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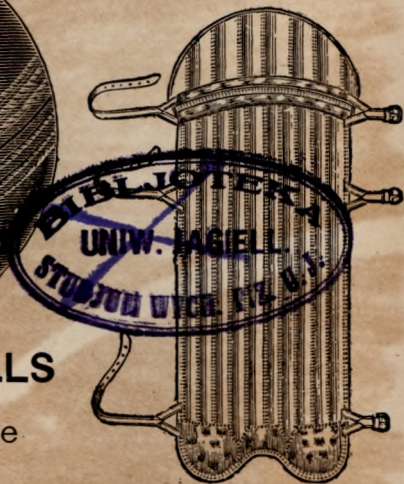
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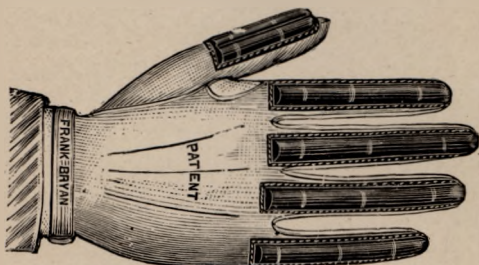
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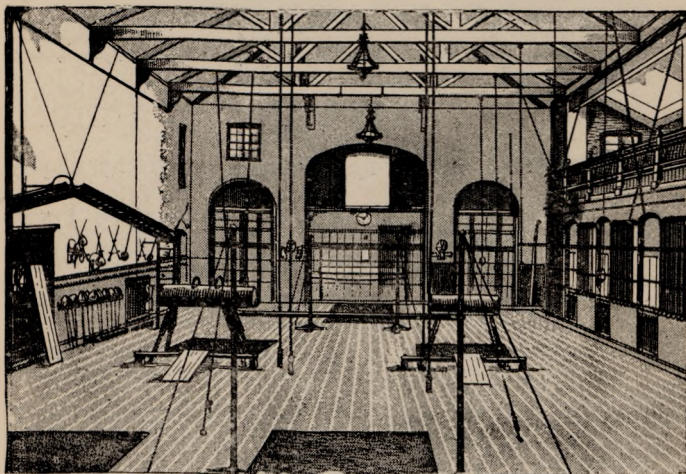
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P R E F A C E.

THIS little book has been written in the middle of hard and absorbing work in quite other subjects. Its aim is not to be historical, nor purely theoretical, but to set forth clearly some principles which may be useful to young players learning, and to older players teaching, cricket. Further, such hints as are easily accessible to ordinary readers in other books, have been very lightly dealt with; others, which I see reason to believe are insufficiently appreciated, have been enforced at some length.

I must acknowledge my obligation to Mr. A. Tabor, of Cheam, for a valuable suggestion or two in the chapter on batting; and it would be difficult indeed for any Etonian to write on cricket without feeling how much he owed to the example, the teaching, and practical judgment of Mr. R. A. H. Mitchell.

ETON, *March*, 1890.

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W KRAKOWIE.

CRICKET.

CHAPTER I.

CRICKET MANAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS.

THE subject of this chapter is the problem of planting and keeping alive cricket in schools. Since schools differ *toto caelo* from each other in numbers and system, it will hardly be expected that any observations will be comprehensive enough to embrace all. Still, it is hoped that, by keeping in view such questions as most naturally arise wherever boys play together, some hints may be given not unworthy of their attention.

The first essential in the fostering of cricket in schools, it is generally thought, is to have some one on the spot whose authority is considerable, and whose judgment in the game is universally respected. In many schools this is a master; in others, an outsider interested in the place pays frequent visits, and gives the boys the benefit of his experience and coaching. Another alternative is to maintain a professional on the spot, who, invested with almost plenary powers, manages the order and arrangement of games, matches, and practice, as he thinks best. Of these different plans, it is difficult to say which is the best, unless the

qualities of the individuals are known beforehand; but, *cæteris paribus*, a master seems on the whole to be in a better position than any one else to handle the many delicate questions that arise concerning the amount to be left to the captain's own decision, the relation between play and work, the managing of professionals and grounds, and so forth. Certain it is that a professional bowler engaged at a school, if he be a man of good manners, and willing to speak dogmatically, will have a strange influence over the young cricketers, which would be very absurd were it not somewhat injurious. Not only cricket, but many matters, some of them tinged with the associations of low life, will the boys look at through the professional's eyes; and it seems undesirable that this functionary should be invested with an even larger influence than the possession of a peculiar gift, and of strong, though ill-balanced, opinions will inevitably secure for him.

Supposing, then, that a satisfactory "coach" is secured, it remains to inquire into the scope and limits of cricket coaching. What is to be expected from it? Excessive hopes are often entertained by young cricketers of the good they will get from the advice of an experienced teacher; and just as sick people often repose in a doctor, whom they must know is very much in the dark as to the nature of their complaint, the most unhesitating confidence, which, though ill-grounded, is by itself beneficial, so it would be unwise to seriously undermine the faith that boys have in coaching, since it acts upon them as a useful stimulus, and, like the doctor's advice, it ought to be obeyed, because it is the best thing of the kind to be got. Still it is well to point out that neither as to batting nor bowling can a great deal be done. Fielding is another matter. But suppose a batsman is being coached, and

gets bowled out, the best teacher in the world can very often say nothing beyond that he put his bat on one side of the ball ; or that he played back instead of forward. But an instant's reflection will show largely the correction of these grave faults depends on the boy's eye, and how little real help he gets from being told what he has done wrong. Of course he ought to be told it ; but the stress of the struggle only then begins for him. But in the department of fielding an immense deal might be done, and it is to the consideration of that important fact that we must now address ourselves.

It is, I believe, pretty generally admitted that a tradition of good fielding may be established in a school, and that there are one or two schools, such as a Winchester, where good fielding has for years been the rule rather than the exception. It would be well to state clearly what this admission implies. It implies that fielding is more or less an acquired art ; certainly more so than batting and bowling. No one has ever seriously spoken of a batting or bowling tradition existing in any school or institution. This clearly is because we know too well that, even if a school be blessed, as Uppingham once was, with the simultaneous appearance of four first-rate batsmen, there is absolutely no reason to suppose that the next generation will be able to maintain their high standard, however eagerly they may emulate their example. Again, we all know that there is something in base-ball which imparts a remarkable power of fielding, but no results at all comparable to this have been observed in batting and bowling. It is true that the Australians, when they first came over to England, were much inferior in batting to what they subsequently became, and their progress was ascribed to the influence of the English example. This may be granted ; but the

fact is that the 1878 eleven was composed of men of unusual batting capabilities, who were singularly ignorant of the most important rules, and could not fail to profit by watching and imitating the greatest English players. But that soon came to an end, whereas a tradition of fielding is to some extent a permanent phenomenon, and acts upon boys at one school so that they manifest year by year their superiority to other boys who presumably begin their school-life in no way less fitted to run, stoop, and throw. That is to say, a certain stimulus, which resides, so to speak, in the atmosphere of one school, produces this result on this one department of the game, and not to any appreciable degree on any other.

This inference, moreover, is corroborated by other considerations. Unless some special efforts are made, or some special stimulus exists to maintain a good tradition of fielding, it is pretty clear that the standard will be below what it ought to be, simply because it is to a good many players the dullest part of the game—that is to say, the particular department of fielding where stimulus most tells, viz. the ground-fielding, including running after the ball, is to any but a really good fieldsman a tamer affair than batting or bowling. Catching is another matter. At present I am only treating of ground-fielding. In addition to this patent fact, it is to be noted that at most schools very little fielding practice, strictly speaking, is insisted on, whereas a great deal of time and real energy is given both to batting and bowling. Again, even if an hour or so is now and again given to fielding, it should be remembered that each individual boy gets far less to do than if he were expending the same time on batting or bowling. A cricket practice in most schools means hard work in batting and bowling, and very easy work indeed in fielding. The same

thing exactly might be said of an ordinary game or match. I hope that the reader will find no difficulty in granting these propositions when he has read on a little further.

To sum up, then we find that though apparently a good fielder is born, not made, yet, owing to certain influences, a tradition of good fielding exists in certain schools, proving that boys who are not above the average in cricket ability can be got to field better than others; that, moreover, in other schools so little fielding training is carried on, as to make it easy to understand why the standard in this, the least exciting department of the game, should be lower than it ought to be. It remains now to investigate what the nature of this fielding stimulus or tradition is, how it may be brought into operation, and what its effect might be expected to be.

In the first place, we may be quite sure that in teaching boys to field, imitation must be an important agent. Hence it comes that a fielding tradition is much more easy to maintain than to set going. A good cricketing master can show boys what good batting and good bowling is; but, alas! he can in fielding very seldom do more than tell what it ought to be, or perhaps, in his own case, what it used to be. *Eheu! fugaces*, and the subtle bodily change, known as ossification of sinews, is enough to account for a certain reserve of demeanour on the part of masters in the field. Hence, if an example is to be set, it must be set by the boys to each other. The most sensible thing to do is to select the most promising fielder and train him. It is worth remarking that, however supple his limbs are, unless he has seen some first-class fielding (and if he has seen any he is better off than most) he will have no idea what is expected of him. The acrobatic movements of a fine cover-point do not come by nature, though there may be a

native aptitude for them. A boy will accordingly stand at cover-point and watch a ball go past him which he genuinely believes to be out of his reach; when all the time, if he had really gone at it with a will, and lost no time at the start, he might quite well have secured it.

Again, unless strong measures are taken, the school-fieldsmen will stand on their heels, while the ball is being hit; and this is generally the cause of that heart-sickening want of life—that imperturbable middle-aged decorum which is so often to be noticed among boy-cricketers of seventeen, eighteen, nineteen years of age, and is enough, when seen, to make old cricketers weep. But not to stand on the heels requires effort and stimulus; and it is astonishing how often you may make the effort, and reap no reward; the ball doesn't come. But when it does, what a change! The leap, the determination that the batsman shall not score, the racing after the ball, are all part of the same *dash* which must begin from the toes, not from the heel. Now some of these early principles can be taught to a boy by taking him singly, and throwing or hitting the ball, not too hard, either at him or to one side just within his utmost reach; and, by constant encouragement and exhortation, the trainer may induce him again and again to do violence to his propriety, in the first place, and then to stretch his sinews and curve his backbone till he finds himself capable of a brilliancy which he never before suspected. The exercise is terrific, and ten minutes *per diem* are amply sufficient. It is best to take only one at a time. No one can guess the improvement that is sure to ensue if this *régime* is faithfully observed. Why should it be supposed that dash in fielding should be within the reach of only a few? Consider the years of special effort required to make an acrobat. Why, then, shouldn't a few minutes a day make

all the difference to a young fellow's joints in the cricket-field?

I assume, then, that with proper care one or two of the most lissom youngsters can be made into really good fields, and that the example will spread. But a great deal more is required. Under the head of stimulus we must consider the special influences required to induce a boy habitually to "field up," in other words, to really do his best. Now, before this can be inculcated with success, the importance of keenness in fielding must be fully realized. The reason why this part of the game requires so much attention is that a great deal of the successful fielding we hear of or see is the result of determination and resolve. A deep field is standing with his whole body ready to jump in any direction that may be required. There comes a catch, but it is very doubtful if he can get to it; only because he was ready to start he does so, and perhaps the best bat on the side walks home; or, owing to the same fact, he again and again saves a ball from going to the boundary. Now, if this is the case with a deep field, how much more with cover-point and other "save one" fields! Whenever cover-point or mid-off cover an unexpected ball, it may be that they save three or four runs at once, but it is certain that they prevent the batsmen subsequently attempting a good many which they could certainly run, were they not afraid. The aggregate of runs thus saved is considerable; and the covering of balls only just within reach is largely dependent on the being ready to start.

If any one doubts this let me ask him if he starts for a hundred yards' race leaning forward, with his muscles braced, or standing still like a sentry or a policeman. Everybody knows that a really good start in a short race means a yard or two to the good; and in fielding it would

mean a good deal, though not so much, as the direction in which to move is not to be ascertained previous to the moment of starting. Again, nothing is more common than for mid-off, short-leg, third man, and cover-point to have to race after a tolerably strong stroke, which goes between the fields and is worth two or three runs. In every long innings there are very many of these. I will venture to say that the difference between an active man's greatest speed and average running would mean one run saved on each of seven such hits out of ten. In other words, instead of scoring thirty the batsman would score twenty-three; and it will be found that most of those who jeer at this assertion have a very insufficient idea of what running means, and have never reflected that the spectacle of a fieldsman running at top speed, as if a mad terrier were yapping at his calves, is none too common; and that the above estimate assumes full speed, and no merely respectable trot over the sward. But full speed means determination, resolve, eagerness to save the run; and these are just the qualities which young fieldsmen by nature are without.

