduced to a few simple classes, and plain rules given for all and each. There are what are called good balls, and bad balls. The former, good lengths, and straight, while puzzling to the eye; the latter, bad lengths and wide, while easy to see and to hit.

But, is not a good hand and eye quite enough, with a little practice, without all this theory? Do you ignore the Pilches and the Parrs, who have proved famous hitters from their own sense alone?—The question is, not how many have succeeded, but how many more have failed. Cricket by nature is like learning from a village dame; it leaves a great deal to be untaught before the pupil makes a good scholar. If you have Caldecourt's, Wisden's, or Lillywhite's instructions, *vivâ voce*, why not on paper also? What, though many excellent musicians do not know a note, every good musician will bear witness that the consequence of Nature's teaching is, that men form a vicious habit almost impossible to correct, a lasting bar to brilliant execution. And why?—because the piano or the violin leaves no dexterity or rapidity to spare. The muscles act freely in one way only, in every other way with loss of power. So with batting. A good ball requires all the power and energy of the man! And, as with riding, driving, rowing, or every other exercise, it depends on a certain form, attitude, or position, whether this power be forthcoming or not. [111]

The scope for useful instructions for *forming good habits of hitting before their place is preoccupied with bad*—for, "there's the rub"—is very great indeed. If Pilch, and Clarke, and Lillywhite, averaging fifty years each, are still indifferent to pace in bowling,—and if Mr. Ward, as late as 1844, scored forty against Mr. Kirwan's swiftest bowling, while some of the most active young men, of long experience in cricket, are wholly unequal to the task; then, it is undeniable that a batsman may form a certain invaluable habit, which youth and strength cannot always give, nor age and inactivity entirely take away. [112]

The following are simple rules for forming correct habits of play; for adding the judgment of the veteran to the activity of youth, or putting an old head on young shoulders, and teaching the said young shoulders not to get into each other's way.

All balls that can be bowled are reducible to "length balls" and "not lengths."

Not lengths, are the toss, the tice, the half volley, the long hop, and ground balls.

These are *not length balls*, not pitched at that critical length which puzzles the judgment as to whether to play forward or back, as will presently be explained. These are all "bad balls;" and among good players considered certain hits; though, from the delusive confidence they inspire, sometimes they are bowled with success against even the best of players.

These *not lengths*, therefore, being the easiest to play, as requiring only hand and eye, but little judgment, are the best for a beginner to practise; so, we will set the tyro in a proper position to play them with certainty and effect. [113]

POSITION.—Look at any professional player,—observe how he stands and holds his bat. Much, very much, depends on position,—so look at the figure of Pilch. This is substantially the attitude of every good batsman. Some think he should bend the right knee a little; but an anatomist reminds me that it is when the limb is straight that the muscles are relaxed, and most ready for sudden action. Various as attitudes appear to the casual observer, all coincide in the main points marked in the figure of Pilch in our frontispiece. For, all good players,—

1st. Stand with the right foot just within the line. Further in, would limit the reach and endanger the wicket: further out, would endanger stumping.

2dly. All divide their weight between their two feet, though making the right leg more the pillar and support, the left being rather lightly placed, and more ready to move on, off, or forward, and this we will call the Balance-foot.

3rdly. All stand as close as they can without being before the wicket; otherwise, the bat cannot be upright, nor can the eye command a line from the bowler's hand.

4thly. All stand at guard as upright as is easy to them. We say *easy*, not to forbid a slight stoop, —the attitude of extreme caution. Height is a great advantage, "and a big man," says Dakin, "is foolish to make himself into a little man." If the eye is low, you cannot have the commanding sight, nor, as players say, "see as much of the game," as if you hold up your head, and look well at the bowler.

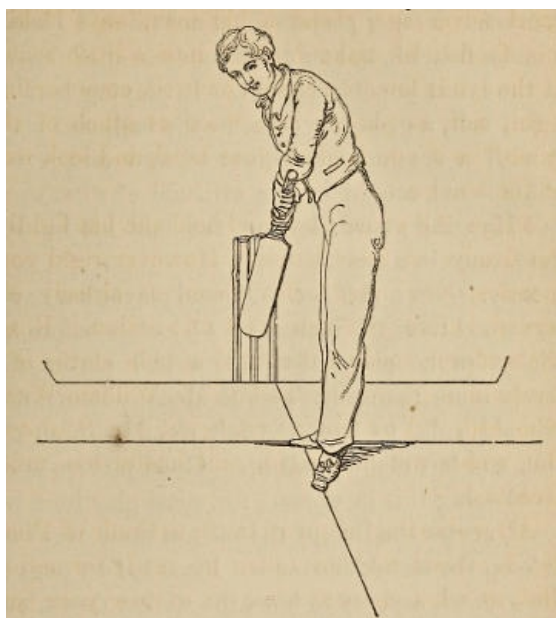
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5thly. All stand easy, and hold the bat lightly, yet firmly, in their hands. However rigid your muscles, you must relax them, as already observed, before you can start into action. Rossi, the sculptor, made a beautiful marble statue of a batsman at guard, for the late Mr. William Ward, who said, "You are no cricketer, Mr. Sculptor; the wrists are too rigid, and hands too much clenched."

After standing at guard in the attitude of Pilch, *fig. 1.* shows the bat taken up ready for action. But, at what moment are you to raise your bat? Caldecourt teaches, and some very good players observe, the habit of not raising the bat till they have seen the pitch of the ball. This is said to tend both to safety and system in play; but a first-rate player, who has already attained to a right system, should aspire to more power and freedom, and rise into the attitude of *fig. 1.* as soon as the ball is out of the bowler's hand. Good players often begin an innings with their bat down, and raise it as they gain confidence.

Fig. 1.

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Preparing for Action. The toes are too much before Wicket, and foot hardly within the crease. Foreshortening suits our illustration better than artistic effect.

Meet the ball with as full a bat as the case admits. Consider the full force of this rule.

1st. *Meet the ball.* The bat must strike the ball, not the ball the bat. Even if you block, you can block hard, and the wrists may do a little; so, with a good player this rule admits of no exception. Young players must not think I recommend a flourish, but an exact movement of the bat at the latest possible instant. In playing back to a bail ball, a good player meets the ball, and plays it with a resolute movement of arm and wrist. Pilch is not caught in the attitude of what some call Hanging guard, letting the ball hit his bat dead, once in a season.

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2dly. *With a full bat.* A good player has never less wood than 21 inches by 4¼ inches before his wicket as he plays the ball, a bad player has rarely more than a bat's width alone. Remember the old rule, to keep the left shoulder over the ball, and left elbow well up. Good players must avoid doing this in excess; for, some play from leg to off, across the line of the ball, in their over care to keep the shoulder over it. Fix a bat by pegs in the ground, and try to bowl the wicket down, and you will perceive what an unpromising antagonist this simple rule creates. I like to see a bat, as the ball is coming, hang perpendicular as a pendulum from the player's wrists. The best compliment ever paid me was this:—"Whether you play forward or back, hitting or stopping, the wicket is always covered to the full measure of your bat." So said a friend well known in North Devon, whose effective bowling, combined with his name, has so often provoked the pun of "the falls of the *Clyde*."

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3dly. *As full a bat as the case admits:* you cannot present a full bat to any but a straight ball. A

bat brought forward from the centre stump to a ball Off or to leg, must be minutely oblique and form an angle sufficient to make Off or On hits.

Herein then consists the great excellence of batting, *in presenting the largest possible face of the bat to the ball*. While the bat is descending on the ball, the ball may rise or turn, to say nothing of the liability of the hand to miss, and then the good player has always half the width of his bat, besides its height, to cover the deviation; whereas, the cross player is far more likely to miss, from the least inaccuracy of hand and eye, or twist of the ball.

And, would you bring a full bat even to a toss? Would you not cut it to the Off or hit across to the On?

This question tries my rule very hard certainly; but though nothing less than a hit from a toss can satisfy a good player, still I have seen the most brilliant hitters, when a little out of practice, lose their wicket, or hit a catch from the edge of the bat, by this common custom of hitting across even to a toss or long hop.

To hit tosses is good practice, requiring good time and quick wrist play. If you see a man play stiff, and "up in a heap," a swift toss is worth trying. Bowlers should practise both toss and tice. [118]

We remember Wenman playing well against fine bowling; when an underhand bowler was put on, who bowled him with a toss, fourth ball.

To play tosses, and ground balls, and hops, and every variety of loose bowling, by the rigid rules of straight and upright play, is a principle, the neglect of which has often given the old hands a laugh at the young ones. Often have I been amused to see the wonder and disappointment occasioned, when some noted member of a University Eleven, or the Marylebone Club, from whom all expected of course the most tremendous hitting "off mere underhand bowling," has been easily disposed of by a toss or a ground ball, yclept a "sneak."

A fast ball to the middle stump, however badly bowled, no player can afford to treat too easily. A ball that grounds more than once may turn more than once; and, the bat though properly $4\frac{1}{4}$ inches wide, is considerably reduced when used across wicket; so *never hit across wicket*. To turn to loose bowling, and hit from leg stump square to the on side with full swing of the body, is very gratifying and very effective; and, perhaps you may hit over the tent, or, as I once saw, into a neighbour's carriage; but, while the natives are marvel-stricken, Caldecourt will shake his head, and inwardly grieve at folly so triumphant. [119]

This reminds me of a memorable match in 1834, of Oxford against Cowley, the village which fostered those useful members of university society; who, during the summer term, bowl at sixpences on stumps sometimes eight hours a day, and have strength enough left at the end to win one sixpence more.

The Oxonians, knowing the ground or knowing their bowlers, scored above 200 runs in their first innings. Then Cowley grew wiser; and even now a Cowley man will tell the tale, how they put on one Tailor Humphreys to bowl twisting underhand sneaks, at which the Oxonians laughed, and called it "no cricket;" but it actually levelled their wickets for fewer runs than were made against Bayley and Cobbett the following week. The Oxonians, too eager to score, and thinking it so easy, hit across and did not play their usual game.

Never laugh at bowling that takes wickets. Bowling that is bad, often for that very reason meets with batting that is worse. Nothing shows a thorough player more than playing with caution even badly pitched underhand bowling.

One of the best judges of the game I ever knew was once offered by a fine hitter a bet that he could not with his underhand bowling make him "give a chance" in half an hour. [120]

"Then you know nothing of the game," was the reply; "I would bowl you nothing but Off tosses, which you must cut; you would not cut those correctly for half an hour, for you could not use a straight bat once. Your bet ought to be,—no chance before so many runs."

Peter Heward, an excellent wicket-keeper of Leicester,—of the same day as Henry Davis, one of the finest and most graceful hitters ever seen, as Dakin, or any midland player will attest,—once observed to me, "Players are apt to forget that a bad bowler may bowl one or two balls as well as the best; so, to make a good average, you must always play the same guarded and steady game, and take care especially when late in the season." "Why late in the season?" "Because the ground is damp and heavy—it takes the spring out of good bowling, and gives fast underhand bowling as many twists as it has hops, besides making it hang on the ground. This game is hardly worth playing it is true; but a man is but half a player who is only prepared for true ground." "We do not play cricket," he continued, "on billiard tables; wind and weather, and the state of the turf make all the difference. So, if you play to win, play the game that will carry you through; and that is a straight and upright game; use your eyes well; play not at the pitch, nor by the length, but always (what few men do) at the ball itself, and never hit or 'pull the ball' across wicket." [121]

Next as to the *half-volley*. This is the most delightful of all balls to hit, because it takes the right part of the bat, with all the quickness of its rise or rebound. Any player will show you what a half-volley is, and I presume that every reader has some living lexicon to explain common terms. A half-volley, then, is very generally hit in the air, soaring far above every fieldsman's head; and to know the power of the bat, every hitter should learn so to hit at pleasure. Though, as a rule, *high hits make a low average*. But I am now to speak only of hitting half-volleys along the ground.

Every time you play forcibly at the pitch of a ball you have more or less of the half-volley; so this is a material point in batting. The whole secret consists partly in timing your hit well, and

partly in taking the ball at the right part of the rise, so as to play the ball down without wasting its force against the ground.

Every player thinks he can hit a half-volley along the ground; but if once you see it done by a really brilliant hitter, you will soon understand that such hitting admits of many degrees of perfection. In forward play, or driving, fine hitters seem as if they felt the ball on the bat, and sprung it away with an elastic impulse; and, in the more forcible hits, a ball from one of the All England batsmen appears not so much like a hit as a shot from the bat: for, when a ball is hit in the swiftest part of the bat's whirl, and with that part of the bat that gives the greatest force with the least jar, the ball appears to offer no resistance; its momentum is annihilated by the whirl of the bat, and the two-and-twenty fieldsmen find to their surprise how little ground a fieldsman can cover against true and accurate hitting. [122]

Clean hitting requires a loose arm, the bat held firmly, but not clutched in the hand till the moment of hitting; clumsy gloves are a sad hindrance, the hit is not half so crisp and smart. The bat must be brought forward not only by the free swing of the arm working well from the shoulder, but also by the wrist. (Refer to *fig. 1. p. 115.*) Here is the bat ready thrown back, and wrists proportionally bent; from that position a hit is always assisted by wrist as well as arm. The effect of the wrist alone, slight as its power appears, is very material in hitting; this probably arises from the greater precision and better time in which a wrist hit is commonly made.

As to hard hitting, if two men have equal skill, the stronger man will send the ball farthest. Many slight men drive a ball nearly as far as larger men, because they exert their force in a more skilful manner. We have seen a man six feet three inches in height, and of power in proportion, hit a ball tossed to him—not once or twice, but repeatedly—a hundred yards or more in the air. This, perhaps, is more than any light man could do. But, the best man at putting the stone and throwing a weight we ever saw, was a man of little more than ten stone. In this exercise, as in wrestling, the application of a man's whole weight at the proper moment is the chief point: so also in hard hitting. [123]

The whirl of the bat may be accelerated by wrist, fore-arm, and shoulder: let each joint bear its proper part.

NUTS FOR STRONG TEETH.—All effective hits must be made with both hands and arms; and, in order that both arms may apply their force, the point at which the ball is struck should be opposite the middle of the body.

Take a bat in your hand, poise the body as for a half-volley hit forward, the line from shoulder to shoulder being parallel with the line of the ball. Now whirl the bat in the line of the ball, and you will find that it reaches that part of its circle where it is perpendicular to the ground,—midway between the shoulders; at that moment the bat attains its greatest velocity; so, then alone can the strongest hit be made. Moreover, a hit made at this moment will drive the ball parallel to and skimming the ground. And if, in such a hit, the lower six inches of the bat's face strike the ball, the hit is properly called a "clean hit," being free from all imperfections. The same may be said of a horizontal hit, or cut. The bat should meet the ball when opposite the body. I do not say that every hit should be made in this manner; I only say that a perfect hit can be made in no other, and that it should be the aim of the batsman to attain this position of the body as often as he can. Nor is this mere speculation on the scientific principle of batting; it arises from actual observation of the movements of the best batsmen. All good hitters make their hits just at the moment when the ball is opposite the middle of their body. Watch any fine Off-hitter. If he hits to Mid-wicket, his breast is turned to Mid-wicket; if he hits, I mean designedly, to Point, his breast is turned to Point. I do not say that his hits would always go to those parts of the field; because the speed and spin of the ball will always, to a greater or less degree, prevent its going in the precise direction of the hit; but I only say that the ball is always hit by the best batsmen when just opposite to them. Cutting forms no exception: the best cutters turn the body round on the basis of the feet till the breast fronts the ball,—having let the ball go almost as far as the bails,—and then the full power of the hitter is brought to bear with the least possible diminution of the original speed of the ball. This is the meaning of the observation,—that fine cutters appear to follow the ball, and at the latest moment cut the ball off the bails; for, if you do not follow the ball, by turning your breast to it at the moment you hit, you can have no power for a fine cut. It makes good "Chamber practice" to suspend a ball oscillating by a string: you will thus see wherein lies that peculiar power of cutting, which characterises Mr. Bradshaw, Mr. Felix, and Mr. C. Taylor; as of old, Searle, Saunders, and Robinson. Robinson cut so late that the ball often appeared past the wicket. [124]

And these hints will suffice to awaken attention to the powers of the bat. Clean hitting is a thing to be carefully studied; the player who has never discovered his deficiency in it, had better examine and see whether there is not a secret he has yet to learn. [125]

The Tice. Safest to block: apt to be missed, because a dropping ball; hard to get away, because on the ground. Drop the bat smartly on the ground, and it will make a run, but do not try too much of a hit. The Tice is almost a full pitch; the way to hit it, says Caldecourt, is to go in and make it a full pitch: I cannot advise this for beginners. Going in even to a Tice puts you out of form for the next ball, and creates a dangerous habit. [126]

Ground balls, and all balls that touch the ground more than once between wickets, I have already hinted, are reckoned very easy, but they are always liable to prove very dangerous. Sometimes you have three hops, and the last like a good length ball: at each hop the ball may twist On or Off with the inequalities of the ground; also, if bowled with the least bias, there is much scope for that bias to produce effect. All these peculiarities account for a fact, strange but

true, that the best batsmen are often out with the worst bowling. Bad bowling requires a game of its own, and a game of the greatest care, where too commonly we find the least; because "only underhand bowling,"—and "not by any means good lengths;" it requires, especially, playing at the ball itself, even to the last inch, and not by calculation of the pitch or rise.

Let me further remark that hitting, to be either free, quick, or clean, must be done by the arms and wrists, and not by the body; though the weight of the body appears to be thrown in by putting down the left leg; though, in reality, the leg comes down after the hit to restore the balance.

Can a man throw his body into a blow (at cricket)? About as much as he can hold up a horse with a bridle while sitting on the same horse's back. Both are common expressions; both are at variance with the laws of nature. A man can only hit by whirling his bat in a circle. If he stands with both feet near together, he hits feebly because in a smaller circle; if he throws his left foot forward, he hits harder because in a wider circle. A pugilist cannot throw in his body with a round hit; and a cricketer cannot make anything else but round hits. Take it as a rule in hitting, that what is not elegant is not right; for the human frame is rarely inelegant in its movements when all the muscles act in their natural direction. Many men play with their shoulders up to their ears, and their sinews all in knots, and because they are conscious of desperate exertion, they forget that their force is going anywhere rather than into the ball. It is often remarked that hard hitting does not depend on strength. No. It depends not on the strength a man has, but on the strength he exerts, at the right time and in the right direction; and strength is exerted in hitting, as in throwing a ball, in exact proportion to the rapidity of the whirl or circle which the bat or hand describes. The point of the bat moves faster in the circle than any other part; and, therefore, did not the jar, resulting from the want of resistance, place the point of hitting, as experience shows, a little higher up, the nearer the end the harder would be the hit. The wrist, however slight its force, acting with a multiplying power, adds greatly to the speed of this whirl.

Hard hitting, then, depends, first, on the freedom with which the arm revolves from the shoulder, unimpeded by constrained efforts and contortions of the body; next, on the play of the arm at the elbow; thirdly, on the wrists. Observe any cramped clumsy hitter, and you will recognise these truths at once. His elbow seems glued to his side, his shoulder stiff at the joint, and the little speed of his bat depends on a twist and a wriggle of his whole body.

Keep your body as composed and easy as the requisite adjustment of the left leg will admit; let your arms do the hitting; and remember the wrists. The whiz that meets the ear will be a criterion of increasing power. Practise hard hitting,—that is, the full and timely application of your strength, not only for the value of the extra score, but because hard hitting and correct and clean hitting are one and the same thing. Mere stopping balls and poking about in the blockhole is not cricket, however successful; and I must admit, that one of the most awkward, poking, vexatious blockers that ever produced a counterfeit of cricket, defied Bayley and Cobbett at Oxford in 1836,—three hours, and made five and thirty runs. Another friend, a better player, addicted to the same teasing game, in a match at Exeter in 1845, blocked away till his party, the N. Devon, won the match, chiefly by byes and wide balls! Such men might have turned their powers to much better account.

Some maintain that anything that succeeds is cricket; but not such cricket as full-grown men should vote a scientific and a manly exercise; otherwise, to "run cunning" might be Coursing, and to kill sitting Shooting. A player may happen to succeed with what is not generally a successful style,—winning in spite of his awkwardness, and not by virtue of it.

But there is another cogent reason for letting your arms, and not your body, do the work,—namely, that it makes all the difference to your sight whether the level of the eye remains the same as with a composed and easy hitter; or, unsteady and changing, as with the wriggling and the clumsy player. Whether a ball undulates in the air, or whether there is an equal undulation in the line of the eye which regards that ball, the confusion and indistinctness is the same. As an experiment, look at any distant object, and move your head up and down, and you will understand the confusion of sight to which I allude. The only security of a good batsman, as of a good shot, consists in the hand and eye being habituated to act together. Now, the hand may obey the eye when at rest, but have no such habit when in unsteady motion. And this shows how uncertain all hitting must be, when, either by the movement of the body or other cause, the line of sight is suddenly raised or depressed.

The same law of sight shows the disadvantage of men who stand at guard very low, and then suddenly raise themselves as the ball is coming.

The same law of sight explains the disadvantage of stepping in to hit, especially with a slow dropping ball: the eye is puzzled by a double motion—the change in the level of the ball, and the change in the level of the line of sight.