How to maintain this eagerness is a tough problem. Interest in the games or matches is of course essential; and to secure this, schools adopt the plan of varying pick-up games with house or dormitory matches. A good deal might be written on this subject, but we are hardly yet in a position to give any decided opinion on the relation which one sort of game ought to bear to the other. One thing seems clear. In most schools to set house against house or dormitory against dormitory, is a sure and certain way of provoking interest. A glance at boys playing in these, and at others playing in ordinary pick-up games, will detect the difference in the zest and keenness of the combatants. But the question cannot be settled off-hand by merely instituting

house-matches *in perpetuo*. The contests for first place would be settled before the end of the season, and, even if this difficulty were obviated by the expedient of a list in order of merit—a not uncommon system,—a want of variety would be felt if the same sort of matches were continually being played. Added to which there must be games among the first twenty-two in the school, to settle the first eleven ; and this would destroy the house-matches. A kind of sham house-match, with the chief representatives playing elsewhere in the “swell” game, is not uncommon, and seems to work well. Anyhow the present custom is to have a considerable number of pick-up games intercalated among house contests. These games are arranged according to ciubs which represent different portions of the school, so that, roughly speaking, it may be said that games divide boys by age, house-matches by houses or dormitories.

Now, as the chief difficulty is to maintain an interest in ordinary games throughout one season, one recommendation may be made with some assurance. The players should be encouraged to compete for colours to wear, which need consist of nothing further than a cap of well-marked hue. There is no reason to underrate the power of this enticement. Human beings have ever been addicted to ornament, and some have thought that great wars have been fought for very little else than the difference between one colour and another. It is quite certain that the authorization of caps for proficiency in cricket does wonders ; and it is a stimulus quite innocent enough to be worth trying. Before experiment there will be croaking and dark forebodings ; but afterwards it is very doubtful if any one can prove mischief. Care must be taken to avoid expense ; and much will be left to the discretion of the cricketing master as to superintending in any way the presentation of these colours. Boys will show

simply astounding want of judgment in their selection of players, and the principle of popularity will be allowed undue weight. Nevertheless, a rough justice is somehow generally attained, and it is unquestionably a valuable piece of responsibility for a young captain to be entrusted with. When flagrant favouring seems to be going on, a judicious hint to the captain of the school eleven—in whose hands the correction power ought to be—will generally set matters right.

By some such expedients as these it can be provided that a certain proportion of the ordinary club games will not be wanting in interest, nor furnish occasions for slipshod fielding and general lounging. Germane to this is the further question whether cricket should be compulsory or not, in the same sort of way as football is. This question need not, in a work like the present, be treated from the point of view of general education. It is here merely to be discussed as far as it affects cricket. Now, there is one grand distinction between cricket and football, which at once offers a practical objection to the former being compulsorily played. One game is played in cold weather, the other in hot. Further, it should be mentioned that compulsion in games exists in order to compel the unwilling, and presumably the less efficient players, to take part in the game; these being the very ones who are not stimulated by any prospect of distinction. Now, what is the comparative effect of compulsion in the two games on this class? In summer you may force them to the field, but you won't get them to play. You may fit them out with pads, bats, and balls, but they will none the less lie on the grass and eat biscuits when the sun is high; and, after all, England is a free country. But turn a pack of lethargic boys loose in a paddock, over which the March winds are gaily sweeping, and no sooner have they

taken off their coats than they must bestir themselves to keep body and soul together, and, whatever else goes on, it is unquestionable that they run here and there and generally pursue the ball in default of any more exciting quest. The upshot of which is that compulsory football attains its object while compulsory cricket is generally a failure, at least as far as the interests of the game are concerned. No other objection to the system can be urged of equal cogency; and it appears that in some schools the compulsion, after all, works fairly well, though it never can be thoroughly successful. Disciplinary and other reasons will often explain its continuance, but as far as the promotion of genuine interest in the games is concerned, it cannot be thought fit to be named in the same breath with the giving of colours, or with the due intercalation of house-matches.

But fielding is not to be learnt only by individual training combined with regular games. It ought to be possible to devise a means of a social practice of fielding, which, without involving the waste of time of ordinary match fielding, would insure to each individual something to do, and some stimulus to do it. Before making suggestions we may consider some prevailing methods of trying to fulfil the idea of social fielding practice. There are three.

The first is the combination of fielding practice with batting, which consists in those boys who are unemployed in either batting or bowling standing vaguely here and there, and returning the ball to the bowler whenever it is hit in their direction. This, however, is not really practice at all, but more like a lounge, and may be dismissed without further remark.

The second is the attempt to train each fieldsman in his own place, by placing the eleven round a double-wicket pitch exactly as if a game were being played. Two batsmen then

go in, and hit as far as they can to each in turn, running tip-and-run fashion, so as to practice the quick return to the wicket-keep. This is an honest but very ineffectual attempt to meet the difficulty. The fields are being taught something when the ball goes to them ; but in real life it is found that this is just what it won't do. Since a skilled batsman cannot command the ball sufficiently, each man gets far too little to do, and often the strokes have something artificial about them, and unlike the real thing. Still, for fields favourably placed, such as cover-point, mid-off, and mid-on, the tip-and-run plan is undoubtedly useful, and should be occasionally practised. But the real objection is that only eleven boys can be employed at once, and very likely there is not room for another such costly expenditure of space as would be required to provide for the next batch of players, the second and third elevens.

The third method is for some one who can give the ball a good larrup to stand a long way off from a semi-circle of fields, and hit balls to them in succession. Here, again, while they are receiving each ball they are learning something, and good is done ; but (1) the hits off the hand are not like hits off bowling ; (2) all the fields are reduced to an unnatural uniformity, cover-point and short-slip being made to stop the sort of hits which only the deep fields get ; (3) the objection again holds good that each man gets too little to do ; (4) there is no practice for throwing-in ; (5) in most grounds, while this is going on, the batting practice is seriously interfered with.

In short, if combined fielding practice, *i.e.* that kind of practice which exercises a whole eleven, at least, together, is to be arranged at all successfully, certain conditions must be fulfilled which the above-named methods violate.

In making the following suggestion I have kept these conditions in view throughout.

It is quite possible for the first two or even three elevens of the school to practice together, so that either two boys are batting side by side at two nets, or four, two back to back with two. Probably the arrangements at most schools would not require more than two wickets to be going at a time. Now the ordinary usage is for each batsman to be enclosed by an off-net and leg-net, or, at least, to play with one net behind the stumps and one between him and the next player; the only fielding that is done is by a few casuals who pick up the ball when it comes their way. Supposing, then, that only the net between two wickets were retained, the necessity would arise for fieldsmen behind each wicket. One wicket, moreover, requires all the off-fields, the other all the on-fields. On these simple facts depends the whole arrangement. As early in the season as possible those players who will probably occupy certain definite posts in the first eleven should accustom themselves to occupying those posts during the time their comrades are practising batting: the off-fields ranging themselves with reference to the off-wicket, the on-fields with reference to the on-wicket. Behind each wicket there would be a long-stop as well as, if thought advisable, a wicket-keep.

If the batting practice continued for a long time, to prevent monotony the fieldsmen would, after an interval, change to the place they would occupy in a match in alternate overs, *e.g.* long-leg would move across to mid-off, or the country and the country fields come over to short-slip and third man. But in general it would be well not to confine the boys too strictly to their allotted posts, since a well-trained cricketer ought to be able to field well

anywhere. But there are one or two places where scarcely any one can field really well, except by dint of constant familiarity and practice—notably point, short-slip, and third man. So, naturally, the school representatives chosen for these places would be careful to occupy them in practice. Others might interchange at more or less frequent intervals. But the great desideratum must always be secured, that, instead of loafing about in purposeless *ennui*, the onlookers should be *doing* something, occupying a definite place in the field; and it would be to their interest to keep their attention fixed on the ball, to learn its motions, to anticipate its sinuosities,—in short, to show zeal, and field properly, since by doing so they would improve day by day.

Especially in regard to the three difficult places above named would the advantage of this system appear. For short-slip, for instance, familiarity is enormously important; and the benefit of turning any bad or timid field into a long-stop *pro tem.* would be considerable. An hour at that, with the prospect, in case of carelessness, of either being rapped on the tibia, or of running after a bye, would turn many a poor sievelike mid-off into a good robust field; and, of course, whoever was managing the practice would be careful to temper the wind to the shorn lamb.

Another advantage that might then be secured would be the opportunity offered to various players to learn wicket-keeping. The prevailing neglect of wicket-keeping is a gross folly. First as regards those who are to be regular wicket-keepers, why do they never practise? Their art is every whit as difficult as batting, and it is astonishing how its supreme importance to the efficiency of an eleven is overlooked. There is probably no hope of getting a really good man out on a good wicket, which can be compared to the chance of his sending a catch to the wicket-keeper before his eye is in.

Sometimes these chances are missed, and no one notices anything ; but even of those noticed the number is enormous, far greater than that which any other single field either holds or drops,—indeed, on hard smooth wickets, almost as great as that of all the other fields put together. And yet an eleven will go smiling into the field without a wicket-keep! Everybody thinks it will come right somehow ; so it does, but the match is lost first.

Of course the regular wicket-keeper's *practice* of his art must be limited by consideration for his hands. Even allowing for this, it is probable that he would gain if he devoted some time every day merely to taking the slow balls, and watching the fast ones. I repeat that familiarity with the motion of the ball is enormously important. But every member of any team would gain if he were taught how to keep wicket in early youth. In the first place it certainly helps the eye in batting. The problem of judging pace, pitch, and break is exactly the same in both cases. Next, it teaches sureness of hand in fielding. A field who has learnt wicket-keeping must find any catch, especially if it does not involve running, mere child's play compared with a chance behind the sticks. It is impossible that any such continuous exercise of hand and eye of the most subtle description could be anything but valuable to the general quickness and sureness both of fielding and batting. Lastly, even if all the eleven do not learn how to keep wicket, there ought always to be one or more ready to take the place of the regular man, in case of injury or absence.

It remains to notice a possible objection or two. First, there is no provision made for throwing-in. This is true, though at times the fields could throw in as if in a match, but certainly this could be only occasional. The truth is, that throwing-in must be practised specially by two or

three players together in a remote corner of the field, and it must not be forgotten that the above proposal is not to be regarded as supplementing such individual practice, but only as a means of utilizing for fielding purposes the large amount of time now devoted to batting practice by itself. More serious by far is the difficulty that in many schools the exact number who may be practising at any given time cannot be fixed, and the symmetry of the system breaks down unless the precise requirement of men is obtained. But the system suggested is not only symmetrical; it is elastic to any extent. Supposing there are eight boys present (and short of this any social fielding becomes impossible), one will be batting, two will be bowling. The remaining five, instead of trying to cover all the ground, will be given, say only the off-side places, the net covering the on-side. Or two nets could be used, and there would be three or four fields behind the wicket, and one overhead: and so on. The elasticity consists in the use of more nets where necessary to reduce the number of fields. On the other hand, where more than seventeen or eighteen have to be provided for, another practice-wicket would have to be set up at a distance, with one, two, or three nets, according to the number of the overflow. Of course, if it is quite impossible to provide for this space, there is nothing to be done but agitate for more playground. Cricket can neither be played nor learnt without good large stretches of green grass, and if such are not provided it is not the fault of this suggestion.

A few words only will be necessary on the subject of catching. The usual method of hitting big high catches to a pack of fieldsmen a long way off is not bad fun, and is of some use to those who are to be deep fields. It ought to teach them how to judge high hits, and how best to hold

their hands, since it seems that each person must settle this for himself. But as to ordinary catching, it is pretty plain from the example of the American base ball players that we have a good deal to learn. It may be doubted whether a real increase of agility, consequent on standing ready for a leap in any direction, would not materially increase the number of brilliant catches every year. If the difference between the two classes of players is due to any other cause, I would hazard the conjecture that the base-ball being very different from the cricket-ball as to the distribution of its weight and the nature of its flight, may partially account for the certainty and brilliancy of the American catching.