So much for our theory; now for experience! Look at Pilch and all fine players. How characteristic is the ease and repose of their figures—no hurry or trepidation. How little do their heads or bodies move! Bad players dance about, as if they stood on hot iron, a dozen times while the ball is coming, with precisely the disadvantage that attends an unsteady telescope. "Then you would actually teach a man how to see?" We would teach him how to give his eyes a fair chance. Of sight, as of quickness, most players have enough, if they would only make good use of it.

To see a man wink his eyes and turn his head away is not uncommon the first day of partridge shooting, and quite as common at the wicket. An undoubting judgment and knowledge of the principles of batting literally improves the sight, for it increases that calm confidence which is

essential for keeping your eyes open and in a line to see clearly.

Sight of a ball also depends on a habit of undivided attention both before and after delivery, and very much on health. A yellow bilious eye bespeaks a short innings: so, be very careful what you eat and drink when engaged to play a match. At a match at Purton in 1836, five of the Lansdowne side, after supping on crab and champagne, could do nothing but lie on the grass. But your sight may be seriously affected when you do not feel actually ill. So Horace found at Capua:

“Namque pilâ lippis inimicum et ludere crudis.”

STRAIGHT AND UPRIGHT PLAY.—To be a good judge of a horse, to have good common sense, and to hit straight and upright at Cricket, are qualifications never questioned without dire offence. Yet few, very few, ever play as upright as they might play, and that even to guard their three stumps. To be able, with a full and upright bat, to play well over and to command a ball a few inches to the Off, or a little to the leg, is a very superior and rare order of ability.

The first exercise for learning upright play is to practise several times against an easy bowler, with both hands on the same side of the handle of the bat. Not that this is the way to hold a bat in play, though the bat so held must be upright; but this exercise of rather poking than playing will inure you to the habit and method of upright play. Afterwards shift your hands to their proper position, and practise slipping your left hand round into the same position, while in the act of coming forward.

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But be sure you stand up to your work, or close to your blockhole; and let the bowler admonish you every time you shrink away or appear afraid of the ball. Much practice is required before it is possible for a young player to attain that perfect composure and indifference to the ball that characterises the professor. The least nervousness or shrinking is sure to draw the bat out of the perpendicular. As to shrinking from the ball—I do not mean any apprehension of injury, but only the result of a want of knowledge of length or distance, and the result of uncertainty as to how the ball is coming, and how to prepare to meet it. Nothing distinguishes the professor from the amateur more than the composed and unshrinking posture in which he plays a ball.

Practice alone will prevent shrinking: so encourage your bowler continually to remind you of it. As to practising with a bowler, you see some men at Lord’s and the University grounds batting hour after hour, as if cricket were to be taken by storm. To practise long at one time is positively injurious. For about one hour a man may practise to advantage; for a second hour, he may rather improve his batting even by keeping wicket, or acting long stop. Anything is good practice for batting which only habituates the hand and eye to act together.

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The next exercise is of a more elegant kind, and quite coincident with your proper game. Always throw back the point of the bat, while receiving the ball, to the top of the middle stump, as in figure, [page 114](#); then the handle will point to the bowler, and the whole bat be in the line of the wicket. By commencing in this position, you cannot fail to bring your bat straight and full upon the ball. If you take up your bat straight, you cannot help hitting straight; but if once you raise the point of the bat across the wicket, to present a full bat for that ball is quite impossible.

One advantage of this exercise is that it may be practised even without a bowler. The path of a field, with ball and bat, and a stick for a stump, are all the appliances required. Place the ball before you, one, two, or more feet in advance, and more or less On or Off, at discretion. Practise hitting with right foot always fixed, and with as upright and full a bat as possible: keep your left elbow up, and always over the ball.

This exercise will teach, at the same time, the full powers of the bat; what style of hitting is most efficacious; at what angle you smother the ball, and at what you can hit clean; only, be careful to play in form; and always see that your right foot has not moved before you follow to pick up the ball. Fixing the right foot is alone a great help to upright play; for while the right foot remains behind, you are so completely over a straight ball, and in a form to present a full bat, that you will rarely play across the ball. Firmness in the right foot is also essential to hard hitting, for you cannot exert much strength unless you stand in a firm and commanding position.

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Upright and straight hitting, then, requires, briefly, the point of the bat thrown back to the middle stump as the ball is coming; secondly, the left elbow well up; and, thirdly, the right foot fixed, and near the blockhole.

Never play a single ball without strict attention to these three rules. At first you will feel cramped and powerless; but practice will soon give ease and elegance, and form the habit not only of all sure defence, but of all certain hitting: for, the straight player has always wood enough and to spare in the way of the ball; whereas, a deviation of half an inch leaves the cross-player at fault. Mr. William Ward once played a single-wicket match with a thick stick, against another with a bat; yet these are not much more than the odds of good straight play against cross play. At Cheltenham College the first Eleven plays the second Eleven “a broomstick match.”

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When a player hits almost every time he raises his bat, the remark is, What an excellent eye that batsman has! But, upright play tends far more than eye to certainty in hitting. It is not easy to miss when you make the most of every inch of your bat. But when you trust to the width alone, a slight error produces a miss, and not uncommonly a catch.

The great difficulty in learning upright play consists in detecting when you are playing across. So your practice-bowler must remind you of the slightest shifting of the foot, shrinking from the wicket, or declination of your bat. Straight bowling is more easy to stand up to without nervous shrinking, and slow bowling best reveals every weak point, because a slow ball must be played: it

will not play itself. Many stylish players are beaten by slow bowling; some, because never thoroughly grounded in the principles of correct play and judgment of lengths; others, because hitting by rule and not at the ball. System with scientific players is apt to supersede sight; so take care as the mind's eye opens the natural eye does not shut.

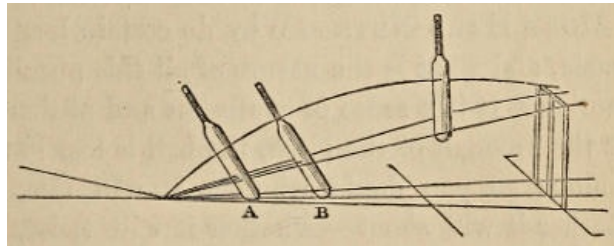
Underhand bowling is by far the best for a learner, and learners are, or should be, a large class. Being generally at the wicket, it produces the straightest play: falling stumps are "no flatterers, but feelingly remind us what we are." Caldecourt, who had a plain, though judicious, style of bowling, once observed a weak point in Mr. Ward's play, and levelled his stumps three times in about as many balls. Many men boasting, as Mr. Ward then did, of nearly the first average of his day, would have blamed the bowler, the ground, the wind, and, in short, any thing but themselves; but Mr. Ward, a liberal patron of the game, in the days of his prosperity, gave Caldecourt a guinea for his judgment in the game and his useful lesson. "Such," Dr. Johnson would say, "is the spirit and self-denial of those whose memories are not doomed to decay" with their bats, but play cricket for "immortality."

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PLAYING FORWARD AND BACK.—And now about length-balls, and when to play forward at the pitch, and when back for a better sight of the rebound.

A length-ball is one that pitches at a puzzling length from the bat. This length cannot be reduced to any exact and uniform measurement, depending on the delivery of the bowler and the reach of the batsman.

For more intelligible explanation, I must refer you to your friends.



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Every player is conscious of one particular length that puzzles him,—of one point between himself and the bowler, in which he would rather that the ball should not pitch. "There is a length-ball that almost blinds you," said an experienced player at Lord's. There is a length that makes many a player shut his eyes and turn away his head; "a length," says Mr. Felix, "that brings over a man most indescribable emotions." There are two ways to play such balls: to discriminate is difficult, and, "if you doubt, you are lost." Let A be the farthest point to which a good player can reach, so as to plant his bat at the proper angle, at once preventing a catch, stopping a shooter, and intercepting a bailer. Then, at any point short of A, should the bat be placed, the ball may rise over the bat if held to the ground, or shoot under if the bat is a little raised. At B the same single act of planting the bat cannot both cover a bailer and stop a shooter. Every ball which the batsman can reach, as at A, may be met with a full bat forward; and, being taken at the pitch, it is either stopped or driven away with all its rising, cutting, shooting, or twisting propensities undeveloped. If not stopped at A, the ball may rise and shoot in six lines at least; so, if forced to play back, you have six things to guard against instead of one. Still, any ball you cannot cover forward, as at B, must be played back; and nearly in the attitude shown in [page 115](#). This back play gives as long a sight of the ball as possible, and enables the player either to be up for a bailer or down for a shooter.

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MORE HARD NUTS.—Why do certain lengths puzzle, and what is the nature of all this puzzling emotion? It is a sense of confusion and of doubt. At the moment of the pitch, the ball is lost in the ground; so you doubt whether it will rise, or whether it will shoot—whether it will twist, or come in straight. The eye follows the ball till it touches the ground: till this moment there is no great doubt, for its course is known to be uniform. I say no great doubt, because there is always some doubt till the ball has passed some yards from the bowler's hand. The eye cannot distinguish the direction of a ball approaching till it has seen a fair portion of its flight. Then only can you calculate what the rest of the flight will be. Still, before the ball has pitched, the first doubt is resolved, and the batsman knows the ball's direction; but, when once it touches the ground, the change of light alone (earth instead of air being the background) is trying to the eye. Then, at the rise, recommences all the uncertainty of a second delivery; for, the direction of the ball has once more to be ascertained, and that requires almost as much time for sight as will sometimes bring the ball into the wicket.

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All this difficulty of sight applies only to the batsman; to him the ball is advancing and foreshortened in proportion as it is straight. If the ball is rather wide, or if seen, as by Point, from the side, the ball may be easily traced, without confusion, from first to last. It is the fact of an object approaching perfectly straight to you, that confuses your sense of distance. A man standing on a railway cannot judge of the nearness of the engine; nor a man behind a target of the approach of the arrow; whereas, seen obliquely, the flight is clear. Hence a long hop is not a puzzling length, because there is time to ascertain the second part of the course or rebound. A toss is easy because one course only. The tice also, and the half-volley, or any over-pitched balls, are not so puzzling, because they may be met forward, and the two parts of the flight reduced to one. Such is the philosophy of forward play, intended to obviate the batsman's chief difficulty, which is, with the second part, or, the rebound of the ball.

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The following are good rules:—

1. Meet every ball at the pitch by forward play which you can conveniently cover.

Whatever ball you can play forward, you can play safely—as by one single movement. But in playing the same ball back, you give yourself two things to think of instead of one—stopping and keeping down a bailer; and, stopping a shooter. Every ball is the more difficult to play back in exact proportion to the ease with which it might be played forward. The player has a shorter sight, and less time to see the nature of the rise; so the ball crowds upon him, affording neither time nor space for effective play. Never play back but of necessity; meet every ball forward which you can conveniently cover—I say *conveniently*, because, if the pitch of the ball cannot be reached without danger of losing your balance, misplacing your bat, or drawing your foot out of your ground, that ball should be considered out of reach, and be played back. This rule many fine players, in their eagerness to score, are apt to violate; so, if the ball rises abruptly, they are bowled or caught. There is also danger of playing wide of the ball, if you over-reach.

2. Some say, When in doubt play back. Certainly all balls may be played back; but many it is almost impracticable to play forward. But since the best forward players may err, the following hint, founded on the practice of Fuller Pilch, will suggest an excellent means of getting out of a difficulty:—Practise the art of *half-play*; that is, practise going forward to balls a little beyond your reach, and then, instead of planting your bat near the pitch, which is supposed too far distant to be effectually covered, watch for the ball about half-way, being up if it rises, and down if it shoots. By this half-play, which I learnt from one of Pilch's pupils, I have often saved my wicket when I found myself forward for a ball out of reach; though before, I felt defenceless, and often let the ball pass either under or over my bat. Still half-play, though a fine saving clause for proficients, is but a choice of evils, and no practice for learners, as forming a bad habit. By trying too many ways, you spoil your game.

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3. Ascertain the extent of your utmost reach forward, and practise accordingly. The simplest method is to fix your right foot at the crease, and try how far forward you can conveniently plant your bat at the proper angle; then, allowing that the ball may be covered at about three feet from its pitch, you will see at once how many feet you can command in front of the crease. Pilch could command from ten to twelve feet. Some short men will command ten feet; that is to say, they will safely meet forward every ball which pitches within that distance from the crease.

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There are two ways of holding a bat in playing forward. The position of the hands, as of Pilch, in the frontispiece, standing at guard, will not admit of a long reach forward. But by shifting the left hand behind the bat, the action is free, and the reach unimpeded.



Every learner must practise this shifting of the left hand in forward play. The hand will soon come round naturally. Also, learn to reach forward with composure and no loss of balance. Play forward evenly and gracefully, with rather an elastic movement. Practice will greatly increase your reach. Take care you do not lose sight of the ball, as many do; and, look at the ball itself, not merely at the spot where you expect it to pitch. Much depends on commencing at the proper moment, and not being in a hurry. Especially avoid any catch or flourish. Come forward, foot and bat together, most evenly and most quietly.

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Forward play may be practised almost as well in a room as in a cricket-field: better still with a ball in the path of a field. To force a ball back to the bowler or long-field by hard forward play is commonly called Driving; and driving you may practise without any bowler, and greatly improve in balance and correctness of form, and thus increase the extent of your reach, and habituate the eye to a correct discernment of the point at which forward play ends and back play begins. By practice you will attain a power of coming forward with a spring, and playing hard or driving. All fine players drive nearly every ball they meet forward, and this driving admits of so many degrees of strength that sometimes it amounts to quite a hard hit. "I once," said Clarke, "had thought there might be a school opened for cricket in the winter months; for, you may drill a man to use a bat as well as a broad-sword." With driving, as with half-play, be not too eager—play forward surely and steadily at first, otherwise the point of the bat will get in advance, or the hit be badly timed, and give a catch to the bowler. This is one error into which the finest forward players have sometimes gradually fallen—a vicious habit, formed from an overweening confidence and success upon their own ground. Comparing notes lately with an experienced player, we both remembered a time when we thought we could make hard and free hits even off those balls which good players play gently back to the bowler; but eventually a succession of short innings sent us back to safe and sober play.

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Sundry other hits are made, contrary to every rule, by players accustomed to one ground or one set of bowlers. Many an Etonian has found that a game, which succeeded in the Shooting fields, has proved an utter failure when all was new at Lord's or in a country match.

Every player should practise occasionally with professional bowlers; for, they look to the principle of play, and point out radical errors even in showy hits. Even Pilch will request a friend to stand by him in practice to detect any shifting of the foot or other bad habit, into which experience teaches that the best men unconsciously fall. I would advise every good player to take one or two such lessons at the beginning of the season. A man cannot see himself, and will hardly believe that he is taking up his bat across wicket, sawing across at a draw, tottering over instead of steady, moving off his ground at leg balls, or very often playing forward with a flourish instead of full on the ball, and making often most childish mistakes which need only be mentioned to be avoided.

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One great difficulty, we observed, consists in correct discrimination of length and instantaneous decision. To form correctly as the ball pitches, there is time enough, but none to spare: time only to act, no time to think. So also with shooting, driving, and various kinds of exercises, at the critical moment all depends not on thought, but habit: by constant practice, the time requisite for deliberation becomes less and less, till at length we are unconscious of any deliberation at all,—acting, as it were, by intuition or instinct, for the occasion prompts the action: then, in common language, we “do it naturally,” or, have formed that habit which is “a second nature.”

In this sense, a player must form a habit of correct decision in playing forward and back. Till he plays by habit, he is not safe: the sight of the length must prompt the corresponding movement. Look at Fuller Pilch, or Mr. C. Taylor, and this rule will be readily understood; for, with such players, every ball is as naturally and instinctively received by its appropriate movement as if the player were an automaton, and the ball touched a spring: so quickly does forward play, or back, and the attitude for off-cut or leg-hit, appear to coincide with, or rather to anticipate, each suitable length. All this quickness, ease, and readiness marks a habit of correct play; and the question is, how to form such a habit.

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All the calmness or composure we admire in proficients results from a habit of playing each length in one way, and in one way only. To attain this habit, measure your reach before the crease, as you begin to practise with a bowler; and, make a mark visible to the bowler, but not such as will divert your own eye.

Having fixed such a mark, let your bowler pitch, as nearly as he can, sometimes on this side of the mark, sometimes on that. After every ball, you have only to ask, Which side? and you will have demonstrative proof whether your play has been right or wrong. Constant practice, with attention to the pitch, will habituate your eye to lengths, and enable you to decide in a moment how to play.

For my own part, I have rarely practised for years without this mark. It enables me to ascertain, by referring to the bowler, where any ball has pitched. To know at a glance the exact length of a ball, however necessary, is not quite as easy to the batsman as to the bowler; and, without practising with a mark, you may remain a long time in error.

After a few days' practice, you will become as certain of the length of each ball, and of your ability to reach it, as if you actually saw the mark, for you will carry the measurement in “your mind's eye.”

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So far well: you have gained a perception of lengths and distance; the next thing is, to apply this knowledge. Therefore, bear in mind you have a HABIT TO FORM. No doubt, many will laugh at this philosophy. Pilch does not know the “theory of moral habits,” I dare say; but he knows well enough that wild practice spoils play; and if to educated men I please to say that, wild play involves the formation of a set of bad habits to hang about you, and continually interfere with good intentions, where is the absurdity? How should you like to be doomed to play with some mischievous fellow, always tickling your elbow, and making you spasmodically play forward, when you ought to play back, or, hit round or cut, when you ought to play straight? Precisely such a mischievous sprite is a bad habit. Till you have got rid of him, he is always liable to come across you and tickle you out of your innings: all your resolution is no good. Habit is a much stronger principle than resolution. Accustom the hand to obey sound judgment, otherwise it will follow its old habit instead of your new principles.

To borrow an admirable illustration from Plato, which Socrates' pupil remarked was rather apt than elegant,—“While habit keeps up itching, man can't help scratching.” And what is most remarkable in bad habits of play is, that, long after a man thinks he has overcome them, by some chance association, the old trick appears again, and a man feels (oh! fine for a moralist!) *one law in his mind and another law*—or rather, let us say, he feels a certain latent spring in him ever liable to be touched, and disturb all the harmony of his cricketing economy.

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Having, therefore, a habit to form, take the greatest pains that you methodically play forward to the over-pitched, and back to the under-pitched, balls. My custom was, the moment the ball pitched, to say audibly to myself “forward,” or “back.” By degrees I was able to calculate the length sooner and sooner before the pitch, having, of course, the more time to prepare; till, at last, no sooner was the ball out of the bowler's hand, than ball and bat were visibly preparing for each other's reception. After some weeks' practice, forward and back play became so easy, that I cease to think about it: the very sight of the ball naturally suggesting the appropriate movement; in other words, I had formed a habit of correct play in this particular.

“*Suave mari magno,*” says Lucretius; that is, it is delightful, from the vantage ground of science, to see others floundering in a sea of error, and to feel a happy sense of comparative security;—so, was it no little pleasure to see the many wickets that fell, or the many catches

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which were made, from defects I had entirely overcome.

For, without the habit aforesaid, a man will often shut his eyes, and remove his right fingers, as if the bat were hot, and then look behind him and find his wicket down. A second, will advance a foot forward, feel and look all abroad, and then try to seem unconcerned, if no mischief happens. A third, will play back with the shortest possible sight of the ball, and hear his stumps rattle before he has time to do anything. A fourth, will stand still, a fixture of fuss and confusion, with the same result; while a fifth, will go gracefully forward, with straightest possible bat, and the most meritorious elongation of limb, and the ball will pass over the shoulder of his bat, traverse the whole length of his arms, and back, and colossal legs, tipping off the bails, or giving a chance to the wicket-keeper. Then, as Pains says of Falstaff, "The virtue of this jest will be the incomprehensible lies that this same fat rogue will tell us." For, when a man is out by this simple error in forward or backward play, it would take a volume to record the variety of his excuses.

The reason so much has been said about Habit is, partly, that the player may understand that bad habits are formed as readily as good; that a repetition of wild hits, or experimentalising with hard hits off good lengths, may disturb your quick perception of critical lengths, and give you an uncontrollable habit of dangerous hitting. [150]

THE SHOOTER.—This is the surest and most destructive ball that is bowled. Stopping shooters depends on correct position, on a habit of playing at the ball and not losing it after the pitch, and on a quick discernment of lengths.

The great thing is decision; to doubt is to lose time, and to lose time is to lose your wicket. And this decision requires a correct habit of forward and back play. But since prevention is better than cure, by meeting at the pitch every ball within your reach, you directly diminish the number, not only of shooters, but of the most dangerous of all shooters, because of those which afford the shortest time to play. But, supposing you cannot cover the ball at the pitch, and a shooter it must be, then—

The first thing is, to have the bat always pointed back to the wicket, as in *fig. 1.* [page 115](#); thus you will drop down on the ball, and have all the time and space the case admits of. If the bat is not previously thrown back, when the ball shoots the player has two operations,—the one, to put the bat back: and the other, to ground it: instead of one simple drop down alone. I never saw any man do this better than Wenman, when playing the North and South match at Lord's in 1836. Redgate was in his prime, and almost all his balls were shooting down the hill; and, from the good time and precision with which Wenman dropped down upon some dozen shooters, with all the pace and spin for which Redgate was famous—the ground being hardened into brick by the sun—I have ever considered Wenman equal to any batsman of his day. [151]

The second thing is, to prepare for back play with the first possible intimation that the ball will require it. A good player descries the enemy, and drops back as soon as the ball is out of the bowler's hand.