English players of the present day are, moreover, under special disadvantages in the matter of catching. Everybody knows that a long innings means a frequent recurrence of this position of affairs—batsmen growing keener and more confident, fieldsmen losing heart and vigour; as was pathetically put into words by one long since dead, who had scouted out for some three hundred odd runs, and towards the end observed, "I am very tired, and very 'ungry, and wish I was 'ome." Now, when things are like this, the batsman is learning new strokes, gaining experience and improving as a player every ten minutes: but all the fieldsmen are learning how to field badly; they are losing spring, they can't keep up their pluck, and when a catch comes they drop it. Beyond question, this is a frequent cause of missing catches. The worst of it is that a player who has missed one catch in an important match will very likely miss another, since this art is largely dependent on nerve. Hence it is not only when a fieldsmen "wishes himself 'ome" that he is likely to drop catches, but at other times also.

The captain of a side can do something to help this



state of things by removing for a time a country field to some place nearer in, where his unsettled nerves will be less taxed. Again, something may be done by getting young fieldsmen to see that, as long as they are playing in cold weather, they are sure to miss catches. When a ball is certain to sting, the hand is certain to flinch, and the very least reluctance to endure the impact will cause a miss. Therefore, young players should never be out of heart if they miss catches when they are either cold or very tired; and if they can miss a ball now and then without losing heart, they are useful men to the side. On the whole, however, there is little to be said and much to be done in this matter. Constant practice, hardening the hands, keeping up pluck, these things do some good; but still, when a high spinning catch comes to some youngster in an important match, no mortal voice can help him. He is alone with his destiny, and the fleeting moments are big with great and momentous issues for him. All the cricketer within him is being put to a terrible test; but it is part of the grandeur of the game that each man must bear his own burden, and fight his own way on through weal and woe, and where the valiant fall only to rise again with new experience, the chicken-hearted give up in despair.

This brings to a conclusion what we have to say on the subject of fielding-training in schools and elsewhere. The question has demanded a good deal of attention because of the reason given above, that, whereas batting and bowling are, comparatively speaking, arts independent of external influences, fielding depends largely on such influences. In schools, the sources of stimulus are mixed; in the universities, however, the standard depends almost entirely on the captain. No one knows without experience the extraordinary power of answering to stimulus that exists in a team

of young men. In schools boys are nervous, and as to fielding many of them have shambling legs and ill-set sinews, which demand two or three years' growth to be fit for real agility. But the university elevens consist of men in the very pink and prime of youth ; fielding ought to be to each member of each team a pleasure and a pride. Again and again it has happened that the matches played by them have been lost by bad fielding ; and as often we have seen a loose slipshod fielding team braced up to become first-rate, all because the captain really meant business. It is, of course, impossible for all the fieldsmen to go through a season without missing anything ; but there ought unquestionably to be that unmistakable dash and vigour which belongs to the magic years twenty to twenty-five, and the absence of which at that time is a grievous indication of half-heartedness or timidity in the captain. The public have a right to demand brilliant fielding in the Oxford and Cambridge match, and the elevens ought to look upon themselves as the models to all other teams in the country, of a beautiful and truly scientific art. It is upon them that our hopes mainly rest of raising by degrees the standard of English fielding. At present, taking everything into account, we cannot deny the existence of many and woeful deficiencies.

We now pass on to consider other important questions in the training of young players. An obvious difficulty presents itself in the early stages. Small boys cannot possibly use full-sized bats. The mischief that results if they do is fatal. It is impossible for them to play straight, because the end of the bat smites the ground and the stroke comes to nought. Besides which, the excessive weight makes them late for all the hits. The way out of the difficulty is sensible and simple : a young player should use an under-

sized bat ; and at the period when *he* begins to feel conscious of growing power, and scents the battle from afar, care should be taken to see that he doesn't order a full-sized bat before his time, and get his father to pay for it. He wants to be a man, and he thinks the first step, after donning stick-up collars, is to use a full-sized bat. With this exception the difficulty may be said to be no longer troublesome.

The next question arises from the fact that boys of ten to fourteen or fifteen cannot bowl a cricket-ball with ease or for any length of time at twenty-two yards. Hence a movement which is now being made for reducing the distances in preparatory-school matches to twenty yards. But this is far from being so sensible or so simple as the modification of the bat. The shortening of the distance alters the character of the bowling. Everybody ought to know that it makes the difficult balls easier to judge. This is a most material fact, and generally ignored. Secondly, a full-sized bat is meant to correspond to a full-sized ball, but an under-sized bat ought to correspond with an under-sized ball. Why in the world is it that little boys are made to play cricket with the same sized ball as Dr. Grace and Mr. Bonner use? What a ludicrous piece of mischievous uniformity this is! The only hope of making cricket as really attractive and useful to young boys as it might be, is to reduce the size of the ball as well as the size of the bat, and keep the full distance. At present a diminutive brat pummels the big ball with all his might, and it barely reaches cover-point ; his best half-volley drive goes meekly into mid-on's hands—or, rather, it would, if the ball were not too big to get there. Not only is his hitting spoilt, but the catching is spoilt, the fielding is spoilt, the throwing becomes painful, and the bowling in spite of the short distance strains the shoulder. The game is out of propor-

tion because the fields never need occupy their proper place, and the ball never travels to them as it will hereafter, nor can they be expected to stop it clean when it does reach them. The fact must be insisted on, that it is all important to make cricket thoroughly attractive to young players, or they will probably give it up.

The great moment for a batsman is seeing his hit fly free and far ; the climax of a fieldsman's day is making a good catch ; the glory of a bowler is to be able to keep up on end without fatigue, and give his whole attention to his pace and pitch. Now all this is prevented by the indefensible anomaly of making little boys play with full-sized balls. It is merely a waste of time to consider the probable rejoinder to these arguments, that good cricketers have grown up under the present system, and that very few people ever seem to think it necessary to do more than shorten the distance. This is not the question. What is wanted is that every possible discouragement to the game, which may, for all we know, be quenching the early hope of many a gifted young player, should be, as far as is possible, removed. Among every ten boys who are led to think cricket a nuisance, there may well be one who has some genius for bowling or batting which only wants time and care to develop ; and the total loss to the game that is due to making it unattractive in early life must be considerable. We hear a great deal of tall talk about the difficulty of keeping school-boy bowlers from overworking themselves, and yet no one seems to think of lightening their labour by lightening the ball. Nor are the practical difficulties which stand in the way worth making a fuss about. It would be necessary to provide balls two sizes smaller than the full for quite young boys up to twelve years of age, then a slightly larger size for the years twelve to fourteen. If, however, the difficulty of house-matches at a

public school was thought fatal to this proposal, then let the preparatory schools use a smaller ball, and the public schools begin at once with the full-sized. This, without being perfect, would be ever so much more rational than the present method.

The chief trouble, of course, is that, however reasonable a proposal may be, it often leads to nothing because a certain unanimity of action is requisite to start it; and unluckily English schools rather pride themselves on never being unanimous or uniform in their various systems. If the Minister of Education in Prussia were to see the sense of any such proposal, two orders would be rapidly draughted in his study, one to be sent round the schools, the other to the shops to order the manufacture of the balls. But alas! though they are far enough from any such consummation there, we are perhaps still further away from it here. If it be a fact that truth is great and will prevail, then we may rest content; but the proverb does not go on to say whether it will take a long or a short time, or whether many cricketers will be discouraged in the process.

Among all young players a great deal can be done by bringing the imitative faculty into play. We are told that a child learns to speak not only by the ear, but by fixing his eyes on the inside of the adult's mouth, so as to assist his investigation of what is going forward. But a problem soon has to be faced. It has been said of Carlyle, that many writers may imitate his straining gestures without imparting any of his genius to their own lucubrations. Macaulay, too, chuckled with pleasure at the thought that the merits of his style were exceedingly difficult to reproduce, though the mannerisms might easily be caught by any hack publicist. Again, in another field of effort, Philip

Brooks records how he once went to hear a great preacher in America in company with a clerical friend, and, after listening to a noble and inspiring discourse, they were, coming out, pondering on what they had heard, when suddenly the friend exclaimed, "I have it! Yes, that is the secret of it all! Did you not observe how he used his right hand? When he wished to excite our feelings he raised it aloft, and when he wished to calm and subdue our emotions he lowered it." Philip Brooks listened, inly forecasting his poor friend in the future unceasingly raising or lowering his right hand as he preached, not without wonder at finding his congregation's emotions were neither stirred nor subdued. So in cricket. Care should be taken to give young players a pattern to watch in the shape of some good batsman of chaste simple style. A school might be named where the mannerism of some former champion was rapidly developed into a flourish which has survived for nearly thirty years, through succeeding generations, and has certainly worked mischief. By a simple style, I mean one where the batsman merely makes the required motion for each stroke, and eschews ornament. Some ornament is innocent enough where it comes quite naturally, but it is nearly always ugly and mischievous when it has been copied.

But such matters as these concerning the training of batting are connected with the difficult and important question of providing good wickets for the boys.

In many schools, especially in such as enjoy the advantage of being near to a town, cricket is carried on under the disadvantage of want of space. This is a grievous state of things. A few years ago a German schoolmaster came over to England to inspect the public-school system of athletics, and determine, on behalf of the high educational authorities of his own country, how it was that "in England

the boys play so many games, and do so much work." Nothing struck him so forcibly as the beautiful stretches of bright green grass which are the precious possession of our educational centres. The undisguised admiration which he expressed was a reminder to his hearers of the immense value of the green sward of our cricket-fields. If we realized this fully, there would never be a school cramped in its area of play-ground, any more than in the amount of food and sleep allowed to the "students." But still it is a fact that as grim winter succeeds to summer, so football takes the place of cricket, and in very many places has to be played on the same pieces of ground. This is a bad business. During the autumn the cricket pitch requires attention and relaying and doctoring generally. If this cannot be done at the right time it must be done in the spring. But the golden opportunity has gone. Nothing more than some poor tinkering is possible after December's days are done. Moreover, it is not uncommon to find football continuing merrily into the Lent term, so that even the time for putting in a few necessary patches is sadly curtailed. Now the result of this is that, except for the first eleven, the pitches throughout the summer are rough.

Time was when small boys used to accept a rough pitch as one of the ills which flesh is heir to, or rather they played on them without noticing whether they were rough or not, merely evading a blow on the ribs by a timely and prudent withdrawal towards short-leg. But nowadays these young heroes come to the larger schools after having been trained on superb wickets at the preparatory schools, and their critical instinct is fully developed. Hence grumblings and disaffection. These, however, would matter little if it were not that their previous teaching goes to the wall. The forward play which was taught to them with such

laborious care, and had just become a source of pleasure and profit, is now found to contain contusions on the knuckles, sore ribs, and a general depression of spirit, without at the same time securing runs. Hence it is given up, not all at once, *nemo repente fuit turpissimus*, but little by little the confidence is undermined, the reach forward is checked, and at last the old pull takes the place of the smooth graceful drive, and the ruin is complete,—a grievous instance of what scientific people call reversion to the original type.

It cannot be too often insisted on that this state of things prevents a certain class of cricketer from ever reaching his prime—those namely who are not gifted with the best nerves, or the best padded ribs, and have no unusual love for the game to start with. It is no use our lamenting that there should be any young Englishmen who can be so described; but the fact is undeniable, and the problem of giving them good wickets ought to be solved, or these players will be lost to the game. Certain it is that the more robust geniuses will contrive to struggle on and finally emerge as good players. But they would not lose, if this epoch of hazardous rough-and-tumble cricket were obliterated from their lives. In after life they will be called upon to habituate themselves to just the amount of variation in the wickets which is produced by the climate, and very little more, since good wickets are becoming the rule everywhere. Why, then, during the most delicate time of their cricket education, should their development of style be seriously and inevitably interrupted? There is no answer to this; all that happens is, that while their progress is hindered, others are prevented from learning the game at all.

But it is none the less difficult to suggest a remedy. As

regards practice, one precaution may be, and indeed is, taken in some schools with good effect. A piece of ground is carefully laid down with chalk mould, or gravel, according to the nature of the soil, in the shape of a strip some ten yards wide and a hundred long, in some outlying quarter of the playground, which is untouched by the rout of football players. This strip is jealously protected from harm, and remains as good and smooth as possible throughout the season. At the beginning the practice wickets are pitched along a chalk line drawn a little outside the hindmost edge of the strip, *i.e.* the one nearest the outside of the field. The batsmen then stand with the whole breadth of the smooth ground before them, so that the balls pitch on it, bowled by bowlers from the rougher ground beyond. After a time these pitches get cut up, and the wickets are then advanced a foot or two forward, so that the balls then pitch on a fresh piece of ground, always inside the strip. This can be repeated at suitable intervals during the season, and, if strict obedience in the matter of keeping the ranks is enforced, there is no reason why the practice should not be very respectable all the summer term through. But as to the pitches on which the games are played, here, alas! there is bound to be trouble and vexation of spirit.