The third—a golden rule for batsmen—is: expect a good length to shoot, and you will have time, if it rises: but if you expect it to rise, you are too late if it shoots.

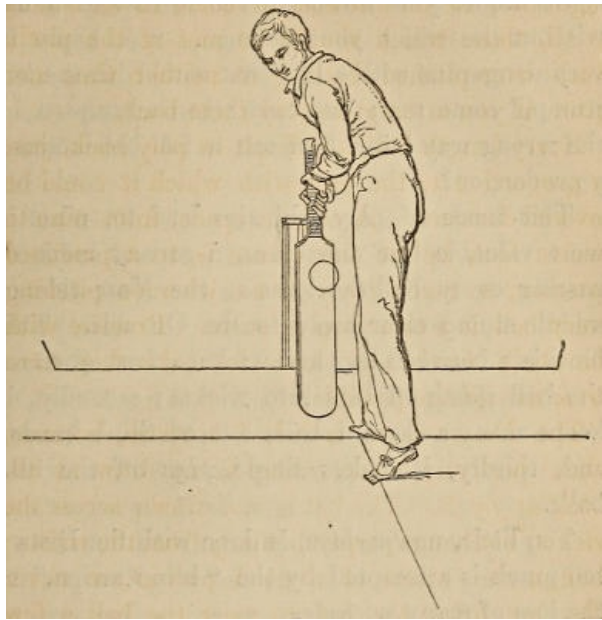
THE BAIL BALL.—First, the attitude is that of *fig. 1.* The bat thrown back to the bails is indispensable for quickness: if you play a bailer too late, short slip is placed on purpose to catch you out; therefore watch the ball from the bowler's hand, and drop back on your wicket in good time. Also, take the greatest pains in tracing the ball every inch from the hand to the bat. Look hard for the twist, or a "break" will be fatal. To keep the eye steadily on the ball, and not lose it at the pitch, is a hint even for experienced players: so make this the subject of attentive practice.

The most difficult of all bailers are those which ought not to be allowed to come in as bailers at all, those which should be met at the pitch. Such over-pitched balls give neither time nor space, if you attempt to play them back. [152]

Every length ball is difficult to play back, just in proportion to the ease with which it could be covered forward. A certain space, from nine to twelve feet, before the crease is, to a practised batsman, so much *terra firma*, whereon pitching every ball is a safe stop or score. Practise with the chalk mark, and learn to make this *terra firma* as wide as possible.

THE DRAW is so called, I suppose, because, when perfectly made, there is no draw at all. Look at *fig. 2.* The bat is not drawn across the wicket, but hangs perpendicularly from the wrists; though the wrists of a good player are never idle, but bring the bat to meet the ball a few inches, and the hit is the natural angle formed by the opposing forces. "Say also," suggests Clarke, "that the ball meeting the bat, held easy in the hand, will turn it a little of its own force, and the wrists *feel* when to help it." This old rule hardly consists with the principle of meeting the ball.

The Draw is the spontaneous result of straight play about the two leg stumps: for if you begin, as in *fig. 1.*, with point of bat thrown back true to middle stump, you cannot bring the bat straight to meet a leg-stump ball without the line of the bat and the line of the ball forming an angle in crossing each other; and, by keeping your wrists well back, and giving a clear space between body and wicket, the Draw will follow of itself. [153]



The bat must not be purposely presented edgewise in the least degree. Draw a full bat from the line of the middle stump to meet a leg-stump ball, and, as the line of the ball must make a very acute angle, you will have the benefit of a hit without lessening your defence. "A Draw is very dangerous with a ball that would hit the leg stump," some say; but only when attempted in the wrong way; for, how can a full bat increase your danger? [154]

This mode of play will also lead to, what is most valuable but most rare, a correct habit of passing every ball the least to the Near side of middle stump clear away to the On side. This blocking between legs and wickets, first, obviates the ball going off legs into wicket; secondly, it keeps many awkward balls out of Slip's hands; and, thirdly, it makes single runs off the best balls.

Too little, now-a-days, is done with the Draw; too much is attempted by the "blind swipe," to the loss of many wickets.

Every man in a first-rate match who loses his wicket, while swiping round, ought to pay a forfeit to the Reward Fund.

The only balls for the Draw are those which threaten the wicket. To shuffle backwards half a yard, scraping the bat on the ground, or to let the ball pass one side the body with a blind swing on the other, are hits which to mention is to reprove.

Our good friend, Mr. Abraham Bass,—and what cricketer in the Midland Counties defers not to his judgment?—thinks that the Draw cannot be made quite so much of as we say, except by a left-handed man. The short-pitched balls which some draw, he thinks, are best played back to middle On, by a turn of the left arm to the On side. [155]

Here Mr. Bass mentions a very good hit—a good variety—and one, too, little practised: his hit and the Draw are each good in their respective places. To discriminate every shade is impossible. "Mr. Taylor had most hits I ever saw," said Caldecourt, "and was a better player even than Lord Frederick; though Mr. Taylor's hits were not all *legitimate*:" so much the better; new combinations of old hits.

As to the old-fashioned hit under leg, Mr. Mynn, at Leicester, in 1836, gave great effect to one variety of it; a hit which Pilch makes useful, though hard to make elegant. Some say, with Caldecourt, such balls ought always to be drawn: but is it not a useful variety?

DRAW OR GLANCE FROM OFF STUMP.—What is true of the Leg stump is true of the Off, care being taken of catch to Slips. Every ball played from two Off stumps, by free play of wrist and left shoulder well over, should go away among the Slips. Play hard on the ball; the ball must never hit a dead bat; and every so-called block, from off stumps, must be a hit. [156]

Commence, as always, from *fig. 1.*; stand close up to your wicket; weight on pivot-foot; balance-foot ready to come over as required. This is the only position from which you can command the off stump.

Bear with me, my friends, in dwelling so much on this Off-play. Many fine cutters could never in their lives command off stump with a full and upright bat. Whence come the many misses of off-hits? Observe, and you will see, it is because the bat is slanting, or it must sweep the whole space through which the ball could rise.

By standing close up, and playing well over your wicket with straight bat, and throwing, by means of left leg, the body forwards over a ball rising to the off-stump, you may make an effective hit from an off-bailer without lessening your defence; for how can hard blocking, with a full bat, be dangerous? All that is required is, straight play and a free wrist, though certainly a tall man has here a great advantage.

A FREE WRIST.—Without wrist play there can be no good style of batting. Do not be puzzled about "throwing your body into your hit." Absurd, except with straight hits—half-volley, for instance. Suspend a ball, oscillating by a string from a beam, keep your right foot fixed, and use the left leg [157]

to give the time and command of the ball and to adjust the balance, and you will soon learn the power of the wrists and arms. Also, use no heavy bats; 2 lbs. 2 oz. is heavy enough for any man who plays with his wrists. The wrist has, anatomically, two movements; the one up and down, the other from side to side; and to the latter power, by much the least, the weight of the bat must be proportioned. "My old-fashioned bat," said Mr. E. H. Budd, "weighed nearly three pounds, and Mr. Ward's a pound more."

THE OFF-HIT, here intended, is made with upright bat, where the horizontal cut were dangerous or uncertain. It may be made with any off-ball, one or two feet wide of the wicket. The left shoulder must be well over the ball, and this can only be effected by crossing, as in *fig. 3*. p. 159, left leg over. This, one of the best players agrees, is a correct hit, provided the ball be pitched well up; otherwise he would apply the Cut: but the cut serves only when a ball rises; and I am unwilling to spare one that comes in near the ground.

This upright off-hit, with left leg crossed over, may be practised with a bat and ball in the path of a field. You may also devise some "Chamber Practice," without any ball, or with a soft ball suspended—not a bad in-door exercise in cold weather. When proficient, you will find that you have only to hit at the ball, and the balance-foot will naturally cross over and adjust itself. [158]

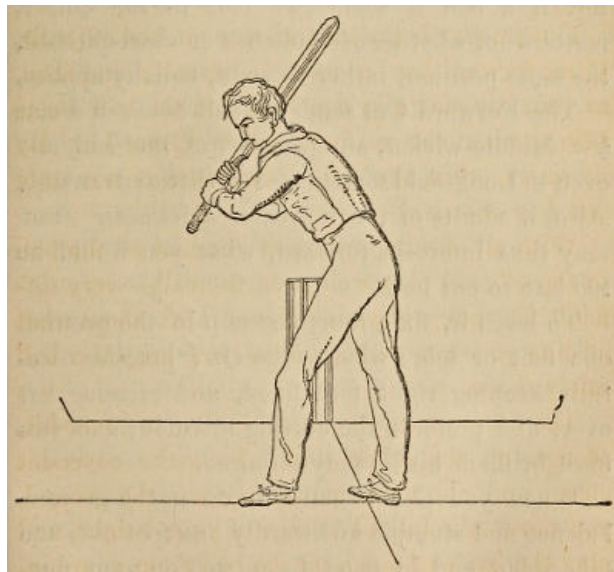
In practising with a bowler, I have often fixed a fourth stump, about six inches from off-stump, and learnt to guard it with upright bat. *Experto crede*, you may learn to sweep with almost an upright bat balls as much as two feet to the Off. But this is a hit for balls requiring back play, but —

COVER-HIT is the hit for over-pitched off-balls. Come forward hard to meet an off-ball; and then, as your bat moves in one line, and the ball meets it in another, the resultant will be Cover-hit. By no means turn the bat: a full face is not only safe but effective.

With all off-hits beware of the bias of the ball to the off, and play well over the ball—very difficult for young players. Never think about what off-hits you can make, unless you keep the ball safely down.

The fine square leg-hit is similar to cover-hit, though on the other side. To make cover-hit clean, and not waste power against the ground, you must take full advantage of your height, and play the bat well down on the ball from your hip, timing nicely, eye still on the ball, and inclining the bat neither too little nor too much.

Fig. 3.



THE FORWARD CUT, a name by which I would distinguish another off-hit is a hit made by Butler, Guy, Dakin, Parr, and indeed especially by the Nottingham men, who, Clarke thinks, "hit all round them" better than men of any other county (see *fig. 3*). The figures being foreshortened as seen by the bowler, the artist unwillingly sacrifices effect to show the correct position of the feet. This hit may be made from balls too wide and too low for the backward cut. Cross the left leg over, watch the ball from its pitch, and you may make off-hits from balls low or cut balls high (unless very high, and then you have time to drop the bat) with more commanding power than in any other position. Some good players do not like this crossing of left foot, preferring the cutting attitude of *fig. 3*.; but I know from experience and observation, that there is not a finer or more useful hit in the field; for, if a ball is some two feet to the Off, it matters not whether over-pitched or short-pitched, the same position, rather forward, equally applies. [159] [160]

The Forward Cut sends the ball between Point and Middle-wicket, an open part of the field, and even to Long-field sometimes: no little advantage. Also, it admits of much greater quickness. You may thus intercept forward, what you would be too late to cut back.

To learn it, fix a fourth stump in the ground, one foot or more wide to the Off; practise carefully keeping right foot fixed, and crossing left over, and preserve the cutting attitude; and this most brilliant hit is easily acquired.

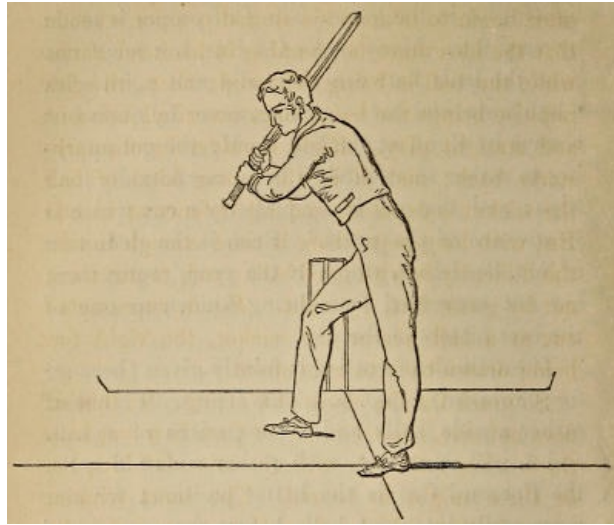
When you play a ball Off, do not lose your balance and stumble awkwardly one foot over the other, but end in good form, well on your feet. Even good players commit this fault; also, in

playing back some players look as if they would tumble over their wicket.

THE CUT is generally considered the most delightful hit in the game. The Cut proper is made by very few. Many make Off-hits, but few "cut from the bails between short slip and point with a late horizontal bat—cutting, never by guess but always by sight, at the ball itself; the cut applying to rather short-pitched balls, not actually long hops; and that not being properly a cut which is in advance of the point." Such is the definition of Mr. Bradshaw, whom a ten years' retirement has not prevented from being known as one of the best hitters of the day.

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Fig. 4.



The attitude of cutting is faintly given (because foreshortened) in *fig. 4*. This represents a cut at rather a wide ball; and a comparison of *figs. 3* and *4*. will show that, with rather wide Off-balls, the Forward Cut is the better position; for you more easily intercept balls before they are out of play. Right leg would be thrown back rather than advanced, were the ball nearer the wicket. Still, the attitude is exceptional. Look at the other figures, and the cutter alone will appear with right foot shifted. Compare *fig. 1*. with the other figures, and the change is easy, as in the left foot alone; but, compare it with the cuts (*figs. 4* and *5*.), and the whole position is reversed: right shoulder advanced, and right foot shifted. There is no ball that can be cut which may not be hit by one of the other Off-hits already mentioned, and that with far greater certainty, though not with so brilliant an effect. Pilch and many of the steadiest and best players never make the genuine cut. "Mr. Felix," says Clarke, "cuts splendidly; but, in order to do so, he cuts before he sees the ball, and thus misses two out of three." Neither do I believe that any man will reconcile the habitual straight play and command of off-stump, which distinguishes Pilch, with a cutting game. Each virtue, even in Cricket, has its excess: fine Leg-hitters are apt to endanger the leg-stump; fine Cutters, the Off. For, the Cutter must begin to take up his altered position so soon, that the idea must be running in his head almost while the ball is being delivered; then, the first impulse brings the bat at once out of all defensive and straight play. Right shoulder involuntarily starts back; and, if at the wrong kind of ball, the wicket is exposed, and all defence at an end. But with long-hops there is time enough to cut; the difficulty is with good balls: and, to cut them, not by guess but, by sight. *Fig. 5*. represents a cut at a ball nearer the wicket, the right foot being drawn back to gain space.

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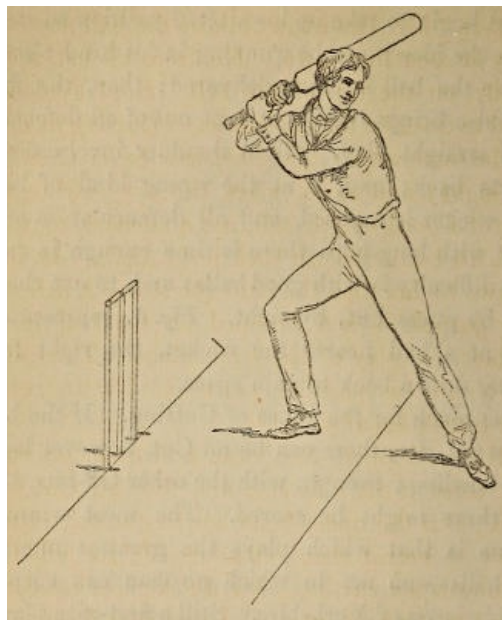
So much for the abuse of Cutting. If the ball does not rise, there can be no Cut, however loose the bowling; though, with the other Off-hits, two or three might be scored. The most winning game is that which plays the greatest number of balls—an art in which no man can surpass Baldwinson of Yorkshire. Still a first-rate player should have a command of every hit: a bowler may be pitching uniformly short, and the balls may be rising regularly: in this case, every one would like to see a good Cutter at the wicket.

To learn the Cut, suspend a ball from a string and a beam, oscillating backwards and forwards—place yourself as at a wicket, and experimentalise. You will find:—

1. You have no power in Cutting, unless you Cut late—"off the bails:" then only can you use the point of your bat.

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Fig. 5.



2. You have no power, unless you turn on the basis of your feet, and front the ball, your back being almost turned upon the bowler, at the moment of cutting.

3. Your muscles have very little power in Cutting quite horizontally, but very great power in Cutting down on the ball.

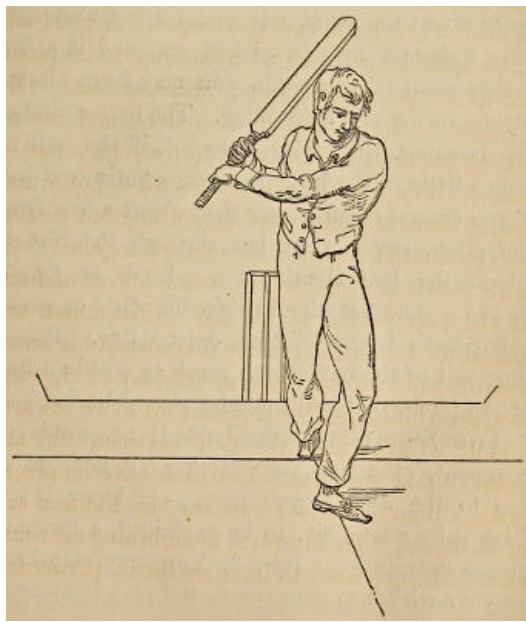
This agrees with the practice of the best players. Mr. Bradshaw follows the ball and cuts very late, cutting down. He drops his bat, apparently, on the top of the ball. Lord Frederick used to describe the old-fashioned Cutting as done in the same way. Mr. Bradshaw never Cuts but by sight; and since, when the eye catches the rise of a good length ball, not a moment must be lost, his bat is thrown back just a little—an inch or two higher than the bails (he stoops a little for the purpose)—and dropped on the ball in an instant, by play of the wrist alone. Thus does he obtain his peculiar power of Cutting even fair-length balls by sight. [165]

Harry Walker, Robinson, and Saunders were the three great Cutters; and they all Cut very late. But the underhand bowling suited cutting (proper) better than round-armed; for all Off-hitting is not cutting. Mr. Felix gives wonderful speed to the ball, effected by cutting down, adding the weight of a descending bat to the free and full power of the shoulder: he would hardly have time for such exertion if he hit with the precision of Mr. Bradshaw, and not hitting till he saw the ball.

Lord Frederick found fault with Mr. Felix's picture of "the Cut," saying it implied force from the whirl of the bat; whereas a cut should proceed from wrists alone, descending with bat in hand,—precisely Mr. Bradshaw's hit. "Excuse me, my Lord," said Mr. Felix, "that's not a Cut, but only a *pat*." The said *pat*, or wrist play, I believe to be the only kind of cutting by sight, for good-length balls. [166]

To encourage elegant play, and every variety of hit, we say practise each kind of cut, both Lord Frederick's *pat* and Mr. Felix's off-hit, and the Nottingham forward cut, with left leg over; but beware of using either in the wrong place. A man of one hit is easily managed. A good off-hitter should send the ball according to its pitch, not to one point only, but to three or four. Old Fennex used to stand by Saunders, and say no hitting could be finer—"no hitter such a fool—see, sir, they have found out his hit—put a man to stop his runs—still, cutting, nothing but cutting—why doesn't the man hit somewhere else?" So with Jarvis of Nottingham, a fine player and one of the best cutters of his day, when a man was placed for his cut, it greatly diminished his score. For off-balls we have given, Off-play to the slips—Cover hit—the Nottingham hit more towards middle wicket; and, the Cut between slip and point—four varieties. Let each have its proper place, till an old player can say, as Fennex said of Beldham, "He hit quick as lightning all round him. He appeared to have no hit in particular: you could never place a man against him: where the ball was pitched there it was hit away." [167]

Fig. 6.



LEG-HITTING.—Besides the draw, there are two distinct kinds of leg-hits—one forward, the other back. The forward leg-hit is made, as in *fig. 6.*, by advancing the left foot near the pitch of the ball, and then hitting down upon the ball with a free arm, the bat being more or less horizontal, according to the length of the ball. A ball so far pitched as to require little stride of left leg, will be hit with nearly a straight bat: a ball as short as you can stride to, will require nearly a horizontal bat. The ball you can reach with straight bat, will go off on the principle of the cover-hit—the more square the better. But, when a ball is only just within reach, by using a horizontal bat, you know where to find the ball just before it has risen; for, your bat covers the space about the pitch. If you reach far enough, even a shooter may be picked up; and if a few inches short of the pitch, you may have all the joyous spring of a half-volley. The better pitched the bowling, the easier is the hit, if the ball be only a little to the leg. In using a horizontal bat, if you cannot reach nearer than about a foot from the pitch, sweep your bat through the line in which the ball should rise. Look at *fig. 7. p. 173.* The bat should coincide with or sweep a fair bat's length of that dotted line. But if the point of the bat cannot reach to within a foot of the pitch, that ball must be played back.

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THE SHORT-PITCHED LEG BALL needs no comment, save that, according as it is more or less to the wicket, you may,—1. Draw it; 2. Play it by a new hit, to be explained, a Draw or glance outside your leg; 3. You may step back on your wicket to gain space, and play it away to middle On, or cut it round, according to your sight of it.