The only suggestion that seems possible to make is that the boys should be encouraged to roll the ground themselves. No light roller is any good for a hot season, and of course a heavy one will not cure bumps on a dry ground; but still it will be of some use, and would probably prevent the surface from getting desperately bad. In addition to which it should be remembered that it is a distinct gain to get young gentlemen to take trouble, and to acquire some idea of the dignity of the labour involved in subduing nature to man's use. Nor is it found that the human boy is averse

to effort in the open air after some hours spent in cheerless class-rooms. All this is encouraging, but at best it will amount to nothing more than a palliation of the evil. Given the conditions of somewhat curtailed space, and the trouble will make itself felt. At present, like the phylloxera, it awaits its remedy.

CHAPTER II.

BOWLING.

THE training of bowlers and bowling is indeed a subject which might daunt a stout-hearted author. It would not be very difficult to describe good bowling ; to write pages on the special subtlety of some one's twist or pace or pitch ; or to give soul-stirring narratives of great achievements in days of yore. It is well that these things should be done. But to attempt, in conformity with the design of this little book, to give suggestions how a young aspirant is to follow in the steps of bygone heroes, and how he is to give the ball the same living stealthiness of flight which batsmen now and then discern,—in short, to tell any one how to learn to bowl, is well-nigh a hopeless task. There is something that baffles the keenest observation, either of telescope or microscope, in a really first-rate bowler's motions ; or, rather, it would be truer to say that no amount of inspection reveals the secret sufficiently clearly to enable any one else to acquire it. Men of similar build have been known to copy each other's actions till a strange similarity was noticeable ; but there always remains a certain difference in the flight and bound of the ball. Again, when we first saw Alfred Shaw

bowl, who was there who did not think to himself that there, at last, was the simplest thing in the world to go and do,— simply to take three or four steps, move the arm at its most natural angle without any fuss or swagger, and it was bound to send the ball straight to the right spot : how could it go anywhere else? Yet of all the number who went home and practised that action, not one ever attained to the same degree of precision, or could combine it with the same amount of break-back. Others have bowled as well, but with their own action, not his. Indeed, it may safely be said that those who tried the hardest to reproduce the artist's delivery were wanting in the original gift, and ended their cricket career as very poor bowlers.

The fact is, bowling is a special endowment of nature, totally unlike anything else. It is easy to see that batting and fielding largely depend on nature ; but some of the strangest facts about bowling are not in the least true about other departments of the game, or indeed of any game. For instance, who can explain the mysterious evanescence of some boys' bowling? We know of cases where, for a few months it may be, the ball was delivered with just that peculiar spin and facility which denotes the heaven sent gift. Winter comes in the usual way, and lo ! at the return of spring the bowler is a bowler no more. Some inspired person puts it down to overwork. We all hear a great deal of boys being over-bowled ; and it is sometimes insisted that, if proper care were taken of young boys at public schools, we should see a large supply of bowlers at the universities, and the lamentable inferiority of the gentlemen as compared to the players would soon be rectified. But who ever tended and nursed the Freemans, the Shaws, Morleys, and Lohmans when they were young? Does any one come up and tell the lads on the Nottinghamshire greens that they have been bowling

enough for the day, and must go home and have some gruel?

It seems reasonable to suppose that the numerous professional bowlers have in their boyhood been exposed to the dangers of a more thorough neglect than even the lower boys in schools, though it is not pretended that these latter are in all cases adequately fostered to their maturity. The question demands investigation, but till the contrary is proved, we are surely barred from attributing the skill of the professionals to more careful precautions against over-bowling. If there is anything in their boyhood which stands out in contrast to the boyhood of the public-school players, it is that they are not more, but less looked after. And this fact seems to place this mysterious art on a different footing at once from several others. The standard of good professional billiard players is enormously above that of good amateurs. This is plainly due to weeks, months, and years having been given by the professionals to patient and terribly monotonous practice, so monotonous that no one who has not to live by it could endure it. In a less degree the professional singer puts the amateur in the shade; this is because he has given much more time to practice, but not so much more as the billiard-player. And so in other arts, early training and constant coaching brings its reward. And yet the best bowlers are those who have been trained the least.

Now, there is a great deal that is very baffling in all this. And it would be a poor confession of weakness merely to say that bowling is like music or divination, something inspired and inexplicable, which it would be almost profane to scrutinize too closely. The story is told that Mr. Ruskin in his young and most enthusiastic days was walking with the great painter Turner, and descanting with his own

inimitable eloquence on the mysteries and principles of painting; and after some twenty minutes his companion, whose genius was artistic, not dialectic, replied, "Yes, painting is a rum job." It is incumbent on us to set forth as far as we can, not indeed with Mr. Ruskin's eloquence, but with something more than Turner's brevity, some explanation of this phenomenon, the difference between professionals and amateurs in bowling, with a view to drawing a practical lesson.

The fitfulness of bowling, above alluded to, is chiefly noticeable among boys. This must be for one of two reasons. Either the muscles are weak, and the work therefore too hard for them, or else, owing to the rapid change in their physical conformation, the arm moves in the right way one year and wrongly the next. Whichever of these two reasons be the true one, there appears to be a process of sifting going on from early boyhood to about eighteen years old, a survival of the fittest. Now, during this period the same sifting must be continuing among young players on the village green as among public-school boys. Some will overdo the practice; others, who were good bowlers at thirteen, will be useless at nineteen. In spite of the care taken at public schools, the career of a boy bowler in one place is very similar to that of one in the other line of life. There is anyhow less difference then than afterwards.

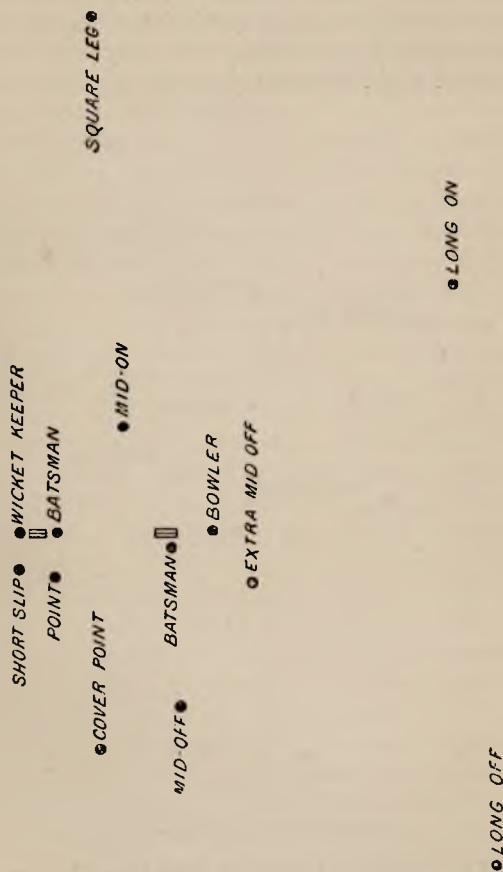
What, then, happens after a bowler leaves the public school? and is it the same as happens to a young professional of eighteen or nineteen years of age? At the universities, it may be confidently asserted, the bowlers are left very much to themselves. An idea which, though wholly erroneous, prevails widely, is that they are past the age when coaching and careful practice will be of any use to them; that they are, in short, fully formed cricketers, and to be treated as such.

The result is that bowling is not practised at all. If the public-school boy does not go to a university, this is even more certainly the case. Matches at irregular intervals, careless living, constant batting, especially at nets, which seems to have a deleterious influence on the bowler's muscles, and antagonistic interests generally, cause in most cases a deterioration in the power of the right arm. With the professionals these difficulties need not, and generally do not exist. At about eighteen a young bowler begins to be talked about, and finds it worth his while to take pains, and get engagements. If he is successful, he treats himself as a bowler, and doesn't trouble his head about batting. Day by day he is at it, and never bowls carelessly, and, if he is fully grown, his muscles can stand it, and he steadily advances. And this improvement is due, not to any particular supervision, but to the time-honoured fact that a man to live must eat. The young man perceives his chance of making a livelihood, takes the requisite pains, and succeeds.

This seems a more reasonable account of the fact than that which is ordinarily advanced, viz. that school-boys overbowl themselves, and professionals do not. The truth seems to be that the professional bowls better, not because he bowls less, but more; and also at the right time of life. It is surely an absurdity to talk of undergraduates as fully formed cricketers, any more than complete scholars, or models of common-sense and sobriety. All these things are in process of growth. By eighteen or nineteen most lads are strong enough to stand a great deal of bowling; but they are certainly young enough to improve enormously if they take pains. And this gives us a practical suggestion for the future. The one thing which has never yet been tried at the universities and elsewhere is steady daily practice.

If some of those flashy persons who are to be seen fre-

quently disporting themselves at the nets, paying large sums to the ground-men to bowl at them for an hour at a time, were to devote their energies to working at bowling, instead of making exhibitions of themselves for three shillings a day, they might be of some service to the community. Very moderate bowling at fifteen, might become really useful at twenty-five. But it needs patience and work. Bowling is, a ter all, pretty much like other arts. It depends to some extent on the capacity for taking pains. There is, perhaps, no fact which causes a truly patriotic cricketer so much dismay as the prospect which is now opening before us, of a long vista of professional victories over the gentlemen. Many other things in modern cricket, *e.g.* the length of the innings, inspire some anxiety as to the future; but if the professionals are to have it all their own way, we can hardly expect to keep the game clear of the terrible dangers which already beset football, and have done so much to ruin baseball in America. If their superiority to-day is due to the fact that they have learnt to bat as well as bowl, the balance must be restored by the gentlemen learning to bowl as well as bat. It is therefore not without purpose that the causes of the difference between the bowling of the two classes has been thus discussed; and it is satisfactory to find that the remedy lies (since bowling is not magic) in something so simple as that our young gentlemen should give themselves some trouble between eighteen and twenty-three years of age. Simple enough to say, it undoubtedly is. But we can hardly expect that it will be carried out by any but the small and perhaps dwindling minority who have the interests of the game so much nearer their hearts than their own pleasure, that they will endure a somewhat thankless labour in order to promote them. It is now necessary to examine the nature of this labour, the learning how to bowl.



Position of the field for lob bowling.

Dividing bowling, then, roughly into two classes, slow and fast, we may say at once that there is very little in the way of well-established principle to which we can appeal in any investigation of this question. Not only is bowling to a great extent a gift of nature, but even those men who have



Position of the field for fast bowling.

attained to excellence by dint of careful practice, have failed to bequeath the method of their practice to posterity. Indeed, it seems almost certain that the best fast bowlers

have developed no one knows how, not even themselves. But among slow bowlers there have been a few who have trained themselves and others, and who could testify to the good of patient work. So we will confine ourselves for the present to slow bowling, especially to the humble, but not to be despised art of bowling lobs.

Good lob-bowlers are and always have been very few in number. This is due less to the inherent difficulty of lob-bowling, than to the proneness of young cricketers to discouragement. A lad of fifteen thinks he can bowl lobs, and tries ; of course, at first, with small success, for the simple reasons that the batsman is not afraid of him, his field cannot hold catches, and, if they could, he has no notion where to put them. After one or two attempts at this, he retires to fielding long slips, conscious that he has not yet found his vocation. And yet it may well be that, though he starts with nothing more than a certain power of twisting the ball, he has the makings of an effective lob-bowler in him, which some pertinacity could not fail to bring out. If he could be induced to give a little time to practising at a stump every day, and then resume his attack of some batsman in a game or match, something might come of it. It is quite certain that most of the wickets which even a really good lob-bowler gets are got by the folly of the batsman, more than by the skill of the bowler. Very rarely is a decent player really beaten by a lob. Far oftener than not, some fit of excessive timidity, some fatalistic feeling, which certain players are never without, that they cannot play so-and-so's lobs, or, on the other hand, some silly bravado play to the gallery, is at the bottom of a lob's success. Now, a young bowler who perseveres is almost sure to get some wickets in this way before long, and, after that, he makes his attempts under new conditions ; that is to say, any nervous batsman thinks there

is some strange "devil" in his bowling to which he must succumb : and a bad lob-bowler has a very good chance of doing something if the batsmen are nervous. There is a deal of waste in nature. If other bowlers, who have promise in them, come to nought in the hurly-burly of public-school cricket, or are for ever ruined by the sloggers on the village green, how much more the gentle and sensitive "lobster," whose success depends so largely on facts he is ignorant of and conditions he cannot control. A little discouragement at the outset, and he tries no more. Nay, even in the case of an older bowler, how often it happens that, after an honest but ineffectual effort, he is only sneered at for his pains ! Perhaps he does what is perfectly right, and tries an over or two against a batsman who is thoroughly set in an important match : and since lobs are but poor things at best, he gets hit about rather freely on a good wicket.

He has done what any sciolist in cricket knows to be strictly right and sensible, and yet some of those very clever persons who spin out fancy anecdotes about the match in some daily paper, will deride the bowler, and the captain who put him on, and the whole side for not being able to do better themselves. A cricketer who plays much in public must expect quaint and scanty justice. Now belauded, now decried, he must make up his mind to go on unheeding, or he will never make a lob-bowler. Meantime, it can hardly be denied that many and many a decent bowler might become far more accurate and formidable, if only he would constantly practice ordinary good plain lobs at a stump, without a batsman, and with nothing but a friend behind the wicket to return the ball, and a piece of paper whereon to pitch it. It will require patience and perseverance, since no trace of improvement will be visible for many days—a characteristic which this art shares with golf, tennis, and one or two other games.

Now, since some lob-bowlers acquire a fair control over the ball but seem not to know what to do with it when they have got it, a hint or two as to some simple tricks may not be out of place: though it must be repeated that dodginess is no use till accuracy is learnt; and that for one accurate plain bowler who lacks ideas, there are twenty who are full of them, but who in their most cunning moments bowl their worst balls.

The following principles, however, are sound. Watch the batsman. It may be that you have before you a dashing driving bat, who will long to get your balls on the full pitch or half-volley. Of course, the object is to get him to run out to a ball that is too short. So you first bowl him some steady low balls without much twist; then a high, very slow one, dropping short on the off-side and twisting away. If he is a very nimble man he may get to the place and drive the ball for three or four; but if he lacks resolution he will perhaps only get halfway, and be stumped, or very nearly there, to be caught at cover-point; and mind, if the field drops the catch, go on exactly as if nothing had happened.

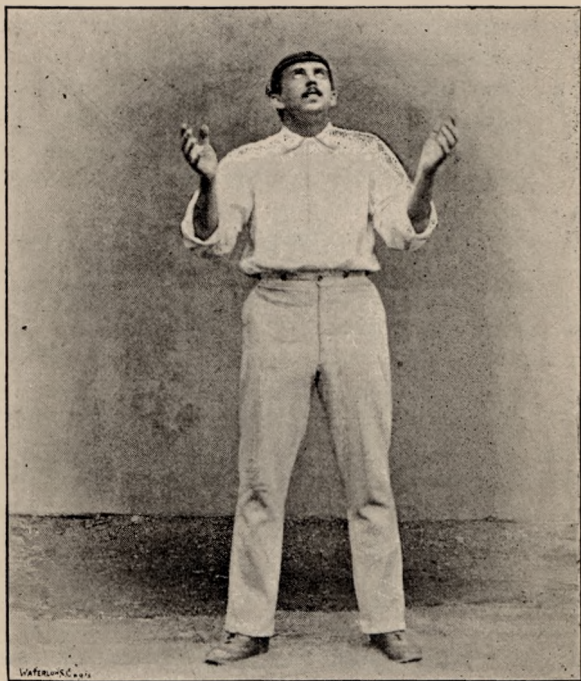
Or the batsman may be fast-footed, and playing lobs as if they were fast balls forward and back. The best ball to puzzle him with, is a fast one pitching straight and twisting away, rendering a catch at point possible, or a very slow twister far up, which may tempt the player from a mere sense of shame to do something violent. This style of play, however, if maintained for long is very wearing to the bowler, and on a good hard wicket will generally be difficult to overcome, unless the lobs are bowled with an unusual twist.

Lastly, there is the over-cautious batsman, who thinks he can play every ball back. For him you should have ready a really fast ball on the leg-stump without any twist. This may induce him to step back in the hope of gaining time, and so

hitting his wicket. If the previous balls have all been slow and curly, and he has got to feel himself thoroughly secure with them, the fast ball is very likely to be effective. But you must learn how to increase the speed of the ball without letting every one see what is going forward.

There are various ways of doing this. One is to increase the speed or length of your run. It is a plain truth that the pace of the ball depends on the run, as well as on the swing of the arm : as can be verified by observing the impetus given to projectiles thrown from a railway-carriage window. Now, the pace of the run up to the crease *before* the ball leaves the hand is of small importance ; the difference depends on the ball being propelled by a body in fast motion or by one hardly moving at all. So you can run fast up to the crease, and, just at the moment of bowling, stop dead. This will give the ball a slow flight, even though your arm moves through the air at its ordinary rate. Or you may take your usual number of strides, but each a little longer than usual. This gives extra speed to the run, and consequently to the ball, but the batsman can hardly perceive the reason why. His eyes are fixed on the bowler's arm. Lastly, there is a trick of giving the ball a forward spin with the tips of the fingers as it leaves the hand, which causes a fast bound from the pitch. Combined with a fast run, this spin makes a ball come along at a surprising pace, without the arm doing anything out of the common. Certain it is that very few lob-bowlers study the run up to the wicket sufficiently. It ought not to be mechanically uniform. When things are going really badly, and two good men are in, and the wicket quite smooth, and you feel that you are nearing your last over, try a slow high full pitch at the batsman's person. It is by no means every player who can prevent himself from sending a plain catch to square leg. He will put the whole

of his muscle into the blow; but if the ball be dropping slower than usual, so that it is about the height of his waist when he hits it, up it will go. The sensation of innocent triumph in the bowler's breast, as he sees the catch secured,



The bad catch.

and a really formidable scorer dismissed early, "was never said in rhyme." It must be felt to be understood.

In a general way, then, it may be said that no eleven is ever quite complete without a lob-bowler, for the simple

reason that no one ever knows what batsman may fall a victim to a momentary carelessness, or want of nerve, nor how bad a ball a successful lob may be. Let the bowler remember that the worst possible lob, which very rarely gets a wicket, is a long hop on the legs; to be a respectable bowler he must send very few of these. Next, that the slower his ball is the more twist there ought to be; and, as a rule, the slowest balls should be on the off-stump, or outside, the fast ones on the leg-stump. Audacity in the bowler, and pluck in the fields are important. If a batsman is very aggressive and seems perfectly at home, don't suppose that he is so necessarily. Very often a running-out player has secret misgivings which he tries to hide under a display of daring. Lastly, the worst folly which a captain can well commit is to possess such a bowler and not to put him on when runs are coming fast.

Some of the above remarks apply to other kinds of bowling. There remains, anyhow, little that can be said in the way of practical advice, excepting perhaps as to the interesting trick that some bowlers have of changing their pace.

With a very few exceptions, it may be said that this art was unknown among our fast and medium pace bowlers previous to the first visit of the Australians in 1878. It then became manifest that in the colonies it was practised far more generally than in the mother-country. Probably the hot seasons and smooth wickets in Australia make it necessary that ordinary bowling should be seasoned with some spice of difficulty of this kind, for the game to prosper. Anyhow it seems quite clear that the knack is not necessarily confined to slow bowlers, though it is curious that in England it is universal among slow bowlers and almost non-existent among fast. On the other hand, we may infer that it is more difficult of attainment in fast bowling, but not impos-

sible, even for a large number. As to the benefits of it, they are indubitable. However long a batsman may stay in, as long as the balls come at different speed he cannot afford to relax his vigilance. He never reaches the condition of that



The safe catch.

peaceful security, free from thought and anxiety, which only requires an almost automatic mechanical style of play to be maintained. If the player plays without unusual vigilance, a perfectly simple ball may bowl him clean out

any moment, simply because he fails to note the change of pace. To those who have played, or even watched Mr. Spofforth in his later years, further disquisition on this subject is needless. Now, how is this trick acquired?

Many authorities would say that no sort of hint could be given likely to be useful. But some years ago a statement was reported to have been made by Mr. Spofforth himself to the effect that he habitually held the ball differently according to the pace required—not loosely for the fast and tightly gripped for the slow, as might be conjectured, but *vice versa*. For a slow ball he would hold the ball poised very loosely about the bottom of the fingers, so that it would not be carried forward for the whole time that the arm is swinging, but would be detached from the hand, at the moment of maximum velocity, and begin its flight deprived of the full impetus which it would gain if held more tightly. That is to say, the hand swings just as fast as usual, and the whole action is identically the same with that used for a fast ball; but, owing to the ball being very loosely poised on the palm, the hand slips from under it just before the ordinary moment, with the result that the full violence of the swing is expended on the air, not on the ball.

The principle may be illustrated in this way. Supposing a man takes a racquet and holds it out flat, and on the strings places a racquet-ball; then, if he makes a swift horizontal stroke through the air, the ball will fall off behind the racquet. It slips off behind, because it rests too loosely on the strings to stand the violence of their motion. Now, in bowling this may be done, though it requires time and practice before it can be combined with precision of pitch. It is, anyhow, obvious that up to a certain point the ball must be gripped fast if it is to be thrown or bowled with great speed. Hence, if this grip

varies, we may suppose that the ball will in varying degrees answer to the impetus given by the arm. In other words, without a change of action, the pace will change. Whether Mr. Spofforth ever made this statement or not, it is pretty clear that here is a possible way of acquiring a very scientific refinement of the bowler's art. If bowled overhand, the ball will also be affected by the fingers in succession sweeping down one side as the hand quits it; and this of course results in a break from the off in the case of a right-hand bowler. Whether difficult or not to all, and impossible to some, this trick ought to be practiced by every fast bowler. Many would do no good with it, but a few would; and anything that improves bowling even a little is to be looked upon as an unmixed boon to the game. The number of bowlers who have hitherto made an honest attempt to acquire the knack is extremely small, so that we need not forecast from the past what the future might be.

CHAPTER III.

FIELDING.

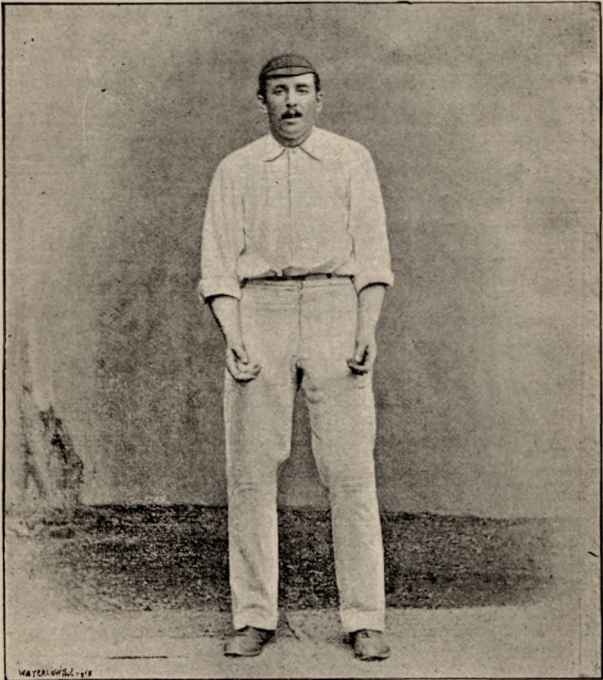
ENOUGH, perhaps, will have been urged in the chapter on Cricket in Schools as to the general importance of the beautiful art known as "fielding," and the possibilities which exist of great improvement in it, if sufficient care is taken by young players. The subject of the present chapter will therefore be simply some recommendations to be observed by the different fieldsmen in their respective places in the field. It might be supposed that directions as to such matters as stopping a ball, or throwing in straight, would be superfluous. A dialogue was overheard, in a brisk game

of football not long ago, between an energetic and outspoken captain and an unsuccessful half-back. Captain, repeatedly: "Now, then, take it on the volley, drop it just over the forwards, kick it before they charge you," etc. Half-back, pathetically: "It is easy to see what *ought* to be done; the difficulty is to do it." To a large extent this discriminating formula will be applicable to all fielding. But yet there are places in the field where something more than a supple back-bone and a capacious pair of hands is wanted, namely, knowledge, particularly as regards the place to stand, how to back-up, and to which wicket to throw. On these points a few remarks may be found useful.

SHORT-SLIP.