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But in leg-hitting, beware of a “blind swipe,” or that chance hit, by guess of where the ball will rise, which some make when the bat cannot properly command the pitch. This blind hit is often made at a ball not short enough to play by sight back, nor long enough to command forward. Parr advances left foot as far as he can, and hits where the ball ought to be. But this he would hardly advise, except you can nearly command the pitch; otherwise, a blind swing of the bat, although the best players are sometimes betrayed into it, is by no means to be recommended.

Reader, do you ever make the square hit On? Or, do you ever drive a ball back from the leg-stump to long-field On? Probably not. Clarke complains that this good old hit is gone out, and that one more man is thereby brought about the wicket. If you cannot make this hit, you have evidently a faulty style of play. So, practise diligently with leg-balls, till balls from two leg-stumps go to long-field On, and balls a little wide of leg-stump go nearly square; and do not do this by a kind of push—much too common,—but by a real hit, left shoulder forward.

Also, do you ever draw out of your ground in a leg-hit? Doubly dangerous is this—danger of stumping and danger of missing easy hits. If once you move your pivot foot, you lose that self-command essential for leg-hits. So, practise, in your garden or your room, the stride and swing of the bat, till you have learnt to preserve your balance.

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One of the best leg-hitters is Dakin: and his rule is: keep your right foot firm on your ground; advance the left straight to the pitch, and as far as you can reach, and hit as straight at the pitch as you can, just as if you were hitting to long-field: as the lines of bat and ball form an angle, the ball will fly away square of itself.

My belief is, the Wykehamists introduced the art of hitting leg-balls at the pitch. When, in 1833, at Oxford, Messrs. F. B. Wright and Payne scored above sixty each off Lillywhite and Broadbridge, it was remarked by the players, they had never seen their leg-hit before. Clarke says he showed how to make forward leg-hits at Nottingham. For, the Nottingham men used to hit after leg-balls, and miss them, till he found the way of intercepting them at the rise, and hitting square.

And this will be a fair occasion for qualifying certain remarks which would appear to form what is aptly called a “toe-in-the-hole” player.

When I spoke so strongly about using the right foot as a pivot, and the left as a balance foot, insisting, also, on not moving the right foot, I addressed myself not to proficient, but to learners. Such is the right position for almost all the hits on the ball, and this fixing of the foot is the only

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way to keep a learner in his proper form.

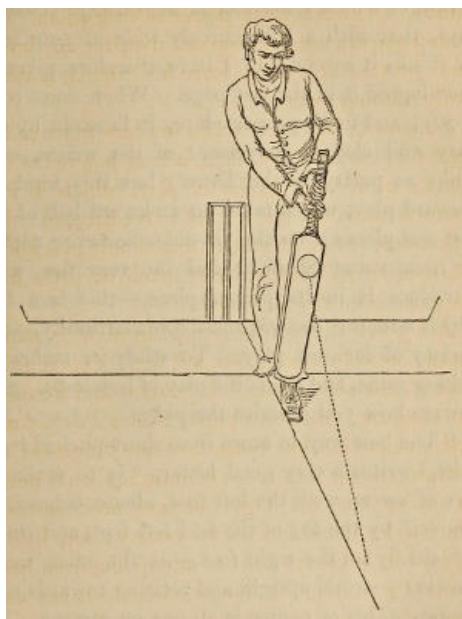
Experienced players—I mean those who have passed through the University Clubs, and aspire to be chosen in the Gentlemen’s Eleven of All England—must be able to move each foot on its proper occasion, especially with slow bowling. Clarke says, “If I see a man set fast on his legs, I know he can’t play my bowling.” The reason is, as we shall explain presently, that the accurate hitting necessary for slow bowling requires not long reaching, but a short, quick action of the arms and wrists, and activity on the legs, to shift the body to suit this hitting in narrow compass.

A practised player should also be able to go in to over-pitched balls, to give effect to his forward play. To be stumped out looks ill indeed; still, a first-rate player should have confidence and coolness enough to bide his time, and then go boldly and steadily in and hit away. If you do go in, take care you go far enough, and as far as the pitch; and, only go in to straight balls, for to those alone can you carry a full bat. And, never go in to make a free swing of the bat or tremendous swipe. Go in with a straight bat, not so much to hit, as to drive or block the ball hard away, or, as Clarke says, “to run the ball down.” Stepping in only succeeds with cool and judicious hitters, who have some power of execution. All young players must be warned that, for any but a most practised player to leave his ground, is decidedly a losing game. [172]

Supposing the batsman knows how to move his right foot back readily, then, a long-hop to the leg admits of various modes of play, which I feel bound to mention, though not to recommend; for, a first-rate player should at least know every hit: whether he will introduce it much or little into his game is another question.

A leg-ball that can be played by sight is sometimes played by raising the left leg. This is quite a hit of the old school,—of Sparkes and Fennex, for instance. Fennex’s pupil, Fuller Pilch, commonly makes this hit. Some first-rate judges—Caldecourt among others—maintain it should never be made, but the Draw always used instead. Mr. Taylor found it a useful variety; for, before he used it, Wenman used to stump him from balls inside leg stump. For some lengths it has certainly the advantage of placing the ball in a more open part of the field.

Fig. 7.



Another way to play such balls is to step back with the right foot, and thus gain time and length of hop, and play the ball away, with short action of the arm and wrist, about middle On. This also is good, as making one hit more in your game. Another hit there is which bears a name not very complimentary to Mr. James Dean; though Sampson, of Sheffield, attains in a similar manner remarkable certainty in meeting leg-balls, and not inelegantly. My attention was first called to this hit by watching the play of Mr. E. Reeves, who makes it with all the ease and elegance of the Draw, of which I consider it one variety. Clarke says, that with a ball scarcely wide of your leg, he thinks it a good hit: I have, therefore, given a drawing of it in [the last page](#). When done correctly, and in its proper place, it is made by an easy and elegant movement of the wrists, and looks as pretty as the Draw; but this kind of forward play, which takes an awkward ball at its rise and places it on the On-side, however useful to Sampson of Sheffield and the very few who introduce it in its proper place,—this is a hit which *nascitur non fit*, must come naturally, as a variety of forward play. To study it, makes a poking game, and spoils the play of hundreds. So, beware how you practise the poke. [173] [174]

“The best way to score from short-pitched leg-balls,” writes a very good hitter, “is to make a sort of sweep with the left foot, almost balancing yourself by the toe of the said left foot, and resting chiefly on the right foot,—at the same time drawing yourself upright and retiring towards the wicket. This of course is all one movement. In this position you make the heel of your right the pivot on which you turn, and move your left (but in a greater circle), so that both preserve the same parallel as at starting, and come round together; and this I regard as the great secret of a batsman’s movement in this hit. This gives you the power of simply playing the ball down, if it rises much, and likewise of hitting hard if it keep within a foot of the ground. Both Sampson and Parr score very much in this style.” [175]

However, with fast bowling, there are almost as many mistakes as runs made by hitting at these short-pitched leg-balls. Pilch, in his later days, would hardly meddle with them.

Lastly, as to leg-balls, remember that almost any one can learn to hit clean up (square, especially); the art is to play them down. Also, leg-hitting alone is very easy; but, to be a good Off-player, and an upright and straight player, and yet hit to leg freely, is very rare. We know a fine leg-hitter who lost his leg-hit entirely when he learnt to play better to the off.

CHAP. VIII.

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HINTS AGAINST SLOW BOWLING.

While our ideas on Slow Bowling were yet in a state of solution, they were, all at once, precipitated and crystallised into natural order by the following remarks from a valued correspondent:—

“I have said that Pilch was unequalled with the bat, and his great excellence is in *timing* the ball. No one ever mastered Lillywhite like Pilch; because, in his forward play, he was not very easily deceived by that wary individual’s repeated change of pace. He plays forward with his eye on, not only the pitch, but on the ball itself, being faster or slower in his advance by a calm calculation of time—a point too little considered by some even of the best batsmen of the day. No man hits much harder than Pilch; and, be it observed, hard hitting is doubly hard, in all fair comparison, when combined with that steady posture which does not sacrifice the defence of the wicket for some one favourite cut or leg-hit. Compare Pilch with good general hitters, who, at the same time, guard their wicket, and I doubt if you can find from this select class a harder hitter in England.”

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This habit of playing each ball by correct judgment of its time and merits has made Pilch one of the few who play Old Clarke as he should be played. He plays him back all day if he bowls short, and hits him hard all along the ground, whenever he overpitches; and sometimes he will go in to Clarke’s bowling, but not to make a furious swipe, but to “run him down” with a straight bat. This going in to Clarke’s bowling some persons think necessary for every ball, forgetting that “discretion is the better part of” cricket; the consequence is that many wickets fall from positive long hops. Almost every man who begins to play against Clarke appears to think he is in honour bound to hit every ball out of the field: and, every one who attempts it comes out saying, “What rubbish!—no play in it!” The truth being that there is a great deal of play in it, for it requires real knowledge of the game. You have curved lines to deal with instead of straight ones. “But, what difference does that make?” We shall presently explain.

The amusing part is, that this cry of “What rubbish!” has been going on for years, and still the same error prevails. Experience is not like anything hereditary: the generations of eels do not get used to being skinned, nor do the generations of men get tired of doing the same foolish thing. Each must suffer *propriâ personâ*, and not by proxy. So, the gradual development of the human mind against Clarke’s bowling is for the most part this:—first, a state of confidence in hitting every ball; secondly, a state of disgust and contempt at what seems only too easy for a scientific player to practise; and, lastly, a slowly increasing conviction that the batsman must have as much head as the bowler, with patience to play an unusual number of good lengths.

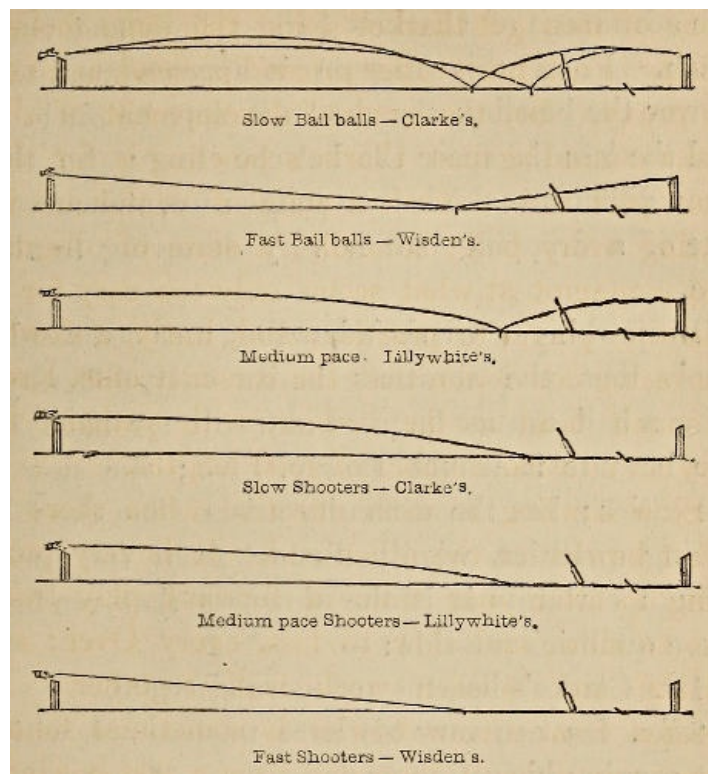
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Slow bowling is most effective when there is a fast bowler at the other end. It is very puzzling to alter your time in forward play from fast to slow, and slow to fast, every Over: so, Clarke and Wisden work well together. A shooter from a slow bowler is sometimes found even more difficult than one from a fast bowler: and this for two reasons; first, because the batsman is made up for slow time and less prepared for fast; and, secondly, because a good slow ball is pitched further up, and, therefore, though the fast ball shoots quicker, the slow ball has the shorter distance to shoot into the wicket.

Compare the several styles of bowling in the following diagram. A good length ball, you see, pitches nearer to the bat in proportion to the slowness of its pace. Wisden is not so fast, nor is Clarke as slow, practically, as they respectively appear. With Wisden’s straight lines, it is far easier to calculate where the ball will pitch, than with the curved lines and dropping balls of Clarke; and when Wisden’s ball has pitched, though its pace is quicker, the distance it has to come is so much longer, that Clarke, in effect, is not so much slower, as he may appear. Lillywhite and Hillyer are of a medium kind; having partly the quickness of Wisden’s pace, and partly the advantage of Clarke’s curved lines and near pitch. From this diagram it appears that the slower the bowling the nearer it may be pitched, and the less the space the bat can cover; also, the more difficult is the ball to judge; for, the curved line of a dropping ball is very deceiving to the eye.

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Slow Bail balls—Clarke's.

Fast Bail balls—Wisden's.

Medium pace—Lillywhite's.

Slow Shooters—Clarke's.

Medium pace Shooters—Lillywhite's.

Fast Shooters—Wisden's.

In speaking of Clarke's bowling, men commonly imply that the slowness is its only difficulty. Now a ball cannot be more difficult for hand or eye because it moves slowly. No; the slower the easier; but the difficulty arises from the following qualities, wholly distinct from the pace, though certainly it is the slowness that renders those qualities possible:—

1st. Clarke's lengths are more accurate.

2dly. He can vary his pace unobserved, without varying his action or delivery.

3dly. More of his balls would hit the wicket.

4thly. A slow ball must be played: it will not play itself.

5thly. Clarke can more readily take advantage of each man's weak point.

6thly. Slow bowling admits of more bias.

7thly. The length is more difficult to judge, owing to the curved lines.

8thly. It requires the greatest accuracy in hitting. You must play at the ball with short, quick action where it actually is, and not by calculation of its rise, or where it will be. [181]

9thly. Slow balls can be pitched nearer to the bat, affording a shorter sight of the rise.

10thly. Catches and chances of stumping are more frequent, and less likely to be missed.

11thly. The curved lines and the straightness preclude cutting, and render it dangerous to cross the ball in playing to leg.

One artifice of Clarke, and of all good slow bowlers, is this: to begin with a ball or two which may easily be played back; then, with a much higher toss and slower pace, as in the diagram, he pitches a little short of the usual spot. If the batsman's eye is deceived as to the distance, he at once plays forward to a length which is at all times dangerous; and, as it rises higher, the play becomes more dangerous still.

The difficulty of "going in" to such bowling as Clarke's, depends on this:—

The bat is only four inches and a quarter wide: call half that width two inches of wood. Then, you can only have two inches to spare for the deviation of your hit; therefore, if a ball turns about two inches, while you are in the act of hitting, the truest hitter possible must miss.

The obvious conclusion from these facts is,—

1st. That you can safely go in to such balls only as are straight, otherwise you cannot present a full bat; and, only when you can step right up to the pitch of the ball, otherwise, by a twist it will escape you; and slow balls turn more than fast in a given space. 2ndly. You can only go in to such lengths as you can easily and steadily command: a very long step, or any unusual hurry, will [182]

hardly be safe with only the said two inches of wood to spare.

Now the question is, with what lengths, against such bowling as Clarke's, can you step in steadily and safely, both as far as the pitch, and with full command of hand and eye? Remember, you cannot begin your step till you have judged the length; and this, with the curved line of a slow dropping ball, you cannot judge till within a little of its grounding; so, the critical time for decision and action is very brief, and, in that brief space, how far can you step secure of all optical illusions, for, Clarke can deceive you by varying both the pace and the curve of his ball?—Go and try. Again, when you have stepped in, where will you hit? On the ground, of course, and straight. And where are the men placed? Besides, are you aware of the difficulty of interchanging the steady game with right foot in your ground, with that springy and spasmodic impulse which characterises this "going in?" At a match at Lord's in 1849, I saw Brockwell score some forty runs with many hits off Clarke: he said to me, when he came out, "Clarke cannot bowl his best to me; for, sometimes, I go in to the pitch of the ball, when pitched well up, and hit her away; at other times, I make a feint, and then stand back, and so Clarke gets off his bowling." He added, "the difficulty is to keep your temper and not to go in with a wrong ball." This, I believe, is indeed a difficulty,—a much greater difficulty than is commonly imagined. My advice to all players who have not made a study of the art of going in, and have not fully succeeded on practising days, is, by no means to attempt it in a match. It is not so easy as it appears. You will find Clarke, or any good slow bowler, too much for you.—"But, supposing I should stand out of my ground, or start before the ball is out of the bowler's hand?" Why, with an unpractised bowler, especially if in the constrained attitude of the overhand delivery, this manœuvre has succeeded in producing threes and fours in rapid succession. But Clarke would pitch over your head, or send in a quick underhand ball a little wide, and you would be stumped; and Wisden would probably send a fast toss about the height of your shoulder, and, being prepared to play perfectly straight at the pitch, you would hardly raise your bat in time to keep a swift toss out of the wicket-keeper's hands.

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The difficulty of curvilinear bowling is this:—

1st. As in making a catch, every fieldsman finds that, in proportion as the ball has been hit up in the air, it is difficult to judge where to place himself: by the same law of sight, a fast ball that goes almost point-blank to its pitch, is far easier to judge than a slow ball that descends in a curve.

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2ndly. As the slow ball reaches the ground at a greater angle, it must rise higher in a given space; so, if the batsman misjudges the pitch of a slow ball by a foot, he will misjudge the rise to a greater extent than with a fast ball, which rises less abruptly. Hence, playing forward is less easy with slow, than with fast, bowling.

3dly. As to timing the ball, all the eye can discern in a body moving directly towards it, is the angle with the ground: to see the curve of a dropping ball you must have a side view. The man at Point can see the curve clearly; but not so the batsman. Consequently, the effect of the curve is left out in the calculation, and the exact time of the ball's approach is, to that extent, mistaken. Every one knows the difficulty of making a good half-volley-hit off a slow ball, because the timing is so difficult: great speed without a curve is less puzzling to the eye than a curvilinear movement, however slow. It were odd, indeed, if it were harder to hit a slow than a fast ball. No. It is the curve that makes difficult what of its pace alone would be easy. All forward play, with slow bowling, is beset with the great difficulty of allowing for the curve. And what style of play does this suggest? Why, precisely what Clarke has himself remarked,—namely, that to fix the right foot as for fast bowling, and play with long reach forward, does not answer. You must be quick on your feet, and, by short quick action of the arms, hit the ball actually as it is, and not as you calculate it will be a second later. This is the system of men who play Clarke best; of Mr. Vernon, of Fuller Pilch, of Hunt of Sheffield, and of C. Browne: though these men also dodge Clarke; and, pretending sometimes to go out, deceive him into dropping short, and so play their heads against his. The best bowling is sometimes hit; but I have not heard of any man who found it much easier to score off Clarke than off other good bowlers. To play Clarke "on any foregone conclusion" is fatal. Every ball must be judged by its respective merits and played accordingly.

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Again, as to cutting, or in any way crossing, these dropping or curvilinear balls. As a slow ball rises twice as much in a given space as a fast ball, of course the chances are greater that the bat will not cover the ball at the point at which, by anticipation, you cut. If you cut at a fast ball, the height of its rise is nearly uniform, and its course a straight line: so, most men like very fast bowling, because, if the hand is quick enough, the judgment is not easily deceived, for the ball moves nearly in straight lines. But, in cutting or in crossing a slow ball, the height of the rise varies enough to produce a mistake while the bat is descending on the ball.

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Once more, in playing at a ball after its rise, a safe and forcible hit can only be made in two ways. You must either meet the ball with full and straight bat, or cut horizontally across it. Now, as slow balls generally rise too high for a hard hit with perpendicular bat, you are reduced generally to the difficulties of cutting or back play. Add to all this, that the bias from the hand and from the inequalities of the ground is much greater, and also that a catch, resulting from a feeble hit and the ball spinning off the edge of the bat, remains commonly so long in the air that every fieldsman can cover double his usual quantity of ground, and then we shall cease to wonder that the best players cannot score fast off slow bowling.

BOWLING.—AN HOUR WITH “OLD CLARKE.”

In cricket wisdom Clarke is truly “Old:” what he has learnt from anybody, he learnt from Lambert. But he is a man who thinks for himself, and knows men and manners, and has many wily devices, “*splendidè mendax.*” “I beg your pardon, sir,” he one day said to a gentleman taking guard, “but ain’t you Harrow?”—“Then we shan’t want a man down there,” he said, addressing a fieldsman; “stand for the ‘Harrow drive,’ between point and middle wicket.”

The time to see Clarke is on the morning of a match. While others are practising, he walks round with his hands under the flaps of his coat, reconnoitring his adversaries’ wicket.

“Before you bowl to a man, it is worth something to know what is running in his head. That gentleman,” he will say, “is too fast on his feet, so, as good as ready money to me: if he doesn’t hit he can’t score; if he does I shall have him directly.”

Going a little further, he sees a man lobbing to another, who is practising stepping in. “There, sir, is ‘practising to play Clarke,’ that is very plain; and a nice mess, you will see, he will make of it. Ah! my friend, if you do go in at all, you must go in further than that, or my twist will beat you; and, going in to swipe round, eh! Learn to run me down with a straight bat, and I will say something to you. But that wouldn’t score quite fast enough for your notions. Going in to hit round is a tempting of Providence.” [188]

“There, that man is purely stupid: alter the pace and height with a dropping ball, and I shall have no trouble with him. They think, sir, it is nothing but ‘Clarke’s vexatious pace:’ they know nothing about the curves. With fast bowling, you cannot have half my variety; and when you have found out the weak point, where’s the fast bowler that can give the exact ball to hit it? There is often no more head-work in fast bowling than there is in the catapult: without head-work I should be hit out of the field.” [189]

“A man is never more taken aback than when he prepares for one ball, and I bowl him the contrary one: there was Mr. Nameless, the first time he came to Nottingham, full of fancies about playing me. The first ball, he walked some yards out to meet me, and I pitched over his head, so near his wicket, that, thought I, that bird won’t fight again. Next ball, he was a little cunning, and made a feint of coming out, meaning, as I guessed, to stand back for a long hop; so I pitched right up to him; and he was so bent upon cutting me away, that he hit his own wicket down!”

Look at diagrams [page 179](#). Clarke is there represented as bowling two balls of different lengths; but the increased height of the shorter pitched ball, by a natural ocular delusion, makes it appear as far pitched as the other. If the batsman is deceived in playing at both balls by the same forward play, he endangers his wicket. “See, there,” continues Clarke, “that gentleman’s *is* a dodge certainly, but not a new one either. He does step in, it is true; but while hitting at the ball, he is so anxious about getting back again, that his position has all the danger of stepping in, and none of its advantages.”

“Then there is Mr. —,” naming a *great* man struggling with adversity. “He gives a jump up off his feet, and thinks he is stepping in, but comes flump down just where he was before.”

“Pilch plays me better than any one. But he knows better than to step in to every ball, or to stand fast every ball. He plays steadily, and discriminates, waiting till I give him a chance, and then makes the most of it.”

Bowling consists of two parts: there is the mechanical part, and the intellectual part. First, you want the hand to pitch where you please, and then the head to know where to pitch, according to the player. [190]

TO LEARN THE ART OF BOWLING.—1. First, consult with some Lillywhite or Wisden, and fix on one, and one only, plan of holding the ball, manageable pace, and general style of delivery. Consult and experiment till you have chosen the style that suits the play of your muscles and your strength. If you choose a violent and laborious style, you will certainly become tired of it: but a style within your strength will be so delightful that you will be always practising. Secondly, having definitely chosen one form and style of bowling, the next thing is to fix it and form it into a habit: for, on the law of Habit a bowler’s accuracy entirely depends.

To form a steady habit of bowling, the nerves and muscles being a very delicate machinery, you must be careful to use them in one way, and one way only; for then they will come to serve you truly and mechanically: but, even a few hours spent in loose play—in bowling with few steps or many, or with a new mode of delivery—will often establish conflicting habits, or call into action a new set of muscles, to interfere with the muscles on which you mainly depend. Many good players (including the most destructive of the Gentleman’s Eleven!) have lost their bowling by these experiments: many more have been thrown back when near perfection. Therefore, [191]

2. Never bowl a single ball but in your chosen and adopted form and style—with the same steps, and with the ball held in the same way. “If these seem small things, habit is not a small thing.” Also, never go on when you are too tired to command your muscles; else, you will be twisting yourself out of form, and calling new and conflicting muscles into action.

As to Pace, if your strength and stature is little, your pace cannot be fast. Be contented with being rather a slow bowler. By commencing slowly, if any pace is in you, it will not be lost; but by commencing fast, you will spoil all.

3. Let your carriage be upright though easy; and start composedly from a state of perfect rest. Let your steps, especially the last, be short; and, for firm foothold, and to avoid shaking yourself

or cutting up the ground, learn to descend not on the heel but more on the toe and flat of the foot, and so as to have both feet in the line of the opposite wicket. For,

4. A golden rule for straight bowling is to present, at delivery, a full face to the opposite wicket; the shoulders being in the same line, or parallel with, the crease. That is the moment to quit the ball—a moment sooner and you will bowl wide to the leg, a moment later and you will bowl wide to the Off. Observe Wisden and Hillyer. They deliver just as their front is square with the opposite wicket. They look well at their mark, and bowl before they have swung too far round for the line of sight to be out of the line of the wicket. Observe, also, bad bowlers, and you will see a uniformity in their deviation: some bowl regularly too much to the On; others as regularly to the Off. Then, watch their shoulders; and you will recognise a corresponding error in their delivery. The wonder is that such men should ever bowl straight. [192]

Also, adopt a run of from five to seven yards. Let your run be quite straight; not from side to side, still less crossing your legs as you run.

5. "Practise," says Lillywhite, "both sides of the wicket. To be able to change sides, is highly useful when the ground is worn, and it often proves puzzling to the batsman."

6. Hold the ball in the fingers, not in the palm, and always the same way. If the tips of the fingers touch the seam of the ball, it will assist in the spin. The little finger "guides" the ball in the delivery.

7. The essence of a good delivery is to send the ball forth rotating, or turning on its own axis. The more spin you give the ball, the better the delivery; because then the ball will twist, rise quickly, or cut variously, the instant it touches the ground. [193]

8. This spin must not proceed from any conscious action of the fingers, but from some mechanical action of the arm and wrist. Clarke is not conscious of any attempt to make his ball spin or twist: a certain action has become habitual to him. He may endeavour to increase this tendency sometimes; but no bowling could be uniform that depended so much on the nerves, or on such nice feeling as this attention to the fingers would involve. A bowler must acquire a certain mechanical swing, with measured steps and uniform action and carriage of the body, till at length, as with a gun, hand and eye naturally go together. In rowing, if you look at your oar, you cut crabs. In skating, if you look at the ice and think of your steps, you lose the freedom and the flow of your circles. So, with bowling, having decided on your steps and one mode of delivery, you must practise this alone, and think more of the wicket than of your feet or your hand.

To assist the spin of the ball, a good bowler will not stop short, but will rather follow the ball, or, give way to it, after delivery, for one or two steps. Some bowlers even continue the twisting action of the hand after the ball has left it.

9. Commence with a very low delivery. Cobbett, and others of the best bowlers, began underhand. The lower the hand, the more the spin, and the quicker the rise. Unfair or throwing bowlers never have a first-rate delivery. See how easy to play is a throw, or a ball from a catapult; and simply because the ball has then no spin. Redgate showed how bowling may be most fair and most effective. No man ever took Pilch's wicket so often. His delivery was easy and natural; he had a thorough command of his arm, and gave great spin to the ball. In Kent against England, at Town Malling, he bowled the finest Over on record. The first ball just grazed Pilch's wicket; the second took his bails; the third ball levelled Mynn, and the fourth Stearman; three of the best bats of the day. [194]

10. Practise a little and often. If you over-fatigue the muscles, you spoil their tone for a time. Bowling, as we said of batting, must become a matter of habit; and habits are formed by frequent repetition. Let the bowlers of Eton, Harrow, and Winchester resolve to bowl, if it be but a dozen balls, every day, wet or fine. Intermission is very prejudicial.

11. The difficulty is to pitch far enough. Commence, according to your strength, eighteen or nineteen yards, and increase to twenty-two by degrees. Most amateurs bowl long hops. [195]

12. Seek accuracy more than speed: a man of fourteen stone is not to be imitated by a youth of eight stone. Many batsmen like swift bowling, and why? Because the length is easier to judge; the lines are straighter for a cut; the ball wants little accuracy of hitting; fast bowlers very rarely pitch quite as far even as they might, for this requires much extra power; fast balls twist less in a given space than slow balls, and rarely increase their speed at the rise in the same proportion as slow balls; fast bowling gives fewer chances that the fieldsman can take advantage of, and admits generally of less variety; fewer fast balls are pitched straight, and fewer even of those would hit the wicket. You may find a Redgate, a Wisden, or a Mynn, who can bring fast bowling under command for one or two seasons; but these are exceptions too solitary to afford a precedent. Even these men were naturally of a fast pace: swiftness was not their chief object. So, study accurate bowling, and let speed come of itself. [195]

So much for attaining the power of a bowler; next to apply it. Not only practise, but *study* bowling: to pelt away mechanically, with the same lengths and same pace, is excusable in a catapult, but not in a man.—Can your adversary guard leg-stump or off-stump? Can he judge a length? Can he allow for a curve? Can he play well over an off-ball to prevent a catch? Can you deceive him with time or pace? Is he a young gentleman, or an old gentleman?— [196]

"Ætatis cujusque notandi sunt tibi mores."

1. Pitch as near the bat as you can without being hit away. The bowler's chance is to compel back play with the shortest possible sight of the rise.

2. If three good balls have been stopped, the fourth is often destructive, because the batsman's patience is exhausted: so take pains with the fourth ball of the Over.

3. The straighter the ball, the more puzzling to the eye, and the more cramping to the hand of the batsman.

4. Short-pitched balls are not only easier to hit, but have more scope for missing the wicket, though pitched straight.

5. A free leg-hitter may often be put out by placing an extra man On side, and bowling repeatedly at leg-stump—only do not pitch very far up to him. Short-pitched leg-balls are the most difficult to hit, and produce most catches. By four or five attempts at leg-hitting, a man gains a tendency to swing round, and is off his straight play.

6. Besides trying every variety of length, vary your pace to deceive the batsman in timing his play; and practise the same action so as not to betray the change of pace. Also, try once or twice a high dropping ball. [197]

7. Learn to bowl tosses and tices. With a stiff player, before his eye is in, a toss often succeeds; but especially practise high lobs—a most useful variety of ball. In most Elevens there are one or two men with whom good roundhand bowling is almost thrown away. A first-rate player in Warwickshire was found at fault with lobs: and till he learnt the secret, all his fine play was at an end.

8. Find out the farthest point to which your man can play forward safely, and pitch just short of that point with every variety of pace and dropping balls. Lillywhite's delight is by pitching alternately just within and just out of the batsman's reach, "*to catch him in two minds.*" Here we have positive metaphysics! Just such a wary antagonist as Lillywhite is described by Virgil,—

"Ille, velut celsam oppugnat qui molibus urbem,
Nunc hos, nunc illos aditus, omnemque pererrat
Arte locum; et variis adsultibus irritus urget."

Of course *aditus* means an unguarded stump, and *locum* where to pitch the ball.

9. A good underhand ball of two high curves—that is, a dropping ball rising high—with a twist in to leg-stump, and a third man to On side, is very effective, producing both catch and stumping. This is well worth trying, with four men on the On side, even if some great player is brought to win a country match. [198]

10. Most men have a length they cannot play. The fault of young bowlers is, they do not pitch far enough: they thus afford too long a sight of the ball. In the School matches and the University matches at Lord's, this is very observable, especially with fast bowlers.

11. The old-fashioned underhand lobbing, if governed by a good head—dropping short when a man is coming out, and sometimes tossed higher and sometimes lower,—is a valuable change in most Elevens; but it must be high and accurately pitched, and must have head-work in it. Put long-stop upon the On side, and bring long-slip nearer in; and be sure that your long-fields stand far away.

12. Lastly, the last diagram explains that curvilinear bowling (the effect of a moderate pace with a spin) gives the batsman a shorter sight of the rise than is possible with the straighter lines of swift bowling. A man has nearly as much time to make up his mind and prepare for Wisden as for Clarke; because, he can judge Wisden's ball much sooner, and, though the rise is faster, the ball has farther to come in.

THEORY OF BOWLING.—What characterises a good delivery? If two men bowl with equal force and precision, why does the ball come in from the pitch so differently in respect of cutting, twisting, or abrupt rise? [199]

"Because one man gives the ball so much more rotatory motion on its own axis, or, so much more spin than the other."

A throw, or the catapult which strikes the ball from its rest, gives no spin; hence, the ball is regular in its rise, and easy to calculate.

Cobbett gave a ball as much spin as possible: his fingers appeared wrapped round the ball: his wrist became horizontal: his hand thrown back at the delivery, and his fingers seemingly unglued joint by joint, till the ball quitted the tips of them last, just as you would spin a top. Cobbett's delivery designed a spin, and the ball at the pitch had new life in it. No bowling so fair, and with so little rough play or violence, ever proved more effective than Cobbett's. Hillyer is entitled to the same kind of praise.

A spin is given by the fingers; also, by turning the hand over in delivering the ball.

A good ball has two motions; one, straight, from hand to pitch; the other, on its own axis.

The effect of a spin on its own axis is best exemplified by bowling a child's hoop. Throw it from you without any spin, and away it rolls; but spin or revolve it against the line of its flight with great power, and the hoop no sooner touches the ground than it comes back to you. So great a degree of spin as this cannot possibly be given to a cricket ball; but you see the same effect in the "draw-back stroke" at billiards. Revolve the hoop with less power, and it will rise abruptly from the ground and then continue its course—similar to that awkward and abrupt rise often seen in the bowling of Clarke among others. [200]

Thirdly, revolve the hoop as you bowl it, not *against* but *in* the line of its flight, and you will

have its tendency to bound expended in an increased quickness forward. This exemplifies a low swimming ball, quickly cutting in and sometimes making a shooter. This is similar to the "following stroke" at billiards, made by striking the ball high and rotating it in the line of the stroke.

Such are the effects of a ball spinning or rotating vertically.

Now try the effect of a spin from right to left, or left to right: try a side stroke at billiards; the apparent angle of reflection is not equal to the angle of incidence. So a cricket ball, with lateral spin, will work from Leg to Off, or Off to Leg, according to the spin.

But why does not the same delivery, as it gives the same kind of spin, always produce the same vertical or lateral effect on a ball? In other words, how do you account for the fact that (apart from roughness of ground) the same delivery produces sometimes a contrary twist? "Because the ball may turn in the air, and the vertical spin become lateral. The side which on delivery was under, may, at the pitch, be the upper side, or the upper side may become under, or any modification of either may be produced in conjunction with inequality in the ground."

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With throwing bowling, the ball comes from the ends of the fingers; why, then, does it not spin? Because, unlike Cobbett's delivery, as explained, wherein the ball left the fingers by degrees, and was sent spinning forth, the ball, in a throw, is held between fingers and thumb, which leave their hold at the same instant, without any tendency to rotate the ball. The fairer and more horizontal the delivery the more the fingers act, the more spin, and the more variety, after the pitch. A high and unfair delivery, it is true, is difficult from the height of the rise; otherwise it is too regular and too easy to calculate, to make first-rate bowling.

A LITTLE LEARNING IS A DANGEROUS THING—and not least at cricket. The only piece of science I ever hear on a cricket field is this: "Sir, how can that be? The angle of reflection must always be equal to the angle of incidence."

That a cricketer should have only one bit of science, and that, as he applies it, a blunder, is indeed a pity.

I have already shown that, in bowling, the *apparent* angle of reflection is rendered unequal to the angle of incidence by the rotatory motion or spin of the ball, and also by the roughness of the ground.

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I have now to explain that this law is equally disturbed in batting also; and by attention to the following observations, many a forward player may learn so to adapt his force to the inclination of his bat as not to be caught out, even although (as often happens to a man's great surprise) he plays over the ball!

The effect of a moving body meeting another body moving, and that same body quiescent, is very different. To prove this,

Fix a bat *immoveably* perpendicular in the ground, and suppose a ball rises to it from the ground in an angle of 45° as the angle of incidence; then supposing the ball to have no rotatory motion, it will be reflected at an equal angle, and fall nearly under the bat.

But supposing the bat is not fixed, but brought forcibly forward to meet that ball, then, according to the weight and force of the bat, the natural direction of the ball will be annihilated, and the ball will be returned, perhaps nearly point blank, not in the line of reflection, but in some other line more nearly resembling the line in which the bat is moved.

If the bat were at rest, or only played very gently forward, the angles of reflection would not be materially disturbed, but the ball would return to the ground in proportion nearly as it rose from it; but by playing very hard forward, the batsman annihilates the natural downward tendency of the ball, and drives it forward, perhaps, into the bowler's hands; and then, fancying the laws of gravitation have been suspended to spite him, he walks back disgusted to the pavilion, and says, "No man in England could help being out then. I was as clean over the ball as I could be, and yet it went away as a catch!"

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Lastly, as to "being out by luck," always consider whether, with the same adversaries, Pilch or Parr would have been so put out. Our opinion is, that could you combine the experience and science of Pilch with the hand and eye of Parr, luck would be reduced to an infinitesimal quantity.

Fortuna fortes adjuvat, men of the best nerve have the best luck; and *nullum numen habes si sit prudentia*, when a man knows as much of the game as we would teach him, he will find there is very little luck after all. Young players should not think about being out by chance: there is a certain intuitive adaptation of play to circumstances, which, however seemingly impossible, will result from observation and experience, unless the idea of chance closes the ears to all good instruction.

CHAP. X. HINTS ON FIELDING.

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The essence of good fielding is, to start before the ball is hit, and to pick up and return straight to the top of the bails, by one continuous action. This was the old Wykehamist style—old, I hope not yet extinct, past revival—(thus had we written, March 1851, and three months after the

Wykehamists won both their school matches at Lord's);—for, some twenty years since, the Wykehamist fielding was unrivalled by any school in England. Fifteen years ago Mr. Ward and, severally and separately, Cobbett instanced a Winchester Eleven as the first fielding they had ever seen at Lord's. And among this chosen number were the yet remembered names of B. Price, F. B. Wright, Knatchbull, and Meyrick. These hardy Trojans—for the ball never came too fast for them—commenced fagging out long, very long, before they were indulged in batting, and were forced to qualify, even for fagging, by practising till they could throw over a certain neighbouring barn, and were always in bodily fear of the pains and penalties of the middle stump if ever they missed a ball. But these days of the voluntary system are far less favourable for fielding. To become a good fieldsman requires persevering practice, with a "big fellow" to fag for who will expect a little more smartness than is always developed by pure love of the game. [205]

And now, Etonians, Harrovians, Wykehamists, I mention you alphabetically, a few words on training your Eleven for Lord's. Choose first your bowlers and wicket-keeper and long-stop; these men you must have, though not worth a run: then if you have any batsmen decidedly superior, you may choose them for their batting, though they happen not to be first-rate fieldsmen. But in most school Elevens, after naming four or five men, among the other six or seven, it is mere chance who scores; so let any great superiority in fielding decide the choice. I remember playing a match in which I had difficulty in carrying the election of a first-rate fieldsman against a second-rate bat. Now, the said batsman could not certainly be worth above fourteen runs; say seven more than the fieldsman. But the fieldsman, as it happened, made a most difficult catch, put one runner out, and, above all, kept the bowlers in good heart, during an uphill game, by stopping many hard hits. A bad fieldsman is a loose screw in your machinery; giving confidence to the adversary, and taking the spirit out of his own party. Therefore, let the captain of an Eleven proclaim that men must qualify by fine fielding: and let him encourage the following exercises:— [206]

Put in two batsmen, whose play is not good enough to spoil, to tip and run. You will then find what very clean fielding is required to save one run, with men determined to try it.

Let every man practise long-stop.

Long-leg is a fieldsman nearly as essential as a good long-stop. A man who can run and throw well should make a long-leg his forte, and practise judging distances for a long catch, covering ground both to right and left, neat handling, with allowance for the twist, and especially an arrow-like and accurate return. No thing is so likely to put the runner out as a swift throw to the hands from a long distance. Aspire to foil the usual calculation, that, at a long distance, the runner can beat the throw.

Let the wicket-keeper take his place, and while some one throws or hits, let him require the quickest and most accurate throwing. A ball properly thrown comes in like an arrow—no time being lost by soaring high in air. At short distances, throw at once to the hands; where unavoidable, with a long hop. But this hop should result from a low and skimming throw; or, the ball will lose its speed. Practise throwing, without any flourish, by a single action of the arm. Any good fieldsman will explain, far better than our pen, the art of picking up a ball in the only position consistent with a quick return. A good throw often runs a man out; an advantage very rarely gained without something superior in fielding. Young players should practise throwing, and remember never to throw in a long hop when they can throw to the hands. "Many a 'run out,'" says Mr. R. T. King, "has been lost by that injudicious practice of throwing long hops to the wicket-keeper, instead of straight, and, when necessary, hard, to his hands;" a practice that should be utterly reprobated, especially as many rising players will fancy it is the most correct, instead of the slowest, style of throwing. To throw in a long hop is only allowable when you might fail to throw a catch, and, which is worst of all, make too short a hop to the wicket-keeper. The Captain should keep an account of the best runners, throwers, clean pickers-up, and especially of men who can meet and anticipate the ball, and of those who deserve the praise given to Chatterton—"the safest pair of hands in England." [207]

So much for quick throwing; but for a throw up from long-field, Virgil had a good notion of picking up and sending in a ball:—

"Ille manu raptum trepidâ torquebat in hostem;
Altior assurgens, et cursu concitus, heros."
Æn. xii. 901.

Here we have snatching up the ball with a quiver of the wrist, rising with the effort, and a quick step or two to gain power.—Meeting the ball requires a practice of its own, and is a charming operation when you can do it; for the same impetus with which you run in assists the quickness of your return. Practice will reveal the secret of running in; only, run with your hands near the ground, so as not to have suddenly to stoop; and, keep your eyes well open, not losing the ball for an instant. In fielding, as in batting, you must study all the varieties of balls, whether tices, half-volleys, or other lengths. [208]

A fast runner *nascitur non fit*: still, practice does much, and especially for all the purposes of a fieldsman near the wicket. A spring and quick start are things to learn; and that, both right and left: few men spring equally well with both feet. Anticipating the ball, and getting the momentum on the proper side, is everything in fielding; and practice will enable a man to get his proper footing and quick shifting step. A good cricketer, like a good skater, must have free use of both feet: and of course a fine fieldsman must catch with both hands.