Of all the stations in the field which are rendered less difficult by knowledge, the scientific and much-neglected post of short-slip is the one that first claims attention. The reason is, that nowhere is even a good field so lost if he does not know where and how to stand. It is a fact not easy to explain that, whenever a short-slip is placed wrong, he is too square, and probably not far enough out. No captain errs in the reverse sense. It is a mere matter of experience that the commonest snick off fast bowling does fly exceedingly fine, and very sharp from the bat. Now, if short-slip is standing too wide and too near, he gets a catch which not only comes faster than it need, but also is directed to his left hand; in short, a catch such as is frequently missed. It is supremely galling to a captain to see a difficult chance missed, when he knows that, had the field obeyed his directions, it would have been a very easy one. For no matter how fast the bowling be, a short-slip catch is a very easy one, provided the field be in his right place.

Even then, one more condition is necessary; he must be keenly attentive, and really expecting the ball to come. Now this sounds a trifle, but in a long innings it is not so. It means that whenever a straight ball or one to the off is



The bad short-slip.

on its way—and that with some bowlers means every ball—short slip has not only to have his hands out, but his knees well bent, after the fashion of a wicket-keeper. If he does this every time, it means that he is a keener cricketer than

many who might be named. One alleviation may be allowed. If the ball goes at or outside the batsman's legs, he need not put himself out. The ball won't come to him, or, if it does, it will come fairly high and slow. Further, he must be on the look-out for the uncanny twist given by a snick. If the ground is hard, that twist will not act unless the ball comes very slowly; if the ground is soft and sticky, the twist will act: there remains, therefore, a condition of ground when it sometimes will act, sometimes not. No short-slip will find it easy to stop the snicks on days of this sort. It is one of the tasks set to people towards the performance of which no advice is of the least service, though in case of failure there will be no lack of blame.

COVER-POINT, MID-OFF, AND MID-ON.

In these positions the fieldsman has a plain task, though not always an easy one. That is to say, it consists in the main of stopping balls and throwing them in. There is less doubt about where he is to stand than is sometimes the case. But still there are some refinements which a good field will hasten to practice. In the first place, the question of where to stand does not vary with the batsmen or the bowlers so much as with the state of the ground. When it is hard, stand well out, because the ball will come easily to you; when it is dead, come in closer. This is plain enough. But it might be objected that if you stand far back the batsmen will steal a short run. True, perhaps; but better risk that than lose all the hardish hits that are made in your direction, which a yard or two further back you might cover. But there is no reason why you should lose these short runs. A man who is active on his legs, and endowed with that precious faculty of being able to start at once, has a grand chance of running

a man out, especially at mid-off. Not long ago a rare fine cover-point, after running out a venturesome batsman, remarked quietly, "When I see a man trying that on, I feel like a spider with a fly." A noble sentiment, showing a real



The good short-slip.

cricketer! His method was simply this. When a new player came in, he would retreat further off, and stand with a gentle lack-lustre appearance, so as to lead the striker to suppose that he had to deal with an ordinary hard-run

cover-point, who lacked interest in the game and didn't know where to stand. There are shoals of such fieldsmen to be met with, and any one may be excused for thinking that one more of the genus is before him. Soon a gentle hit is made towards cover. The field trots very slowly towards it, but on his toes, and eyeing the batsman meantime, till he hears the welcome words "Come on" uttered after a short but fatal hesitation. Then, with a startling change of motion, he pounces on the ball and lodges it in the wicket-keeper's hands before the men have crossed between the wickets, or while a hasty but fervid protest is being muttered by the further batsman in the middle of the pitch. Mid-off is even more favourably placed. Very often the ball is hit quietly towards him, and as he stands full in view of the striker, he can easily tempt him by assuming an otiose demeanour and by standing far out, to risk a short run. Moreover, when he picks up the ball everything is in his favour for throwing in straight, as the wicket stands broad and inviting before him. There are few more perfectly satisfactory moments in our chequered lives than when one of these innocent frauds is quietly conceived and fairly accomplished.

As regards the question closely connected with this, of "backing up," some remarks will be made later.

THIRD MAN.

This is a very scientific place, which gives opportunities of running out similar to those of cover-point and mid-off, but is complicated with some difficulties connected with the wicket to be thrown to, and with the peculiar spin of the ball. The puzzle about the latter is that on a hard ground it doesn't act at all; and a young fieldsmen who

first takes to the place, full of warnings about the twist, will find that though the ball is cut with great severity and glances off the bat, yet it comes hissing along the grass in a straight line. This is embarrassing, and particularly so to boys who come up to Lord's to play a school match in dry weather, after playing through a season on a softer ground at home. No advice can be given. The native genius for the game is nobly tested, since the ball will sometimes twist and sometimes not, as explained above.

Now, when a short run is attempted, third man has a choice of wickets to throw at. If he selects the nearer, he runs less chance of an overthrow, and can better trust the wicket-keeper to be in his place than if he threw to the bowler. On the other hand, the batsman is more likely to be in his ground.

It is common for the striker to be called to, not to call, when a cut is made, and be this right or wrong, third man must take account of the fact. The caller knows his danger, and hastens accordingly, but the striker has to start after hitting, without backing-up, and cannot exactly estimate his danger, unless Parthian-wise he turns his head while running, which diminishes his speed. So if third man is a strong thrower, he certainly ought to throw to the bowler's wicket, a long hop, and, if the bowler is in his place behind the sticks, he will make it very dangerous for the batsman. In short, third man, the bowler, and the backer-up have it in their power to accomplish a really valuable service to the side. They can, by one brilliant and conscientious piece of combined fielding, deter all the following batsmen on the side from attempting to run these common strokes, and the ultimate difference in the aggregate of runs is very considerable indeed. Hereon rests the foundation of the statement that such-and-such a match was

lost by fielding. It is often true, but seldom in the exact sense meant by the newspapers. A brilliant field will stop so many runs from being attempted, that he may well save the match. Whereas he may or may not secure a difficult catch. Such things are not in man's power; but this kind of ground fielding is. Therefore it is exceedingly important that the near fields, mid-off, cover, and third man, should be not only safe fields, but brilliant fields with quick returns: and even if they lose a run or two now and then by an excess of dash, the side can afford it. What no side can possibly afford is to have these scientific positions assigned to heavy, safe, lumbering fieldsmen, who never save a run, and never lose one. Such men allow the batsmen to see exactly what they can do, and they do it without the slightest risk of molestation; and the worst of it is, that very few captains will have an idea that there is anything wrong. It is not only that brilliancy is beautiful, but it is useful as well, and something of it is within the reach of very many more players than ever attempt to learn it.

Third man and cover-point should work till they become quick, not in order to win the indiscriminating applause of the mob, but to save runs—a far more important matter. And if it be objected to this that safety in fielding is a very important quality, and that the tendency of these remarks is to put a premium on brilliancy even though combined with uncertainty, it may truthfully be answered that for many a young cricketer the working to secure brilliancy is the only hope of his ever becoming safe in the field. It is exceedingly common for wiseacres to speak of some slow bad field as if he were necessarily safe, whereas his uncertainty is nearly as bad as his sluggishness; in the same sort of way as people often think a hard hitter has a bad defence, for no other reason than that he can punish a loose

ball. If a field teaches himself brilliancy, he need never lose his safeness, and though many cannot ever become brilliant, all can try, and in trying they will grow to be safer.

LONG-LEG.

When a hard leg-hitter is in, and one of those old-fashioned good bowlers on, who gives a reasonable proportion of leg-balls, there is scarcely anything in any game that can surpass the delight of fielding long-leg. Of course, the field ought to be a very strong thrower, and a fast runner; but quickness of throwing is almost as important as strength, and even an average runner, if he really runs his hardest, will anyhow begin to be a good field. An experienced long-leg will never be bored, so long as the batsman will only hit now and then to him. He has the great interest of watching the swing of the striker's bat, and judging, from his attempt to hit, where the ball is likely to go; and again, if he is a strong enough thrower, he can indulge himself in innocent frauds, such as are described above, by pouncing on the ball, and hurling it to the bowler's wicket a swift skimming long hop, after enticing the two players to a second run. To take the first point, he ought to notice whether the batsman swings his bat vertically or horizontally, because in the one case the ball will be hit square, in the other sharp.

Then, again, the field must be ready for the miss-hits which slide off the side of the bat and go sharp, and according to these different considerations he will take up his position. In spite of all precautions it is certain that such balls will go wide of him, and give him a weary trot before the day is over. But he can always remember that if he stirs his legs with real zest throughout a long innings, he will certainly save a great many runs; and

no man ought to require more stimulus than this. Again, should it be necessary for him to go sharper, he ought to move nearer to the wicket as well ; that is to say, in a line at right angles to that between the two wickets produced. The reason of this is that the snicks and hits which go sharp, are not so hard as the square hits ; and the fieldsman ought to save two by standing near in. Then, again, he should naturally observe where the clean hits of each batsman go ; especially if they are in the air. Some players hit ball after ball in the same place, and yet a vacuous-minded long-leg will return cheerfully to his original position, twenty-five yards away from the right spot, and wonder to find himself tired by the evening, and the match lost.

As to running the men out, the best chances consist of the gentle strokes *played* towards him by a batsman who is sharp enough to know that if he runs fast he may score two, and irritate the field. Long-leg's business, then, is to swoop down on to the ball as fast as he possibly can run, and send it either a smart catch to the wicket-keeper or a long hop to the bowler, who of course ought to be ready behind the stumps, with mid-off backing up behind him. Even if the effort fails, long-leg will probably fluster the batsmen sufficiently to prevent their trying such a run again. And then, supposing his side win the match by a few runs, how great and serene his satisfaction at the end of the long day ! What pleasure, should he lie awake at night, to recall his unnoticed vigilance and persevering zeal in the humdrum part of the day's work ! These are the memories which gladden a cricketer's heart for many a year to come.

In short, taking one thing with another, it is impossible to ponder on the beauties of long-leg fielding as it used to be, without heaving a sigh over the change which the prevalence of smooth wickets has introduced into the game. Time

was when, at Lord's, a goodish fast bowler, not absolutely straight, would give even a first-class batsman plenty to think of, simply because the turf helped his well-pitched balls and made them really difficult to play. Here was a fine incentive to defence. And then the loose balls! Probably once every two overs came a rich half-volley to leg, and unless a batsman could hit it properly he could hardly be reckoned first-rate. But if he could, there the spectators were regaled with the rewarding sight of a combination of crashing hits and stubborn defence such as never can be shown in the same degree of perfection on modern wickets. The defence is, as a rule, a comparatively simple affair, and, as for the leg-hitting, alas and alas! it is well-nigh a dead art in first-class matches, simply because leg-balls are no longer bowled.

The chance for a batsman to display his powers to the full is no longer allowed him; and no matter whether good scores are made, or whether boundary rules are altered, or extra time allowed, or what reforms are made, there is the gravest reason to fear that the great game has received a deadly blow from the levelling and taming of many grounds. The evil of long scoring is a serious one: that of boundaries is also serious, but in a less degree; but the truth is, a spurious excellence in batting is encouraged, grievously unlike the real greatness that used to be shown, simply because it is not complete but very partial. To be a first-class batsman now, a man need have no idea how to play a shooter. This is a misfortune. Nor need he have any power of on-hitting or leg-hitting. He must have a straight bat, good off-strokes, and great patience; but let him exercise these gifts as he will, he will never display the same combination of strength and science as did the great players of twenty years ago. This is the centre of the

mischief—neither the player himself nor the spectators can fully imagine what has been lost. The innings were short and full of brilliancy, like the ancient Athenian history; and while they lasted, every cricketing gift in the batsman was taxed to the uttermost, and the bowler was never without hope.

The time has passed apparently for ever when a player could know the exquisite satisfaction of playing a dead shooter, and hitting the next ball out of the ground, and show what enormous variety and ceaseless interest is contained in the noble game. It has now become a partial revelation only of a man's physical gifts, and this alone, apart from the evils enumerated above, would justify the opinion that the change in the character of the turf at Lord's, from 1875 to 1876, whereby shooters were for ever banished, was a deadly injury to the game. It is a grievous and somewhat allegorical history of the dangers to a country of an advanced and increasingly luxurious civilization.

CHAPTER IV.

BATTING.