Practise left-handed catching in a ring; also picking up with left: "Any one can catch with his

right," says the old player; "now, my boy, let us see what you can do with your left." Try, also, "slobbering" a ball, to see how many arts there are of recovering it afterwards. I need hardly say that jumping off your feet for a high catch, and rushing in to a ball and patting it up in the air and catching it the second attempt, are all arts of first-rate practitioners.

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SAFE HANDS.—Your hands should be on the rat-trap principle,—taking anything in, and letting nothing out again. Of course a ball has a peculiar feeling and spin off a bat quite different from a throw; so practise accordingly. By habit hand and eye will go together: what the eye sees the right part of the hand will touch by a natural adjustment. There is a way of allowing for the spin of the ball in the air: as to its tendency at Cover, to twist especially to the left, this is too obvious to require notice.

I am ashamed to be obliged to remind players, old as well as young, that there is such a thing as being a good judge of a short run: and I might hold up, as an example, an *Honourable* gentleman, who, though a first-rate long-stop and fine style of batting, has a distinct reputation for the one run. It is a tale, perhaps, thrice told, but more than thrice forgotten, that the partner should follow up the ball; how many batsmen destroy the very life of the game by standing still like an extra umpire. Now, in a school Eleven, running notches can be practised with security, because with mutual dependence; though I would warn good players that, among strangers in a country match, sharp running is a dangerous game.

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SYMPTOMS OF A LOSER OF RUNS.—He never follows up the ball, but leans on his bat, or stands sociably by the umpire; he has 20 yards to run from a state of rest, instead of 16, already on the move; he is addicted to checks and false starts; he destroys the confidence of his partner's running; he condemns his partner to play his worst, because in a state of disgust; he never runs and turns, but runs and stops, or shoots past his wicket, making ones for twos, and twos for threes; he often runs a man out, and, besides this loss, depresses his own side, and animates the other; he makes slow fieldsmen as good as fast; having no idea of stealing a run for the least miss, he lets the fieldsmen stand where they please, saving both the two and the one; he lets the bowler coolly experiment with the wicket, when one run breaks the dangerous series, and destroys his confidence; he spares the bowler that disturbance of his nerves which results from stolen runs and suspicion of his fieldsmen; he continues the depressing influence of maiden Overs, when a Single would dispel the charm; he deserves the name of the "*Green man and Still*," and usually commences his innings by saying, "Pray don't run me out, Sir,"—"We'll run no risks whatever." When there is a long hit, the same man will tear away like mad, forgetting that both he and his partner (a heavier man perhaps) want a little wind left for the next ball.—*O Ignavum pecus!* so-called "steady" players. Steady, indeed! You stand like posts, without the least intuition of a run. The true cricketer runs while another is thinking of it; indeed, he does not think—he sees and feels it is a run. He descries when the fieldsmen has a long reach with his left hand, or when he must overbalance and right himself, or turn before he can throw. He watches hopefully the end of a long throw, or a ball backed carelessly up.—Bear witness, bowlers, to the virtue of a single run made sharply and vexatiously. Just as your plot is ripe, the batsmen change, and an ordinary length supersedes the very ball that would have beguiled your man. Is it nothing to break in upon the complete Over to the same man? And, how few the bowlers who repeat the length from which a run is made! To repeat, passionless as the catapult, a likely length, hit or not hit, here it is the professional beats the amateur.—"These indirect influences of making each possible run," says Mr. R. T. King, "are too little considered. Once I saw, to my full conviction, the whole fortune of a game changed by simply effecting two single runs; one, while a man was threatening to throw, instead of throwing, in the ball; the other, while a ball was dribbling in from about middle wicket. This one run ended thirteen maiden Overs, set the bowlers blaming the fieldsmen at the expense, as usual, of their equanimity and precision, and proved the turning-point in a match till then dead against us. Calculate the effect of 'stolen runs' on the powers of a bowler and his tactics as against a batsman, on the places of the fieldsmen, on their insecurity when hurried, and the spirit it puts into the one party and takes away from the other; and add to this the runs evidently lost; and, I am confident that the same Eleven that go out for sixty would, with better running, generally make seventy-five, and not uncommonly a hundred."

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Attend, therefore, to the following rules:—1. Back up every ball as soon as actually delivered, and as far as consistent with safe return. 2. When both men can see the ball, as before wicket, let the decision depend on the batsman, as less prepared to start, or on the elder and heavier man, by special agreement; and let the decision be the partner's when the ball is behind the hitter. 3. Let men run by some call: mere beckoning with strangers leads to fatal errors, backing up being mistaken for "run." "Yes," "no," or "run," "stop," are the words. "Away" sounds like "stay." 4. Let the hitter also remember that he can often back up a few yards in anticipation of a ball passing the fieldsmen. 5. Let the first run be made quickly when there is the least chance of a second. 6. Let the ball be watched and followed up, as for a run, on the chance of a miss from wicket-keeper or fieldsmen. So, never over-run your ground. 7. Always run with judgment and attention, never beyond your strength: good running between wickets does not mean running out of wind, to the suffusion of the eye and the trembling of the hand, though a good batsman must train for good wind. Henry Davis of Leicester was fine as ever in practice, when too heavy to run, and therefore to bat, in a game. The reason of running out and losing runs is, generally, the want of an established rule as to who decides the run. How rarely do we see a man run out but from hesitation! How often does a man lose his chance of safety by stopping to judge what is his partner's ball! Let cricketers observe some rule for judging the run. There will then be no doubt who is to blame,—though, to censure the batsman because his partner is run out, when that partner is not backing up, is too bad. Let the man who has to decide bear all the responsibility if his partner is out; only, let prompt obedience be the rule. When a man feels he must run because

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called, he will take more pains to be ready; and, when once it is plain that a batsman has erred in judgment and lost one wicket of his eleven, he will, if worth anything, make a study of running, and avoid so unpleasant a reflection for the future. Fancy such a *mem.* as this:—"Pilch run out because Rash hesitated," or "Rash run out because when the hitter called he was not backing up."

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These and many other ideas on this most essential, yet most neglected, part of the game, I shall endeavour to illustrate by the following computation of runs which might have been added to an innings of 100.

Suppose, therefore, 100 runs scored; 90 by hits, 4 by wide balls, and 6 by byes and leg byes—the loss is commonly as follows:—

1. Singles lost from hits	about	10	
2. Ones instead of twos, by not making the former run quickly and turning for a second, but over-running ground and stopping	"	4	
3. Runs that might have been stolen from balls dropped and slovenly handled	"	3	
4. Loss from fieldsmen standing where they please, and covering more ground than they dare do with sharp runners	"	5	
5. Loss from not having those misses which result from hurrying the field	"	4	
6. Loss from bowlers not being ruffled, as they would be if feeling the runs should be stopped	"	7	
7. Extra loss from byes not run (with the least "slobbering" the runners may cross—though Dean is cunning)	"	6	[215]
8. From having draws and slips stopped, which long-stop could not stop if nearer in	"	5	
9. One man run out	"	8	
10. Depressing influence of the same	"	?	
11. From not having the only long-stop disgusted and hurried into missing everything	"	?	
12. From not having the adversary all wild by these combined annoyances	"	?	
Total	"	52	
13. Loss from adversary playing better when going in against a score of 100 than against 152	"	?	

Now, though I have put down nothing for four sources of loss, not the less material because hard to calculate, the difference between good runners and bad seems to be above half the score. That many will believe me I can hardly expect; but, before they contradict, let them watch and reckon for themselves, where fielding is not first-rate.

It was only after writing as above that I read that in "North v. South," 1851, the North lost six wickets, and the South two, by running out! In the first Gentlemen and Players' match, of the same year, it was computed that one man, who made a long score, actually lost as many runs as he made! In choosing an eleven, such men should be marked, and the loser of runs avoided on the same principle as a bad fieldsman. Reckon not only the runs a man may make, but the runs he may lose, and how the game turns about sometimes by a man being run out. A perfect cricketer, like a perfect whist-player, must qualify his scientific rules, and make the best of a bad partner—but, how few are perfect, especially in this point! Talk not alone of good batsmen, I have often said.—Choose me some thorough-bred public-school cricketers; for, "the only men," says Clarke, "I ever see judges of a run, are those who have played cricket as boys with sixpenny bats, used to distances first shorter, then longer as they grew stronger, and learnt, not from being bowled to by the hour, but by years of practice in real games. You blame me because the All England Eleven don't learn not to run out, though always practising together. Why, a run is a thing not learnt in a day. There's that gentleman yonder—with all his fine hitting he is no cricketer; he can't run; he learnt at a catapult, and how can a catapult teach a man the game?"

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Great men have the same ideas, or Clarke would seem to have borrowed from Horace

"Qui studet optatam cursu contingere metam
Multa tulit fecitque puer, sudavit et alsit."

A good innings disdains a sleeping partner. Be alive and moving; and—instead of saying, "Well played!" "Famous hit!" &c.; or, as we sometimes hear in the way of encouragement, "How near!" "What a close shave!" "Pray, take care, Smith!"—think of the runs, and say "run" or "stop" as the case may be. Thus, you may avoid the ludicrous scene of two big men rushing from their wickets, pausing, turning back, starting again, and having a small talk together at the eleventh yard, and finding, one or the other, a prostrate wicket, while apologies and recrimination are the only solace.

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Old players need keep up a habit of throwing and of active movements. For, the redundant spirit and buoyancy of youthful activity soon evaporates. Many a zealous cricketer loses his once-famed quickness from mere disuse—*Sic omnia fatis, in pejus ruere*. Instead of always batting, and practising poor Hillyer and Wisden till their dodges are dodges no more, and it is little credit to score from them, go to your neighbour's wicket and practise fielding for an hour, or else, next match, you may find your throwing at fault.

Fielding, I fear, is retrograding: a good general player, famed for that quick return which runs the adversary out, one who is, at the same time, a useful change in bowling, a safe judge of a run, and respectable at every point of the game—this is becoming a scarce character, and Batting is a word supposed coextensive with Cricket,—a sad mistake.

SPARE THE BOWLER.—One reason for returning the ball not to bowler, but to wicket-keeper, who should advance quietly, like Box, and return a catch. A swift throw, or any exertion in the field which hurts the bowler's hand, or sets it shaking, may lose a game. If a bowler has half-volleys returned to him, by stretching and stooping after them, he gets out of his swing. Now, this same swing is a great point with a bowler. Watch him after he has got his footsteps firm for his feet, and when in his regular stride, and see the increased precision of his performance. Then comes the time when your great gun tumbles down his men: and that is the time that some sure, judicious batsman, whose eminence is little seen amidst the loose hitting of a scratch match, comes calmly and composedly to the wicket and makes a stand; and, as he disposes of maiden Overs, and steals ones and twos, he breaks the spell that bound his men, and makes the dead-straight bowling good for Cuts and leg-hits. In no game or sport do I ever witness half the satisfaction of the bowler who can thus bowl maiden Overs and defy a score; or of the batsman who takes the edge off the same, runs up the telegraph to even betting, and gives easier work and greater confidence to those who follow. A wicket-keeper, too, may dart off and save a bowler from fielding a three or four; and, whenever he leaves his wicket, slip must take wicket-keeper's place. "How stale," "true; but,—*instantly's* the word,"—from neglect of which, we have seen dreadful mistakes made even in good matches.

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Ay, and what beautiful things are done by quick return and a low shy; no time wasted in parabolic curves: ball just skimming the ground when it comes in a long hop, but quickest of all returns is a throw to the top of the bails into wicket-keeper's hands.

POINT.—Your great strength lies in anticipation: witness ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν. To that gentleman every ball seems hit, because he always gets thereabouts; yet is he near-sighted withal! 'Tis the mind that sees, eyes are its glasses, and he is too good a workman to want excuse for his tools. With slow bowling and a bad batsman, Point can anticipate easily enough. Still, with all bowling, fast and slow, the common fault of Point is, that he stands, if near, too near; and if far off, yet not far off enough. Stand where you yourself can catch and stop. If slow in hand and eye stand off for longer catches, else, by standing where a quick man would catch sharp catches, you miss everything. With fast bowling, few balls which could be caught at seven yards ground short of twelve. Though, if the ground is very rough, or the bowling slow, the ball may be popped up near the bat, even by good players. Whenever a ball is hit Off, Point must cross instanter, or he'll be too late to back up, especially the bowler's wicket.

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Point is sometimes Point proper, like a Wicket-keeper or Short-slip, to cramp the batsman, and take advantage of his mistakes; but with fast bowling and good batsmen, Point may advantageously stand off like any other fieldsman. For then, he will save many more runs, and may make quite as many catches. If Mr. King stood as Point, and Chatterton as Cover in the same line, with Pilch batting and Wisden bowling, they would not (as I presume they are well aware) work to the best advantage. When Clarke is bowling he generally wants a veritable Point for the catch. But, to stand near, as a Scientific Point, with wild bowling is absurd.

SHORT-LEG is often a very hardly used personage, expected to save runs that seem easy, but are actual impossibilities. A good ball, perhaps, is pushed forward to middle wicket On, Short-leg being square, and the bowler looks black at him. Then a Draw is made, when Short-leg is standing rather forward, and no man is ubiquitous. If the batsman often does not know where the rise or bias may reflect the ball, how should the fieldsman know?

COVER-POINT and LONG-SLIP are both difficult places; the ball comes so fast and curling, that it puzzles even the best man. No place in the field but long-stop has the work of long-slip. This used to be Pilch's place.

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The chief point in these places is to stand either to save one or to save two. This depends on the quickness of the fieldsman and the judgment of the runners. With such judges of a run as Hon. F. Ponsonby, Parr, Wisden, and J. Lillywhite, you must stand rather near to save one; but quick return is every thing. Here Caldecourt was, years since, first-rate. I have seen him, at Cover, when past his best, judge well, start quick, run low, up and in like a shot to wicket-keeper's hands; and what more would you have in fielding? When E. H. Budd played and won a second match for 100*l.* with Mr. Brand—two fieldsmen given,—so much was thought of Mr. Brand's having engaged Caldecourt, that it was agreed he should field on both sides. He did so, and shied Mr. Budd out at a single stump. To save two, a good man may stand a very long way off on hard ground, and reduce the hardest cuts to singles. But a common fault is, "standing nowhere," neither to save one nor to save two. Remember not to stand as sharp when fast bowling is replaced by slow. Cover is the place for brilliant fielding. Watch well the batsman, and start in time. Half a spring in anticipation puts you already under weigh, and makes yards in the ground you can cover. The following is curious;—

"You would think," said Caldecourt, "that a ball to the right hand may be returned more quickly than a ball to the left." But ask him, and he will show you how, if at a long reach, he always found it otherwise. The right shoulder may be even in the better position to return (in spite of change of hands), when the left picks up the ball than when the right picks it.

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Some good Covers have been quicker with a hard jerk than a throw, for the attitude of fielding is less altered. Still a jerk is less easy to the wicket-keeper. A long-slip with good head and heels may assist long-stop; his triumph is to run a man out by anticipating the balls that bump off long-

stop's wrists and shins.

A third man up, or a middle-slip, is at times very killing: this allows long-slip to stand back for hard hits, and no catch escapes. A forward Point, or middle wicket close in, often snaps up a catch or two, particularly when the ground is dangerous for forward play, or the batsman plays hesitatingly.

Thick-soled shoes save colds in soppy weather, and do not jar when the ground is hard; for the Cantabs say that

Thin soles + hard ground = tender feet,

is an undeniable equation. Bowlers should wear worsted socks to save blisters, and mind the thread is not fastened off in a knot, just under the most sensitive part of the heel. [223]

Much inconvenience arises in a match (for the best player may be out) by spectators standing in the eye of the ball; so, stretch strips of white canvass on poles five feet high; for this, while it keeps the stupid away, provides a white background for each wicket.

This is good also in a park, where the deep shade of trees increases the confessed uncertainty of the game. Some such plan is much wanted on all public grounds where the sixpenny freeholders stand and hug their portly corporations, and, by standing in the line of the wicket, give the ball all the shades of green coat, light waistcoat, and drab smalls. Still, batsmen must try to rise superior to such annoyances; for, if the bowler changes his side of the wicket, the umpire will often be in the light of the ball.

Oh! that ring at Lord's; for, as in olden time,—

—“si quid fricti ciceris probat et nucis emptor;”

that is, if the swillers of half-and-half and smokers of pigtail,—a preponderating influence and large majority of voices,—applaud a hit, it does not follow that it is a good one: nor, if they cry “Butterfingers!” need the miss be a bad one. No credit for good intentions!—no allowance for a twisting catch and the sun enough to singe your eyelids!—the hit that wins the “half-and-half” is the finest hit for that select assemblage, whose “sweet voices” quite drown the nicer judgment of the pavilion, even as vote by ballot would swamp the House of Lords. [224]

LONG-STOP.—If you would estimate the value of a practised long-stop, only try to play a match with a bad one. Still, patient merit is rarely appreciated; for, what is done very well looks so easy. Long-stopping requires the cleanest handling and quickest return. The best in form I ever saw was an Oxonian about 1838,—a Mr. Napier. One of the worst in form, however, was the best of his day in effect,—Good; for he took the ball sideways. A left-handed man, as Good was, has a great advantage in stopping slips under-leg. Among the ancients, Old Beagley was the man. But there is many a man whose praise is yet unsung; for when Mr. E. H. Budd saw Mr. R. Stothert at Lansdown, Bath, stop right and left to Mr. Kirwan's bowling, he alluded to Beagley's doings, and said Beagley never came up to R. Stothert. Mr. Marshall (jun.) in the same Club stopped for Mr. Marcon without one bye through a long innings. The gentleman who opposed the firmest front, however, for years, to Messrs. Kirwan and Fellowes,—bowlers, who have broken studs into the breast-bone of a long-stop, and then, to make amends, taken fourpenny-bits of skin off his shins, is Mr. Hartopp, pronounced, by Mr. Charles Burt,—himself undeniable at that point,—to be the best for a continuance he has ever seen. *Vigeat vireatque!* His form is good; and he works with great ease and cool attention. Among the most celebrated at present are Mr. C. Ridding, W. Pilch, Guy, and Dean. [225]

On Long-stopping, Mr. Hartopp kindly writes:—“No place requires so much patient perseverance: the work is so mechanical. I have seen many a brilliant fieldsman there for a short innings, while the bowling is straight and rarely passes; but, let him have to humdrum through 150 or 200 runs, and he will get bored, tired, and careless; then, runs come apace. Patience is much wanted, if a sharp runner is in; for he will often try a long-stop's temper by stealing runs; in such a case, I have found it the best plan to prepare the wicket-keeper for a hard throw to his, the nearer, wicket; for, if this does not run the man out, it frightens him down to steadier running. Throwing over may sometimes answer; but a cunning runner will get in your way, or beat a ball thrown over his head. Long-stop's distance must often be as much as four or five yards less for a good runner than for a bad. Short distance does not make stopping more difficult; because, it gives fewer hops and twists to the ball; but a longer distance enables you to cover more tips and draws, and saves leg-byes. Good runners ought to cross if the ball is in the least fumbled; but clean fielding, with quick underhand return, would beat the Regent Street Pet himself, did he attempt a run. Long-stop is wholly at fault if he requires the wicket-keeper to stand aside: this would spoil the stumping. As to gloves and pads, let every one please himself; we must choose between gloves and sore hands; but wrist gauntlets are of great use, and no hindrance to catches, which often come spinning to the long-stop, and otherwise difficult. [226]

“As to form, dropping on one knee is a bad position for any fielding: you are fixed and left behind by any sudden turn of the ball. The best rule is to watch the ball from the bowler's hand and move accordingly, and you will soon find for how much bias to allow; and beware of a slope like Lord's: it causes a greater deviation than you would imagine in thirty yards. Just as the ball comes, draw yourself up heels together (thus many a shooter have I stopped), and, picking as neatly as you can, pitch it back to wicket-keeper as if it were red hot. Quick return saves many byes, and keeps up an appearance which prevents the attempt. The same discrimination of lengths is required with hands as with bat. Long hops are easy: a tice is as hard almost as a shooter; half-volley is a teaser. Such balls as pitch up to you should be ‘played forward’ by [227]

pushing or sweeping your hands out to meet them; even if you do not field them clean, still you will often save a run by forcing the ball up towards the wicket-keeper, and having it before you.

“A Long-stop wants much command of attention,—eye never off the ball; and this, so little thought of, is the one great secret of all fielding: you must also play your hardest and your very best; a habit which few have energy to sustain. If you miss a ball, rattle away after it; do not stand, as many do, to apologise by dumb show. If the ball bumps up at the moment of handling, throw your chin up and let it hit your chest as full as it may: this is Horace’s advice;—

‘Fortiaque adversis opponite pectora rebus.’

“Long-stop should assist the backing up on the On side, and must start at once to be in time. The attention he has to sustain is very trying to the eyes, especially in windy weather.”