It is not because batting is a less important branch of the game than fielding and bowling, that we come to consider it last of the three. Indeed it might plausibly be argued that the batsman makes runs, and that without some runs no match can be won. The reason is that the interest of batting has always secured it more than its fair share of attention, and the position of the subject in this handbook is only a mild protest against this want of proportion. And

yet it is not surprising that it should monopolize public observation and private effort. It requires a skilled cricketer to appreciate good bowling, which, on a good wicket, apparently does little but spoil the spectators' fun; but an ignoramus can take pleasure in watching batting. Again, a brilliant fieldsman is only one of a party, and perhaps gets few opportunities of display: but a batsman is the cynosure of all eyes; the game is arranged with a view to him, and as long as he is at the wickets, he is the prominent figure. Moreover, while the fieldsmen may be regarded as representing defence, and the bowler as the type of attack, the batsman combines both. And in fulfilling his task, he manifests perhaps the most subtle and perfect working of hand and eye together, that can possibly be seen anywhere on the surface of the globe. It is impossible to make twenty runs in decent style without giving evidence of bodily pluck, readiness of resource, patience, health, strength, and training. But the finished artist who can master first-class bowling, shows the possession of greater endowments than these. Not only physical qualities of the highest order, but moral ones as well are among the ingredients of first-rate batting. We hope to make good this assertion in the following pages.

It will be useful to consider first what is the ideal set before a young batsman. What is it that in buoyant moments he faintly hopes to be able some day to achieve? We may answer this by saying that it is the finished cultivation of certain natural gifts, and that the cultivation of those gifts means simply the gradual formation of certain habits which do not at first come naturally. To take one instance. The natural motion of two arms holding an object like a bat, is a kind of pull to the on. A pull is the primitive hit of the natural man; but to bat well a man

must play straight. This is a most artificial, laboriously acquired motion; but learning to bat involves the gradual exercise of this motion, till it becomes a second nature. This is for art to triumph over nature, till art becomes natural. And be it remembered that to play with a straight bat, is only one among many things which a good batsman has to do. But however numerous they be, they must be done with lightning quickness. To stop a good ball, or to hit a bad one well, is to put the body into a certain posture—by no means a natural one—before the real crisis has begun. After the posture is adopted, comes the stroke, and the stroke takes all a batsman's powers to make well. But if there is anything wrong with the posture, the stroke is spoiled. The grammar of the science is unsound. The posture must be correct, but it must be adopted unconsciously.

Now, from these principles, which some might call truisms, a very important practical maxim proceeds. *All sound rules of batting should be practised by a young cricketer without the ball as well as with it.* The grammar of the science can be partly learnt in the bed room; the application of the rules must be made on the green sward. Many a finished batsman has tried this plan. Five minutes devoted every night by an aspiring cricketer to a leg hit or cut, or forward play at a phantom ball, will gradually discipline his sinews to the required posture, besides sending him to bed in a right frame of mind.

I think it was Harry Jupp who used to ascribe his astonishingly good defence to a habit of this kind. He used to place a large-sized mirror on the floor—not for purposes of personal vanity—but to show if the bat moved in a straight line. To make the test better, a line was drawn along the floor from the centre of the mirror, along

which line the bat was to move. The least deviation was then manifested, not only at the end of the stroke, but while it was being made. What he owed to this careful toil, *Testis Metaurus flumen*, etc., and even though a choleric fellow lodger may now and then have wished him further, the training was sound and the result admirable. The truth must be insisted on; many a cricket match has been won in the bedroom. And even with the ball a good deal can be done. I could name two eminent batsmen who used, as boys, to wait after the day's play was over, and the careless crowd had departed, and in the pavilion give ten minutes or a quarter of an hour to practising a particular style of defence, about which more anon; the one bowled fast sneaks along the floor to the other, at about ten paces distance. This, too, yielded fruit in its time. Like all other great achievements, the getting a score against good bowling is the result of drudgery, patiently, faithfully borne. But the drudgery of cricket is itself a pleasure, and let no young cricketer suppose that he can dispense with it, though some few gifted performers have done great things with apparently little effort.

Again, drudgery should be supplemented by the imitative faculty. Here, as before, we recommend a certain amount of effort, which in itself is pleasurable. It is a great satisfaction to watch good play; but it ought to be an instruction as well.

So, if drudgery and imitation are fairly employed, and combined with a fair natural gift, the result will be a good style. What is a good style? If a young cricketer is aiming at such a thing he ought to know what it is. A good style then may be defined as the easy exercise of those motions which experience has shown to be effective. By motions I mean posture adopted as well as movement

of arms. There is no such thing as beauty of style which involves faulty play, though it is true that there may be faultless play which is not beautiful. The reason is that it may manifest effort or uneasiness, and spectators like to behold a batsman at peace with himself and his surroundings. But the first of these axioms is sometimes forgotten. A young player may aim at a showy style by neglecting the fundamental maxims of batting. If he is a well-made young man, he may attain to a graceful motion of his arms and shoulders, but, before the ladies have had time to admire him, he will be out. He will only swell the already large class of batsmen, who would bat very well if there were no ball.

Effective play is the only really good style. But here a question arises. We all know that some players have freely adopted what is known as the pull, against which young cricketers are sternly cautioned, and they continue to pull with such success that a hundred runs are sometimes registered to their names. And yet this is said to be bad style. The reason is that a pull is an excessively difficult stroke, which can never be made with safety, except by a finished batsman, and then only on a very good wicket. We call it bad style, because if it were generally adopted it would spoil the effectiveness of batting as well as its appearance. The partial adoption of it nowadays is the result of the prevalence of absurdly easy wickets. Perhaps if all wickets were perfect, and remained so for a hundred years, the ideas about style would undergo a change, just as some things are frequently done now by very good players which raise the choler of a veteran critic, unless he is unusually young in mind. So that this is no more than an apparent objection to our assertion that a really good style means effective batting.

The object, then, of a serious-minded young cricketer being to achieve a finished or effective and graceful style, we find that his principal task may be described as learning certain motions till they become habits. But before enumerating these motions in detail, we are brought face to face with a widely prevailing objection to the idea that young cricketers ought to be taught rules. The objection runs something as follows :—

It is thought that just as great players of yore reached eminence without being subject to coaching in early youth, or indeed in some cases after being completely self-taught, so boys of the present day would stand a better chance if they were less drilled than they sometimes are, and were left to find the use of their limbs by a vigorous, if unkempt, style of hitting. The Englishman's instinct, said a Frenchman, is to go out of doors, and hit or kick something as hard as he can. This being so, why not let boys learn to hit as they please till they are sixteen or seventeen, and then perhaps a few rules might be taught them? But if taught beforehand, they only cramp the style, and take away the enjoyment of the game. Nature must be the best teacher ; etc., etc.

Now, without denying the plausibility of this view, we may remark that if cricket rules are not to be taught till sixteen, the game differs essentially from every other scientific game. It is a truism to say that tennis ought to be taught young, and racquets and golf and billiards ; or, at least, taking the greatest exponents of these games, both amateur and professional, we should find that a large majority had been trained almost from the cradle, certainly from the nursery. Is there any reason to suppose that cricket is an exception? The truth is, that in this vexed question we must remember that the days of rough pitches

are apparently numbered. As long as boys are taught on bad wickets, only the most naturally gifted come to the fore : rules are at a discount ; the young player depends almost entirely on nature. But the more the plantain is expelled, the more exact a science batting will become. Without debating the respective shares of nature and teaching in producing a Grace, this we may certainly expect.

In the next place, no one proposes that teaching should take the place of nature, or that a youngster should be cramped in his style. The hope is that he may learn to make runs, and if certain motions are to be learnt, why not begin them very young? It is pretty clear that nature will be left plenty to do. Nor, on the other hand, should we venture to propose that all the refinements of the game should be taught to a boy hardly in his teens. It is not difficult to see what is really necessary to quite a beginner. He ought to be taught how to play forward, how to stand up to the bowling, how to put his left leg across. Let it be remembered that till he does these things he will not make runs, and, though cricket is a grand game, it is unfortunately true that many a devotee has been lured into less noble pursuits simply because he cannot score. There are a few notable exceptions, but patience does not sit on the monument for ever, nor does grief permanently endure being smiled at. Therefore it seems reasonable to infer that these primary principles ought to be taught very early, especially if there is a prospect of the boy continuing his training on respectable wickets.

This leads us to the consideration of the primary rules.

POSITION.

It would appear at first sight as if every one were, as regards position, his own master. A spectator arriving on the ground can generally identify a batsman by his position. How can it be maintained, then, that there is one correct position, and one only? For instance, Dr. Grace adopts a position such as no one except a feeble imitator would naturally adopt, and which is totally different from that of other great players. The answer to this is simple enough. It matters little in what posture you put your body while the bowler is beginning to deliver the ball: the question is, what are you doing as it comes at you? The Spartans combed their hair before the battle, but during the onslaught behaved unlike dandies. So, as the ball is coming you will notice good batsmen behave very much alike. (*a*) They make the best of their height. The reason is that the taller a man is the easier it is to judge the pitch of a ball; hence we all prefer to see a stumpy bowler advancing to the attack rather than a tall man like Mr. Spofforth. (*b*) They stand with their weight equally balanced on both legs. This is eminently a wise thing to do, because you cannot tell beforehand where the ball will pitch, and the use of both legs is required to enable you to play forward or back properly. There are other precautions taken by some first-rate batsmen which would be antecedent to the above. They draw a line carefully from the leg-stump out towards the crease, in order to keep their right toe either clear or nearly clear of the leg-stump. The necessity of this is, however, open to question. If you take your usual guard you ought to know accurately where your big toe is. Moreover, there is an objection, perhaps of a

somewhat sentimental kind. If you occupy the time of the umpire, the spectators, the bowler, etc., while drawing your lines of fortification, and then get bowled first ball, the effect is that of a bathos. You seem to have made that long pilgrimage from the pavilion only to show how great is your science before the ball arrives on the scene; and this fact makes the return journey still longer, whereas every decent cricketer thinks it too long already. Still we should be loth to throw ridicule on the practice, if any one gains comfort from it in a trying moment.

Among other preliminaries, most players would advise that the block be taken just inside the crease, and the two feet turned slightly outwards, a line drawn between the heels being at right angles with the crease.

So much for the measures to be adopted before and while the bowler delivers the ball. There is one caution to be given to young players to be observed while the ball is in the air. Raise your bat ready for action, but don't brandish, twirl, or flourish it in any way. You would do well if from time to time you besought some candid friend—and everybody has one somewhere—to tell you in truthful and unvarnished language if you are beginning this habit. It has been said that the flourish which Charles Dickens used to make after his signature was a sign of physical vigour. So perhaps is a flourish in batting, but it produces more disastrous effects; and if you are checked in it, and transfer it to your autograph, you will be the gainer. A flourish in batting is not simply a silly motion of the bat before the ball comes; it is a certain formula of motion which, having been begun, must be finished, no matter what is going on. Now, when you come to play Lohmann and others, you will find that one of the many difficulties that beset you is to gauge the *pace* of the ball. No two balls

are quite alike. So picture yourself with a ball coming at you a good deal faster than you at first supposed; instead of being ready to bring your bat out at once to meet the ball, you are obliged to hurry over your regular two or three motions in the air, and then try to play. Result: ignobly bowled while apparently scaring flies with your bat from the wicket-keeper's nose. But fortunately this inane piece of show, though easily learnt, is easily unlearnt too, and no cricketer ought to reach maturity without having been told of it. Some good styles, it is true, are slightly ornamented; but if the ornament interferes, however slightly, with the straightness or promptitude of the play, it becomes a bit of cricket foppery, and, as such, to be generally abhorred.

The ball is now at you. Your impulse is to jump backwards towards short-leg, so as to diminish the chance of the ball impinging on your person. M. Taine, in his book on England, remarks that the ball at cricket *s'élançe avec une vélocité terrible*. How is this innate tendency to be overcome under such circumstances? Any teacher of young batsmen ought to see carefully that the bowling is not too swift, or delivered from some disproportionate height, and that the wicket is respectable. If after these precautions have been taken the player still shifts, a drastic remedy may be employed, by fastening the right leg firmly to a peg, and bowling at it. The great object is to get the boy to see that by standing quite firm on the right leg, and using his bat as a protection, he is quite as likely to escape bruises as by running away. And except on very bad wickets this is the truth. But it certainly is a difficult power to acquire in early youth, that of standing quite still, when a hard sphere is hurtling on its direct road to the kneecap. Resolution and good wickets are the best

remedy. Till you have attained to a firm right leg you have hardly begun to bat at all.