WICKET-KEEPING.—If not born with better ocular nerves than the average, I doubt whether any degree of practice would make a first-rate wicket-keeper. Still, since Lillywhite succeeded in training one of the Winchester eleven in Wicket-keeping, by bowling accordingly, wicket-keeping seems an art to be acquired. To place the hands accurately, right or left, according to the pitch of the ball, and to take that ball, however fast, unbalked by the bat or body of the player, is really very difficult. But what if we add—and how few, very few, can accomplish it!—taking the ball in spite of an unexpected bias or turn from the bat. Still, practice will do much where nature has done a little; but with modern bowling you want a man both “rough and ready.” Mr. Herbert Jenner was “the ready man;” so also are Messrs. Anson, Nicholson, and W. Ridding, and Box; but Wenman was ready and rough too. He had fine working qualities, and could stand a deal of pounding, day after day: others have had a short life and a merry one, and mere transient popularity; but, for wicket-keeping under difficulties, give me Wenman. At wicket-keeping, the men of labour ought to beat the men of leisure. Hard hands are essential: and, hard hands can only come from hard work. Wenman’s calling, that of a wheelwright and carpenter, is in his favour. “I found my hands quite seasoned,” writes an amateur, “after a two-month’s work at the oar.” Chatterton fears no pace in bowling. But Lockyer’s name now stands highest of all: the certainty and facility with which he takes Wisden’s bowling, both with right and left, can hardly be surpassed. We leave wicket-keepers to emulate Lockyer, especially in his every-day lasting and working qualities against fast bowling, for that is the difficulty. Like Wenman, he does not stand too near, so he is well placed for catches. Moreover, they both have weight and power—a decided advantage: a feather weight may be shaken. Winterton, of Cambridge, carries great weight with him at the wicket. This gives a decided advantage over a player of the weight of Mr. Ridding: albeit, in the Players’ Match in 1849, Mr. Ridding stumped Hillyer off Mr. Fellowes’s bowling, and that with an Off-ball nearly wide! Hammond was the great wicket-keeper of former days: but then, the bowling was often about Clarke’s pace. Browne, of Brighton, and Osbaldeston put wicket-keepers to flight; but the race reappeared in—the finest ever seen for moderate pace—Mr. Jenner, famed not only for the neatest stumping, but for the marvellous quantity of ground he could cover, serving, as a near Point, Leg, and Slip, as well as Wicket-keeper. Box’s powers, though he has always been a first-rate man, are rather limited to pace.—“Have me to bowl,” Lillywhite used to say, “Box to keep wicket, and Pilch to hit, and then you’ll see Cricket;” for Box is best with Lillywhite.—As to making mistakes as wicket-keeper, what mortal combination of flesh and blood can help it. One of the most experienced Long-stops, after many years at Lord’s and in the country, says, to take even one out of three of possible chances, has proved, in his experience, good average wicket-keeping; for, think of leg shooters! though Mr. Ridding could take even them wonderfully well.

“I have seen,” writes Mr. E. S. E. H., “Mr. C. Taylor—who was capital at running in, and rarely stumped out, having an excellent eye, and if the twist of the ball beat him it was enough to beat the wicket-keeper also—I have seen him, after missing a ball, walk quietly back to his ground, poor wicket-keeper looking foolish and vexed at not stumping him, and the ring, of course, calling him a muff.” Really, wicket-keepers are hardly used; the spectators little know that a twist which misses the bat, may as easily escape the hand.

Again, “the best piece of stumping I ever saw was done by Mr. Anson, in the Players’ Match, in 1843. Butler, one of the finest of the Nottingham batsmen, in trying to draw one of Mr. Mynn’s leg shooters, just lifted, for an instant, his right foot; Mr. Anson timed the feat beautifully, and swept the ball with his left hand into the wicket. I fancy a feat so difficult was never done so easily.”—“I also saw Mr. Anson, in a match against the Etonians, stump a man with his right, catch the flying bail with his left, and replace it so quickly that the man’s surprise and puzzle made all the fun: stumped out, though wicket seemingly never down!” Mr. Jenner was very clever in these things, skimming off one bail with his little finger, ball in hand, and not troubling the umpire. Once his friend, Mr. R. K., had an awkward trick of pulling up his trousers, which lifted his leg every time he had missed a ball: Mr. Jenner waited for his accustomed habit, caught him in the act, and stumped him. “A similar piece of fun happened in *Gentlemen of England v. Gentlemen of Kent* in 1845. A Kent player sat down to get wind, after a run, his bat in his ground but with seat of honour out, and for a moment let go the handle, and the wicket-keeper stumped him out. He was very angry, and said he never would play again: however, he did play the return match at Canterbury, where he was put out in precisely the same manner. Since which, like Monsieur Tonson, he has never been heard of more.”

That a fieldsman wants wits to his fingers’ ends, was shown by Martingell one day: being just too far to command a ball he gave it a touch to keep it up, and cried, “Catch it, Slip.” Slip, so assisted, reached the ball.

The great thing in Wicket-keeping is, for hand and eye to go together, just as with batting, and

what is exercise for the former, assists the latter. Any exercise in which the hand habitually tries to obey the eye, is useful for cricket; fielding improves batting, and batting improves fielding.

Twelve of the principal wicket-keepers of the last fifty years were all efficient Batsmen; namely, Hammond, Searle, Box, Wenman, Dorrington, C. Brown, Chatterton, Lockyer, with Messrs. Jenner, Anson, Nicholson, and Ridding. [232]

“How would you explain, sir,” said Cobbett, “that the player’s batting keeps pace with the gentleman’s, when we never take a bat except in a game?”—Because you are constantly following the ball with hand and eye together, which forms a valuable practice for judging pace, and time, and distance: not enough certainly to teach batting, but enough to keep it up. Besides, if you practise too little, most gentlemen practise too much, ending in a kind of experimental and speculative play, which proves—like gentleman’s farming—more scientific than profitable. Amateurs often try at too much, mix different styles, and, worse than all, *form conflicting habits*. The game, for an average, is the player’s game; because, less ambitious, with less excitement about favourite hits, of a simple style, with fewer things to think of, and a game in which, though limited, they are better grounded.

Amateurs are apt to try a bigger game than they could safely play with twice their practice. Many a man, for instance, whose talent lies in defence, tries free hitting, and, between the two, proves good for nothing. Others, perhaps, can play straight and fairly Off;—and, should not they learn to hit On also? Certainly: but while in a transition state, they are not fit for a county match; and some men are always in this transition state. Horace had good cricket ideas, for, said he, [233]

“Aut famam sequere, aut sibi convenientia finge.”

Either play for show off, and “that’s villanous,” says Hamlet, “and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it;” or, adopt a style you can put well together—and *sumite materiam—æquam viribus*, adopt a style that suits your capabilities; *cui lecta potenter erit res*; try at no more than you can do—*nec deseret hunc*,—and that’s the game to carry you through.

“A mistake,” said an experienced bowler, “in giving a leg ball or two, is not all clear loss; for, a swing round to the leg often takes a man off his straight play. To ring the changes on Cutting with horizontal bat, and forward play with a straight bat, and leg-hitting, which takes a different bat again, this requires more steady practice than most amateurs have either time or perseverance to learn thoroughly. So, one movement is continually interfering with the other.” [234]

CHAP. XI.

CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS.—MISCELLANEOUS.

William Beldham saw as much of cricket as any other man in England, from the year 1780 to about 1820. Mr. E. H. Budd and Caldecourt are the best of chroniclers from the days of Beldham down to George Parr. Yet neither of these worthies could remember any injury at cricket, which would at all compare with those “moving accidents of flood and field” which have thinned the ranks of Nimrod, Hawker, or Isaac Walton. A fatal accident in any legitimate game of cricket is almost unknown. Mr. A. Haygarth, however, kindly informed me that the father of George III. died from the effects of a blow from a cricket ball. His authority is Wraxall’s Memoirs:—

“Frederick, Prince of Wales, son of George II., expired suddenly in 1751, at Leicester House, in the arms of Desnoyers, the celebrated dancing master. His end was caused by an internal abscess that had long been forming in consequence of a blow which he received in the side from a cricket ball while he was engaged in playing at that game on the lawn at Cliefden House in Buckinghamshire, where he then principally resided. It did not take place, however, till several months after the accident, when a collection of matter burst and instantly suffocated him.” [235]

A solicitor at Romsey, about 1825, was, says an eye-witness, struck so hard in the abdomen that he died in a week of mortification. There is a rumour of a boy at school, about eighteen years since, and another boy about twenty-eight years ago, being severally killed by a blow on the head with a cricket ball. A dirty boy also, of Salisbury town, in 1826, having contracted a bad habit of pocketing the balls of the pupils of Dr. Ratcliffe, was hit rather hard on the head with a brass-tipped stump, and, by a strange coincidence, died, as the jury found, of “excess of passion,” a few hours after.

The most likely source of serious injury, is when a hitter returns the ball with all his force, straight back to the bowler. Caldecourt and the Rev. C. Wordsworth, severally and separately, remarked in my hearing that they had shuddered at cricket once, each in the same position, and each from the same hitter! Each had a ball hit back to him by that powerful hitter Mr. H. Kingscote, which whizzed, in defiance of hand or eye, most dangerously by. A similar hit, already described, by Hammond who took a ball at the pitch, just missed Lord F. Beauclerk’s head, and spoiled his nerve for bowling ever after. But, what if these several balls had really hit? who knows whether the respective skulls might not have stood the shock, as in a case which I witnessed in Oxford, in 1835; when one Richard Blucher, a Cowley bowler, was hit on the head by a clean half-volley, from the bat of Henry Daubeny—than whom few Wykehamists *used (fuit!)* to hit with better eye or stronger arm. Still “Richard was himself again” the very next day; for, we saw him with his head tied up, bowling at shillings as industriously as ever. Some skulls stand a great deal. Witness the sprigs of Shillelah at Donnibrook fair; still most indubitably tender is the face; [236]

as also—which *horresco referens*; and here let me tell wicket-keepers and long-stops especially, that a cricket jacket made long and full, with pockets to hold a handkerchief sufficiently in front, is a precaution not to be despised; though “the race of inventive men” have also devised a cross-bar india-rubber guard, aptly described in Achilles’ threat to Thersites, in the Iliad.^[2]

[2] Hom. Il. II. 262.

The most alarming accident I ever saw occurred in one of the many matches played by the Lansdown Club against Mr. E. H. Budd’s Eleven, at Purton, in 1835. Two of the Lansdown players were running between wickets; and good Mr. Pratt—*immani corpore*—was standing mid way, and hiding each from the other. Both were rushing the same side of him, and as one held his bat most dangerously extended, the point of it met his partner under the chin, forced back his head as if his neck were broken, and dashed him senseless to the ground. Never shall I forget the shudder and the chill of every heart, till poor Price—for he it was—being lifted up, gradually evinced returning consciousness; and, at length, when all was explained, he smiled, amidst his bewilderment, with his usual good-nature, on his unlucky friend. A surgeon, who witnessed the collision, feared he was dead, and said, afterwards, that with less powerful muscles (for he had a neck like a bull-dog) he never could have stood the shock. Price told me next day that he felt as if a little more and he never should have raised his head again.

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And what Wykehamist of 1820-30 does not remember R—— Price? or what Fellow of New College down to 1847, when

“Multis ille bonis flebilis occidit,”

has not enjoyed his merriment in the Common Room or his play on Bullingdon and Cowley Marsh? His were the safest hands and most effective fielding ever seen. To attempt the one run from a cover hit when Price was there, or to give the sight of one stump to shy at, was a wicket lost. When his friend, F. B. Wright, or any one he could trust, was at the wicket, well backed up, the ball, by the fine old Wykehamist action, was up and in with such speed and precision as I have hardly seen equalled and never exceeded. When he came to Lord’s, in 1825, with that Wykehamist Eleven which Mr. Ward so long remembered with delight, their play was unknown and the bets on their opponents; but when once Price was seen practising at a single stump, his Eleven became the favourites immediately; for he was one of the straightest of all fast bowlers; and I have heard experienced batsmen say, “We don’t care for his underhand bowling, only it is so straight we could take no liberties, and the first we missed was Out.” I never envied any man his sight and nerve like Price—the coolest practitioner you ever saw: he always looked bright, though others blue; and you had only to glance at his sharp grey eyes, and you could at once account for the fact that one stump to shy at, a rook for a single bullet, or the ripple of a trout in a bushy stream, was so much fun for R. Price.

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Some of the most painful accidents have been of the same kind—from collision; therefore I never blame a man who, as the ball soars high in air, and the captain of his side does not (as he ought if he can) call out “Johnson has it!” stops short, for fear of three spikes in his instep, or the buttons of his neighbour’s jacket forcibly coinciding with his own. Still, these are not distinctively the dangers of cricket: men may run their heads together in the street.

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The principal injuries sustained are in the fingers; though, I did once know a gentleman who played in spectacles, and seeing two balls in the air, he caught at the shadow, and nearly had the substance in his face. The old players, in the days of underhand bowling, played without gloves; and Bennet assured me he had seen Tom Walker, before advancing civilisation made man tender, rub his bleeding fingers in the dust. The old players could show finger-joints of most ungentle dimensions; and no wonder, for a finger has been broken even through tubular india-rubber. Still, with a good pair of cricket gloves, no man need think much about his fingers; albeit flesh will blacken, joints will grow too large for the accustomed ring, and finger-nails will come off. A spinning ball is the most mischievous; and when there is spin and pace too (as with a ball from Mr. Fellowes, which you can hear humming like a top) the danger is too great for mere amusement; for when, as in the Players’ Match of 1849, Hillyer plays a bowler a foot away from his stumps, and Pilch cannot face him—which is true when Mr. Fellowes bowls on any but the smoothest ground—why then, we will not say that any thing which that hardest of hitters and thorough cricketer does, is not cricket, but certainly it is anything but *play*.

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Some of the worst injuries of the hands occur rather in fielding than in batting. A fine player of the Kent Eleven, about three years ago, so far injured his thumb that one of the joints was removed, and he has rarely played since. Another of the best gentleman players broke one of the bones of his hand in putting down a wicket: but, strangest of all, I saw one of the Christchurch eleven at Oxford, in 1835, in fielding at Cover, split up his hand an inch in length between his second and third fingers: still, all was well in a few weeks.

Add to all these chances of war, the many balls which are flying at the same time at Lord’s and at the Universities, and other much frequented grounds, on a practising day. At Oxford you may see, any day in the summer, on Cowley Marsh, two rows of six wickets each facing each other, with a space of about sixty yards between each row, and ten yards between each wicket. Then, you have twelve bowlers, *dos à dos*, and as many hitters—making twelve balls and twenty-four men, all in danger’s way at once, besides bystanders. The most any one of these bowlers can do is to look out for the balls of his own set; whether hit or not by a ball from behind, is very much a matter of chance. A ball from the opposite row once touched my hair. The wonder is, that twelve balls should be flying in a small space nearly every day, yet I never heard of any man being hit in

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the face—a fact the more remarkable because there was usually free hitting with loose bowling. Pierce Egan records that, in 1830, in the Hyde Park Ground, Sheffield, nine double-wicket games were playing at once—TWO HUNDRED PLAYERS within six acres of grass! One day, at Lord's, just before the match bell rung after dinner, I saw one of the hardest hitters in the M.C.C. actually trying how hard he could drive among the various clusters of sixpenny amateurs, every man thinking it fun, and no one dangerous. An elderly gentleman cannot stand a bruise so well—matter forms or bone exfoliates. But then, an elderly gentleman,—bearing an inverse ratio in all things to him who calls him “governor,”—is the most careful thing in nature; and as to young blood, it circulates too fast to be overtaken by half the ills that flesh is heir to.

A well known Wykehamist player of R. Price's standing, was lately playing as wicket-keeper, and seeing the batsman going to hit Off, ran almost to the place of a near Point; the hit, a tremendously hard one, glanced off from his forehead—he called out “Catch it,” and it was caught by bowler! He was not hurt—not even marked by the ball. [242]

Four was scored at Beckenham, 1850, by a hit that glanced off Point's head; but the player suffered much in this instance.

A spot under the window of the tavern at Lord's was marked as the evidence of a famous hit by Mr. Budd, and when I played, Oxford v. Cambridge, in 1836, Charles, son of Lord F. Beauclerk, hitting above that spot elicited the observation from the old players. Beagley hit a ball from his Lordship over a bank 120 yards. Freemantle's famous hit was 130 yards in the air. Freemantle's bail was once hit up and fell back on the stump: Not out. A similar thing was witnessed by a friend on the Westminster Ground. “One hot day,” said Bayley, “I saw a new stump bowled out of the perpendicular, but the bail stuck in the groove from the melting of the varnish in the sun, and the batsman continued his innings.” I have seen Mr. Kirwan hit a bail thirty yards. A bail has flown forty yards.

I once chopped hard down upon a shooter, and the ball went a foot away from my bat straight forward towards the bowler, and then, by its rotary motion, returned in the same straight line exactly, like the “draw-back stroke” at billiards, and shook the bail off.

At a match played at Cambridge, a lost ball was found so firmly fixed on the point of a broken glass bottle in an ivied wall, that a new ball was necessary to continue the game. [243]

Among remarkable games of cricket, are games on the ice—as on Christchurch meadow, Oxford, in 1849, and other places. The one-armed and one-legged pensioners of Greenwich and Chelsea is an oft-repeated match.

Mr. Trumper and his dog challenged and beat two players at single wicket in 1825, on Harefield common, near Rickmansworth.

Female cricketers Southey deemed worthy of notice in his Common-place Book. A match, he says, was played at Bury between the Matrons and the Maids of the parish. The Matrons vindicated their superiority and challenged any eleven petticoats in the county of Suffolk. A similar match, it is noted, was played at West Tarring in 1850. Southey also was amused at five legs being broken in one match—but only wooden legs—of Greenwich pensioners.

Eleven females of Surrey were backed against Eleven of Hampshire, says Pierce Egan, at Newington, Oct. 2. 1811, by two noblemen for 500 guineas a side. Hants won. And a similar match was played in strict order and decorum on Lavant Level, Sussex, before 3000 spectators.

Matches of much interest have been played between members of the same family and some other club. Besides “the Twelve Cæsars,” the four Messrs. Walker and the Messrs. B Ridding have proved how cricket may run in a family, not to forget four of the House of Verulam. [244]

Pugilists have rarely been cricket players. “We used to see the fighting men,” said Beldham, “playing skittles about the ground, but there were no players among them.” Ned O'Neal was a pretty good player; and Bendigo had friends confident enough to make a p.p. match between him and George Parr for 50*l*. When the day came, Bendigo appeared with a lame leg, and Parr's friends set an example worthy of true cricketers; they scorned to play a lame man, or to profit by their neighbour's misfortunes.

In the famous Nottingham match, 1817, Bentley, on the All England side, was playing well, when he was given “run out,” having run round his ground. “Why,” said Beldham, “he had been home long enough to take a pinch of snuff.” They changed the umpire; but the blunder lost the match.

“Spiked shoes,” said Beldham, “were not in use in my country. Never saw them till I went to Hambledon.” “Robinson,” said old Mr. Morton, the dramatist, “began with spikes of a monstrous length, on one foot.” “The first notion of a leg guard I ever saw,” said an old player, “was Robinson's: he put together two thin boards, angle-wise, on his right shin: the ball would go off it as clean as off the bat, and made a precious deal more noise: but it was laughed at—did not last long. Robinson burnt some of his fingers off when a child, and had the handle of his bat grooved, to fit the stunted joints. Still, he was a fine hitter.” [245]

A one-armed man, who used a short bat in his right hand, has been known to make a fair average score.

SAWDUST.—Beldham, Robinson, and Lambert, played Bennett, Fennex, and Lord F. Beauclerk, a notable single wicket match at Lord's, 27th June, 1806. Lord Frederick's last innings was winning the game, and no chance of getting him out. His Lordship had then lately introduced sawdust when the ground was wet. Beldham, unseen, took up a lump of wet dirt and sawdust, and stuck it

on the ball, which, pitching favourably, made an extraordinary twist, and took the wicket. This I heard separately from Beldham, Bennett, and also Fennex, who used to mention it as among the wonders of his long life.

AS TO LONG SCORES, above one hundred in an innings rather lessens than adds to the interest of a game.

The greatest number recorded, with overhand bowling, was in M.C.C. v. Sussex, at Brighton, about 1844; the four innings averaged 207 each. In 1815, Epsom v. Middlesex, at Lord's, scored first innings, 476. Sussex v. Epsom, in 1817, scored 445 in one innings. Mr. Ward's great innings was 278, in M.C.C. v. Norfolk, 24th July, 1820, but with underhand bowling. Mr. Mynn's great innings at Leicester was in North v. South, in 1836. South winning by 218 runs. Mr. Mynn 21 (not out) and 125 (not out) against Redgate's bowling. Wisden, Parr, and Pilch, Felix, and Julius Cæsar, and John Lillywhite, have scored above 100 runs in one innings against good bowling. Wisden once bowled ten wickets in one innings: Mr. Kirwan has done the same thing.

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IN BOWLING.—The greatest feat ever recorded is this:—that Lillywhite bowled Pilch 61 balls without a run, and the last took his wicket. True, Clarke bowled Daniel Day, at Weymouth, 60 balls without a run, but then Daniel would hit at nothing. Clarke also bowled 64 balls without a run to Caffyn and Box, in Notts v. England in 1853, no doubt a great achievement; still, at slow bowling, these players have not their usual confidence: they had over pitched balls which they did not hit away. But Pilch was not the man to miss a chance, and the fact that he made no run from 61 balls speaks wonders as to what Lillywhite could do in his best day.

Mr. Marcon, at Attlebury, 1850, bowled four men in four successive balls. The Lansdown Club, in 1850, put the West Gloucestershire Club out for six runs, and of these only two were scored by hits—so ten ciphers! Eleven men last year (1850) were out for a run each; Mr. Felix being one. Mr. G. Yonge, playing against the Etonians, put a whole side out for six runs. A friend, playing the Shepton Mallet Club, put his adversaries in, second innings, for seven runs to tie, and got all out for five! In a famous Wykehamist match all depended on an outsider's making two runs, he made a hard hit; when, in the moment of exultation, "Cut away, you young sinner," said a big fellow; and lo! down he laid his bat, and did indeed cut away, but—to the tent! while the other side, amidst screams of laughter at the mistake, put down the wicket and won the match.

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In a B. Match, 1810, the B.s, scored second innings, only 6; and four of these were made at one hit, by J. Wells, a man given, though the first innings scored 137.

True, E. H. Budd was "*absent*," still the Bentleys, Bennett, Beldham and Lord Frederick Beauclerk were among the ten.

On the Surrey ground, 1851, had not an easy catch been missed, the Eleven of All England would have gone out for a run apiece.

The Smallest Score on record is that of the Paltiswick Club, when playing against Bury in 1824: their first innings was only 4 runs! Pilch bowled out eight of them. In their next innings they scored 46. Bury, first innings, 101.

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In a match at Oxford, in 1835, I saw the two last wickets, Charles Beauclerk and E. Buller, score 110 runs; and in an I.Z. match at Leamington, the last wickets scored 80.

THE MATCHES.—There have been only four of any note: the first was played at Woolwich, in 1818, M.C.C. v. Royal Artillery, with E. H. Budd, Esq.; the second, at Lord's, in 1839, M. C. C. v. Oxford; the third, at Lord's, between Winchester and Eton; the fourth at the Oval, in 1847, Surrey v. Kent. But at a scratch match of Woking v. Shiere, in 1818, at Woking, there was a tie each innings and all four innings the same number, 71!

AS TO HARD HITTING.—"One of the longest hits in air of modern days," writes a friend, "was made at Himley about three years since by Mr. Fellowes, confessedly one of the hardest of all hitters. The same gentleman, in practice on the Leicester ground, hit, clean over the poplars, one hundred long paces from the wicket: the distance from bat to pitch of ball may be fairly stated as 140 yards. This was ten yards further, I think, than the hit at Himley, which every one wondered at; though, the former was off slow lob in practice, the latter in a match. Mr. Fellowes once made so high a hit over the bowler's (Wisden's) head, that the second run was finished as the ball returned to earth! He was afterwards caught by Armitage, Long-field On, when half through the second run. I have also seen, I think, Mr. G. Barker, of Trinity, hit a nine on Parker's Piece. It took three average throwers to throw it up. Mr. Bastard, of Trinity, hit a ten on the same ground. Sir F. Heygate, this year, hit an eight at Leicester." When Mr. Budd hit a nine at Woolwich, strange to say, it proved a tie match: an eight would have lost the game. Practise clean hitting, correct position, and judgment of lengths with free arm, and the ball is sure to go far enough. The habit of hitting at a ball oscillating from a slanting pole will greatly improve any unpractised hitter. A soft ball will answer the purpose, pierced and threaded on a string.

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The most vexatious of all stupid things was done by James Broadbridge, in Sussex v. England, at Brighton, in 1827, one of the trial matches which excited such interest in the early days of overhand bowling. "We went in for 120 to win," said our good friend, Captain Cheslyn. "Now," I said, "my boys, let every man resolve on a steady game and the match is ours; when, almost at the first set off, that stupid fellow Jim threw his bat a couple of yards at a ball too wide to reach, and Mr. Ward caught him at Point! The loss of this one man's innings was not all, for the men went in disgusted; the quicksilver was up with the other side, and down with us, and the match was lost by twenty-four runs." But, though stupid in this instance, Broadbridge was one of the most artful dodgers that ever handled a ball. And once he practised for some match till he appeared to all the bowlers about Lord's to have reduced batting to a certainty: but when the

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time came, amidst the most sanguine expectations of his friends, he made no runs.

Now for Generalship: A manager had better not be a bowler, least of all a slow bowler, for he wants some impartial observer to tell him when to go on and when to change,—a modest man will leave off too soon; a conceited man too late. To say nothing of the effect of a change, so well known to gain, not only wickets, but catches (because the timing is different), it is too little considered that different bowlers are difficult to different men,—a very forward player, and one eager for a Cut, may respectively be *non-suited*, each by the bowling easiest to the other. A manager requires the greatest equanimity and temper, especially in managing his bowlers, on whom all depends. He should lead while he appears only to consult them, and never let them feel that the men are placed contrary to their wishes. By changing the best fieldmen into the busiest places, four or five good men appear like a good eleven. To put a man short slip who is slow of sight, and a man long leg who does not understand a long catch, may lose a match. In putting the batsmen in, it is a great point to have men in early who are likely to make a stand,—falling wickets are very discouraging. Also beware of the bad judges of a run; and match your men to the bowling, I have seen a man score twenty against one bowler who was at work two against another—keep your men in good spirits and good humour; if the game is against you, save all you can, and wait one of those wondrous changes that a single Over sometimes makes. Never despair till the last man's out. The M.C.C. in 1847 in playing Surrey followed their innings, being headed by 106; still they won the match by nine runs.

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The manager should always choose his own Eleven; and, we have already hinted that fielding, rather than batting, is the qualification. A good field is sure to save runs, though the best batsman may not make any. When all are agreed on the bowlers, I would leave the bowlers to select such men as they can trust. Then, in their secret conclave you will hear such principles of selection as these:—"King must be Point, Chatterton we cannot afford to put Cover unless you can ensure Wenman to keep wicket; Dean must be long-stop: he works so hard and saves so many draws; and I have not nerve to attack the leg stump as I ought to with any other man. We shall have three men at least against us whom we cannot reckon on bowling out; so if for Short-slip we have a Hillyer, and at leg such a man as Coates of Sheffield, we may pick these men up pretty easily." "But as to Sir Wormwood Scrubbs, our secretary vows he shall never get any more pine apples and champagne for our Gala days if we don't have him, and he is about our sixth bat." "Can't be helped, for, what with his cigar and his bad temper, he will put us all wrong; besides, we must have John Gingerley, whose only fault is chaffing, and these two men will never do together: then for Middle-wicket we have Young George." "Why, Edwards is quite as safe." "Yes; but not half as tractable. I would never bowl without George if I could have him; his eye is always on me, and he will shift his place for every ball in the Over, if I wish it. A handy man to put about in a moment just where you want him, is worth a great deal to a bowler." "Then you leave out Kingsmill, Barker, and Cotesworth? Why, they can score better than most of the tail of the Eleven!" "Yes; on practising days, with loose play, but, with good men against them, what difference can there be between any two men, when the first ripping ball levels both alike?"

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When taking the field, good humour and confidence is the thing. A general who expects every thing smooth, in dealing with ten fallible fellow-creatures, should be at once dismissed the service: he must always have some man he had rather change as Virgil says of the bees—

Semper erunt quarum mutari corpora malis;

but if you can have four or five safe players, join your influence with theirs, and so keep up an appearance of working harmoniously together. Obviously two bowlers of different pace, like Clarke and Wisden, work well together, as also a left-handed and right-handed batsman, like Felix and Pilch, whom we have seen run up a hundred runs faster than ever before or since;

Nunc dextrâ ingeminans ictus, nunc ille sinistrâ.

Never put in all your best men at first, and leave "a tail" to follow: many a game has been lost in this manner, for men lose confidence when all the best are out: add to this, most men play better for the encouragement that a good player often gives. And take care that you put good judges of a run in together. A good runner starts intuitively and by habit, where a bad judge, seeing no chance, hesitates and runs him out. If a good Off-hitter and a good Leg-hitter are in together, the same field that checks the one will give an opening to the other.

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Frequent change of bowlers, where two men are making runs, is good: but do not change good bowling for inferior, till it is hit; unless, you know your batsman is a dangerous man, only waiting till his eyes are open.

With a fine forward player, a near Middle-wicket or forward Point often snaps up a catch, when the Bowler varies his time; generally, a third Slip can hardly be spared.

If your Wicket-keeper is not likely to stump any one, make a Slip of him, provided you play a Short-leg; otherwise he is wanted at the wicket to save the single runs.

And if Point is no good as Point for a sharp catch, make a field of him. A bad Point will make more catches, and save more runs some yards back. Many a time have I seen both Point and Wicket-keeper standing where they were of no use. The general must place his men not on any plan or theory, but where each particular man's powers can be turned to the best account. We have already mentioned the common error of men standing too far to save One, and not as far as is compatible with saving Two.

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With a free hitter, a man who does not pitch very far up answers best; short leg-balls are not

easily hit. A lobbing bowler, with the Long-stop, and four men in all, on the On side, will shorten the innings of many a reputed fine hitter.

A good arrangement of your men, according to these principles, will make eleven men do the work of thirteen. Some men play nervously at first they come in, and it is so much waste of your forces to lay your men far out, and equally a waste not to open your field as they begin to hit.

We must conclude with comments on the Laws of the Game.

I. The ball. Before the days of John Small a ball would not last a match; the stitches would give way. To call for a new ball at the beginning of each innings is not customary now.

II. The bat. Here, the length of the blade of a bat may be any thing the player likes short of thirty-eight inches. As to the width, an iron frame was used in the old Hambledon Club as a gauge, in those primitive days when the Hampshire yeomen shaped out their own bats.

V. The popping crease must be four feet from the wicket, and parallel to it: unlimited in length, but not shorter than the bowling crease,—*unlimited* in this sense that it shall not be said the runner is out because he ran round his ground. [256]

The bowling crease is limited; because, otherwise, the batsman never could take guard; and umpires should be very careful to call "No Ball," if the bowler bowls outside the return crease.

The return, or crease, is not limited; because it is against a batsman's interest to run wide of his wicket; and a little latitude is requisite to prevent dangerous collision with the wicket-keeper.

VI. The wickets. Secretaries should provide a rule, or frame, consisting of two wooden measures, six feet eight inches long, and four feet apart, and parallel. Then, with a chain of twenty-two yards, the relative positions of the two wickets may be accurately determined.

IX. The bowler. "One foot on the ground." No man can deliver a ball with the foot not touching the ground in the full swing of bowling. So, if the foot is over the crease, there is no doubt of its being on the ground.

X. The ball must be bowled: "not thrown or jerked:" here there is not a word about "touching the side with the arm." It is left to the umpire to decide what is a jerk. We once heard an umpire asked, how could you make that out to be a jerk?

"I say it is a jerk because it is a jerk," was the sensible reply. "I know a jerk when I see one, and I have a right to believe my eyes, though I cannot define wherein a jerk consists." [257]

In a jerk there is a certain mechanical precision and curl of the ball wholly unlike fair bowling.

A throw may be made in two ways; one way with an arm nearly straight from first to last: this throw with straight arm requires the hand to be raised as high as the head, and brought down in a whirl or circle, the contrary foot being used as the pivot on which the body moves in the delivery. But the more common throw, under pretence of bowling, results from the hand being first bent on the fore-arm, and then power of delivery being gained by the sudden lash out and straightening of the elbow. It is a mistake to say that the action of the wrist makes a throw.

"In delivery" means some action so called: if the mere opening of the hand is delivery of the ball, then the only question is the height of the hand the moment it opens. But if, as we think, "delivery" comprehends the last action of the arm that gives such opening of the hand effect, then in no part of that action may the hand be above the shoulder.

Further, in case of doubt as to fair bowling, the umpire is to decide against the bowler; so the hand must be *clearly* not above the shoulder, and the ball as clearly not thrown, nor jerked. [258]

Now, as to high delivery as a source of danger, we never yet witnessed that kind of high bowling that admitted of a dangerous increase of speed in an angry moment. The only bowling ever deemed dangerous, has been clearly below the shoulder, and savouring more of a jerk, or of an underhand sling, or throw, than of the round-armed or high delivery. Such bowlers were Mr. Osbaldestone, Browne of Brighton, Mr. Kirwan, Mr. Fellowes, and Mr. Marcon, neither of whom, except on smooth ground, should we wish to encounter.

But, we have often been asked, do the law and the practice coincide? Is it not a fact that few round-armed bowlers are clearly below the shoulder? Undoubtedly this is the fact. The better the bowler, as we have already explained, the more horizontal and the fairer his delivery. Cobbett and Hillyer have eminently exemplified this principle; but amongst amateurs and all but the most practised bowlers, allowing, of course, for some exceptions, the law is habitually infringed. In a country match a strict umpire would often cry "no ball" to the bowlers on both sides, cramp their action, produce wide balls and loose bowling, and eventually, not to spoil the day's sport, the two parties would come to a compromise. And do such things ever happen? Not often. Because the umpires exercise a degree of discretion, and the law in the country is often a dead letter. Practically, the 10th law enables a fair umpire to prevent an undisguised and dangerous throw; but, at the same time, it enables an unfair umpire to put aside some promising player who is as fair as his neighbours, but has not the same clique to support him. [259]

What, then, would we suggest? The difficulty is in the nature of the case. To leave all to the umpire's discretion would, as to fair bowling, increase those evils of partiality, and, instead of an uncertain standard, we should have no standard at all. With fair umpires the law does as well as many other laws as it is; with unfair umpires no form of words would mend the matter. I can

never forget the remark of the late Mr. Ward:—"Cricketers are a very peaceably disposed set of men. We play for the love of play; the fairer the play the better we like it. Otherwise, so indefinite is the nature of round-arm bowling, that I never yet saw a match about which the discontented might not find a pretext for a wrangle." I am happy to add, in the year 1850, the M.C.C. passed a *resolution* to enforce the law of fair delivery. The violation of this law had, we know, become almost conventional; this convention the M.C.C. have now ignored in the strongest terms; they have cautioned their umpires, promised to support them in an independent judgment, and daily encourage them in the performance of their unpleasant duty. This is beginning at the right end. To expect a judge to do that which he believes will be the signal for his own dismissal is too much.

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The absurdity of having a law and breaking it, is obvious; so let me insist on a newer argument, namely, that "to indulge a bowler in an unfair delivery is mistaken kindness, for the fairest horizontal delivery, like Cobbett's and Redgate's, tends most to that spin, twist, quick rise, shooting and cutting, and that variety after the pitch in which effective bowling consists." A throw is very easy to play—as it comes down, so it bounds up: the batsman feels little credit due, and the spectator feels as little interest. The ball leaves the hand at once without any rotatory motion, and one ball of the same pitch and pace is like another. Very different is that life and vitality in the ball as it spins away from the skimming and low delivery of a hand like Cobbett's. The angle of reflection is not to be calculated by the angle of incidence one in ten times, with such spinning balls. That rotatory motion which makes a bullet glance instead of penetrating—that causes the slowly-moving top to fly off with increased speed when rubbing against the wall—that determines the angle from the cushion, and either the "following" or the "draw back" of a billiard ball—that same rotation round its own axis, or the same spin, which a cricket ball receives in proportion as the hand is horizontal and the bowling lawful, determines the variety of every ball of a similar pace and pitch, at least when the ground is true.

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Whether precision and accuracy are as easily attained with a low as with a high delivery, is another question; neither should I be surprised nor sorry if fair delivery necessitated a wider wicket. A higher wicket would favour rather rough ground than scientific bowling; but a wider wicket would do justice to that spin and twist, which often is the means of missing the wicket which with better luck might have been levelled. Amateurs play cricket for recreation—as a pleasure, not a business—and experience shows that any alteration which would encourage the practice of bowling would greatly improve cricket. In country matches, bowlers stipulate for four balls or six; why not make matches to play with a wicket of eight inches, or even twelve? I had rather see a ball go anywhere than into the long-stop's hands, or into the batsman's face. So, give us fair bowling and a wider wicket, and let amateurs have the gratification of seeing the bowlers, on whom the science of the game and the honour of victory chiefly depends, no longer "given" men to play the game for them, but the fair representatives of their own club or their own county.

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XI. "He may require the striker at the wicket from which he is bowling, to stand on that side of it which he may direct."

Query. Can a bowler give guard for one side of the wicket and bowl the other? No law (though law XXXVI. may apply) plainly forbids it; still, no gentleman would ever play with such a bowler another time.

XII. "If the bowler shall toss the ball over the striker's head." As to wide balls, some think there should be a mark, making the same ball wide to a man of six feet and to a man of five. With good umpires, the law is better as it is. Still, any parties can agree on a mark for wide balls, if they please, before they begin the game.

"Bowl it so wide." These words say nothing about the ball pitching more or less straight and turning off afterwards: the distance of the ball when it passes the batsman is the point at issue.

XVI. Or if the "ball be held before it touch the ground." Query; is it Out, if a ball is caught rolling back off the tent? If the ball striking the tent is, by agreement, so many runs, then the ball is dead and a man cannot therefore be out. Otherwise, I should reason that the tent, being on the ground, is as part of the ground. By the spirit of the law it is *not out*, by the letter *out*. But, to avoid the question, the better plan would be not to catch the ball, and disdain to win a match except by good play.

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XVIII. "Or, if in striking at the ball, he hit down his wicket."—

"In striking," not in running a notch, however awkwardly.

XIX. "Or, if under pretence of running, or otherwise."

"Or otherwise;" as, for instance, by calling out, purposely to baulk the catcher.

XX. "Or, if the ball be struck, and he wilfully strike it again."

"Wilfully strike it again." This obviously means, when a man blocks a ball, and afterwards hits it away to make runs. A man may hit a ball out of his wicket, or block it hard. The umpire is sole judge of the striker's intention, whether to score or to guard.

This law was, in one memorable instance, applied to the case of T. Warsop, a fine Nottingham player, who, in a match at Sheffield in 1822, as he was running a notch, hit the ball to prevent it coming home to the wicket-keeper's hands. Clarke, who was then playing, thinks the player was properly given out. Certainly he deserved to be out but old laws do not always fit new offences, however flagrant.

XXI. "With ball in hand." The same hand.

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“Bat (in hand);” that is, not thrown.

XXIII. “If the striker touch.” This applies to the Nottingham case better than Law XX.; but neither of these laws contemplated the exact offence. A ball once ran up a man’s bat, and spun into the pocket of his jacket; and as he “touched” the ball to get it out of his pocket, he was given out. The reply of Mr. Bell on the subject was, the player was out for *touching* the ball—he might have shaken it out of his pocket. This we mention for the curiosity of the occurrence.

XXIV. Or, if with any part of his person, &c.

A man has been properly given out by stopping a ball with his arm below the elbow. Also a short man, who stooped to let the ball pass over his head, and was hit in the face, was once given out, as before wicket.

“From it;” that is, the ball must pitch in a line, not from the hand, but from wicket to wicket.

Much has been said on the Leg-before-Wicket law.

Clarke and others say that a round-arm bowler can rarely hit the wicket at all with a ball not over-pitched, unless it pitch out of the line of the wickets. If this is true, a ball that has been pitched straight “would *not* have hit it;” and a ball that “would have hit it,” could not have been “pitched straight;” and therefore, it is argued the condition “in a straight line from it (the wicket)” should be altered to “in a straight line from the bowler’s hand.”

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And what do we say?

Bring the question to an issue thus: stretch a thin white string from the leg-stump of the striker’s wicket to the off-stump of the bowler’s wicket; and let any round-armed bowler (who does not bowl “over the wicket”) try whether good length balls, which do not pitch outside of the said string, will hit the wicket regularly, that is, of their common tendency and not as “a break.”

My firm belief is, that this experiment (with a bowler and a string) will convince any one that the two conditions of being out leg-before-wicket (“straight pitch,” and “would have hit”) cannot, except by accident, be fulfilled by an ordinary round-armed bowler; and if so, the law of leg-before-wicket should require that the ball pitch straight not from the bowler’s wicket, but straight from the bowler’s hand.

Objection. “This would make the umpire’s task too difficult: you would thus make him guess what was straight from the hand, but he can actually see what is straight from the wicket.”

Answer. This difficulty is an imaginary one. An umpire must be blind indeed, not to discern when the ball keeps its natural line from the hand to the wicket, and when it pitches out of that line, and then abruptly turns into it. Besides, as the law now stands, the umpire has the same difficulty and the same discretion, for how can he decide the condition, “would have hit,” without making allowance for the wide arm, and the “working” of the ball, and bringing the said objectionable *guessing* into requisition? The judgment now proposed for the umpire, is no difficulty at all, but the judgment he has already to exercise is a great difficulty indeed. How often is a batsman convinced, that the ball that hit him before wicket was making so abrupt a turn, that it must have missed the wicket, and, but for that abrupt turn, would never have hit him at all. I do not believe that of the men given out “leg before wicket,” one in three are deservedly out. But, often do we see a wicket saved by the leg and pads, when both the skill of the bowler and the blunder of the batsman deserved falling stumps.

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With these observations, I must leave my friends to the free exercise of their heads and hands, feet and faculties, patience and perseverance, holding myself up to them as an example in one respect only, that I am not too old to learn, and will thankfully receive any contribution, whether from pen or pencil, that is calculated to enrich or to illustrate a work, which, I am but too happy to acknowledge, the community of cricketers have adopted as their own.

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