It may be remarked, parenthetically, that this natural instinct of self-preservation is the reason of the extreme difficulty of *planting* cricket among adults, who begin by knowing nothing of the game. An energetic curate, perhaps, finds himself in a very rural parish, and tries to teach the yokels the game. Unless he is very careful, what happens? Hodge, furnished with the new ball, bowls at Nick, who wields the new bat. After a few minutes it becomes apparent that Hodge has less to learn in his art than Nick has in his. It is easy to bowl straight enough to hit the batsman now and again, but for the batsman to repel the danger is an affair of years. So Nick, after a few ugly knocks, announces his preference for skittles, and the progress of the village cricket is seriously checked. Precisely the same trouble dogs the steps of some well-meaning pioneers of the game in France and Germany, and unless steps are taken to get English players to teach it in schools among quite little boys, it is hard to see how the difficulty will ever be surmounted, since the game has to contend further with a native inaptitude in the people. But to proceed.

FORWARD AND BACK PLAY.

You have now learnt to stand up to the ball, and give your undivided attention to playing it properly. Supposing it is straight, fairly fast, and just a little over-pitched; you must play forward to it. Indeed, in your young days, even if the ball be not over-pitched, but just the right length, you had better play forward. Now, how is this done? Advance the left leg, without losing

balance ; keep head and shoulders well over the bat, but erect ; keep the left shoulder turned almost towards mid-off, and move the bat firmly forward till it meets the ball close to your left foot. Above all things, be quite sure that you



Bad forward play.

do all this in the same motion. If you move the leg before the arm, or *vice versa*, you lose the weight of your body, which, of course, is wanted for the stroke ; and this loss partly explains the extraordinary difference of power

in some men's forward play compared to that of others. You will see from these directions that it is a very complex action, far from easy to do all at once, or by the light of nature. *You must first learn to do it properly without the ball*, then with it. Establish the motion as a habit before the stress of the crisis begins. The chief faults to be avoided are, first, the crooked movement of the bat; that is to say, instead of bringing it down like a pendulum, you will easily get into the way of playing from the on- to the off-side, *across the line of the ball*, or, more rarely, in the other direction. If you do this, the least miscalculation as to the pace of the ball will be fatal to you. Take warning about this, as it is an exceedingly common fault. Ask your candid friend again, and if he reports mischief, have recourse to Jupp's tactics in the bed-room.

While on the subject we may notice a common delusion. Some of those clever fellows who are to be met with everywhere, criticize the play of an eleven of boys who have been taught to play forward, and finding them fall victims to some good bowling, go about the country, saying, "I don't believe in that forward play." Perhaps not; but this piece of information would be more valuable if the speaker went on to say what the boys had better do instead. The question is, which method a young cricketer had better begin with—too much back play or too much forward play, since he is almost sure to err on one side or the other. Now, it has been found that too much forward play on modern wickets is, though a bad thing, less fatal to scoring than too much back play; and it ought to be the aim of all advice in batting to help a young player to get runs, *quocunque modo* runs, otherwise he will not learn the game. Therefore, if you learn to play forward correctly, you have made a great step forward in the new science. You will,

however, not be able just yet to distinguish accurately when to do one thing and when another. Practice and patience must teach you that. A few recommendations may, in the meantime, be made as to dealing with that awkward problem, a good-length straight ball.

Give your mind to making the bat *meet* the ball. It is useless to try and stop a fast ball by hanging before it a loose dangling bit of wood. Grip the handle of your bat firmly with the right hand—the left is not nearly so important,—and then never play back behind the right foot. This rule is frequently transgressed because a batsman is naturally desirous of gaining time before he acts, and he thinks he will see more of the ball if he steps back or plays near the stumps,—a great mistake; the faster the ball is, the more in front of your right foot the bat should be. In fact, notice a player defending his wickets against very fast bowling indeed. You will find that he plays quite a short ball by advancing his left foot, and meeting the ball between his two feet, about a foot in front of the crease. In your young days you will probably not have to face any bowling so fast as this. The first time you do, your knowledge of life will be materially extended; but you will best prepare yourself against that day by playing back, as it is called, close to the right foot, but never behind it.

So much for the ordinary tactics to be pursued in playing straight balls. Remember that these rules apply to bowling which is not slow. As to playing lobs, you will find rules of very little use indeed. In a general way, notice if the lob-bowler makes the ball twist, not only in the air but on the ground. It is remarkable how some lob-bowlers make the ball spin as it is coming towards you, till you might almost hear it hum; and when it pitches, lo! it deviates not an inch from its course. So watch the bowler before you go in,

if possible. If the balls are twisting there are certain things to avoid. Don't play forward to slow balls, but either run out and hit them, or play quite gently back. Don't put your shoulders into playing hard back on to any lob that is not a monstrous long hop. It often happens that the batsman thinks he can score by so doing, and all he does is to misjudge the blow, and lift the ball peacefully to mid-on or mid-off. The fields are so placed as to make scoring in this way very difficult, and the attempt is risky for young players.

Again, when balls are twisting, beware of running out to the off-balls, especially if they are slow. As to running out generally, there is little to be said but this: when you run out at all, do so with a hearty good-will, and an utter forgetfulness of the wicket behind you. How many scores of wickets have been lost by a half-hearted sort of lurching out of the ground just far enough for the victim to be stumped, and not far enough to get near the pitch of the ball! It is a good plan to run out as if hoping to hit the ball full-pitch, and then you will be far enough for the half-volley. But though this mode of scoring is most effective when adopted by a bold hitter with some nerve, it is most disastrous for a batsman to attempt who is not by nature fitted for the task. There are many good bats who play lobs tight-footed, and a great nuisance they are to the bowler. So make clear to yourself what you are born to do, and do it. Meanwhile there are so-called lobs which are plain fast under-hand balls, and as such ought to be played forward. Be on the look-out for these, as well as for the slower ones, which give great promise of twist, and then bound straight on. In short, lobs test the native gift of a young player very well, as he cannot play them by rule. Perhaps the best piece of advice you could get would be simply this: as long as you are an unfinished batsman, play

very steadily at all decent balls, and wait quietly for some of the rascally bad ones which every lob-bowler has in his *repertoire*, and which, if you are patient, he is certain sooner or later to produce. The above remarks apply also to playing some very slow round-hand bowling, such as is seldom seen in good matches, but is effective against boys, and is known by the contumelious designation of "donkey-drops."

OFF-HITTING.

It is now time to treat of the punishing of crooked fast bowling. We will deal first with off-hitting. If you look attentively at some good batsmen, you will see that they adopt different motions according as the off-ball is short or well picked-up. In the latter case they advance the left foot; in the former the right. Now, if you wish to adopt the former course, you will abandon all idea of cutting with the right foot, unless you have quite naturally fallen into the way of doing so, and are advised not to change it. If this is however the case, you will find some advice on the subject below. At present we will suppose that you have an open mind on the question, and are ready to do what is generally thought to be safest. Advance the left leg, then, well out, and across the wicket till it is in front of the off-stump. Further than this is very seldom necessary. On the other hand it is often right not to step so much across. The object is to command the ball, and if it be coming only a little wide of the off-stump, you will do enough if you merely advance the leg towards the bowler. The left shoulder meantime must be pointing towards mid-off, and the left foot also. Avoid pointing the left foot at point, as the manner of some is. It destroys your balance. Of course your eye has been coldly fixed on the ball all this while, so that the final position of the left leg ought to be determined

by the exact distance the ball is from you. And mind that, as in forward play, your step forward and across should be made exactly as you deliver your blow from the shoulders with the bat. This brings the weight of your body into the



The off-hit, showing the common inistake of bending the right knee.

stroke, as is explained below. The stroke is from above, slightly downwards. Now, with all these directions, you ought to get on pretty well, but yet the off-balls are often to young batsmen a source of lamentation, mourning, and

woe. It very often happens that some lengthy assailant is put on to bowl steadily overhand outside the off-stump, for no purpose whatever except to get catches sent to short slip, point, and wicket-keep, and if there is the slightest unevenness in the ground, a great number of bad scratchy hits are made before each batsman has got his eye in. Of course if the balls are kicking, and the batsmen are not very tall, there will be trouble. Something may be done by a policy of masterly inactivity, and letting some of the balls go by; but this is a miserable device unless the ground is playing very difficult. You may, however, do it with advantage before your eye is in, for a few minutes, because the danger is one of hitting late for the ball, and so snicking it.

Again, when the ground is uncertain, you may play for safety by stepping well across and meeting the ball with a full face of the vertical bat, instead of hitting horizontally. But this only applies to balls a little way outside the stump. There is, besides, a danger to which you are exposed in changeable weather. Suppose the wicket has been true and dry, and then comes a slight shower. The players retire, and, on resuming, the batsman forgets that the surface of the ground is faster than it was. Many a good player has been dismissed owing to mistiming the ball because of this, and he returns, and every one says, "Poor fellow; just got his eye out by coming in for the rain." The truth is that his eye was too well in, and that's the reason why he came out. It is best with off-balls to watch a couple before you hit at them, and then all will go well.

THE CUT WITH THE RIGHT FOOT.

This is without any exception the most fascinating stroke in the game. At no moment does the motion of the batsman seem so easy, or his force so mysterious. But it

cannot be denied that the delicacy of the stroke means danger to the striker. It is made as follows:—when the batsman sees the ball coming to the off, and not far pitched, he moves the left leg a little forward to get leverage for his stroke. Be it remembered that he would do exactly this if he were going to make the ordinary left-foot cut, or off-hit with the left foot out. But the difference is that in the latter case he ought not to bring the left foot on to the ground till he can do so simultaneously with the bat hitting the ball, on the principle of the body moving with the arms. But in the case of a right-foot cut, this motion of the left leg is made *before* the stroke proper begins. As soon, then, as the batsman has made this preparation, he raises the right foot an inch or two from the ground, holds it poised for a brief moment, then brings it down with a peculiar smart stamp close behind the block hole, or somewhere hard by, according to the exact line the ball is taking; and exactly simultaneously with this stamp, the indescribable swirl of the bat is made which sends the ball skimming between point and third man, or sometimes, off very fast bowling, to the left hand of third man.

This stroke is capable of variation. For instance, Dr. Grace, though sometimes spoken of as no cutter, delivers a very similar blow to balls just outside the off-stump, with the result of crashing it in the direction of point, or just square of cover-point. One such is in our recollection made off Emmett, which appeared to strike Barlow's horny left hand at point, full in the centre, but somehow passed on to the ropes for four, with only a slight deviation from its original course. But though made exactly on these principles, it was not called a cut, because Dr. Grace's strokes to the off are made apparently more with the shoulders than with the wrists. When seen in full perfec-

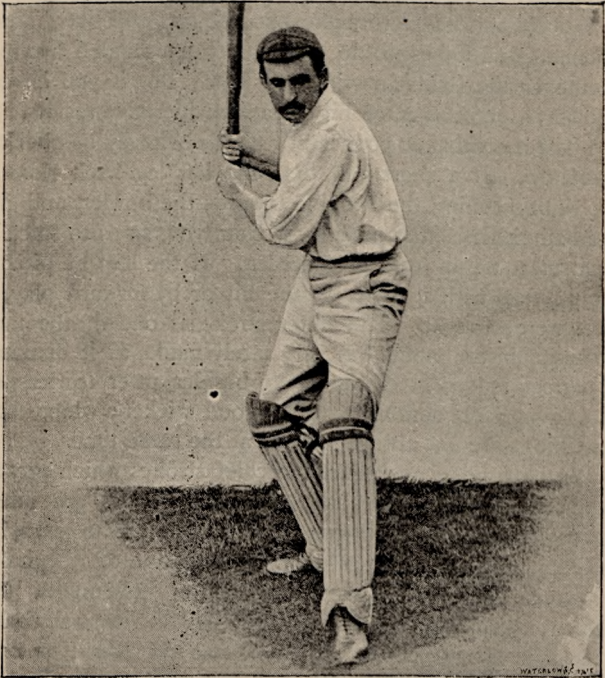
tion the cut is made evidently with the wrist, off a low bowler, so that the bat is nearly vertical. When the ball is going low and close by the off-stump, especially delivered by a left-hand bowler on a fast wicket, is the best opportunity. If well timed, the stroke gives a kind of soft creamy touch to the bat, and the whiz of the ball past the admiring third man signalizes one of those moments when a cricketer can justly say he has not lived in vain: it is a superb moment, and the memory of it is with him through life; it lives through any gloom that may brood on his declining years, long after his powers have begun to fail, as he settles with his increasing family at Eastbourne, "darkly dreaming" of gout and butchers' bills. But, reader, it has its dangers. In the first place, it is a more difficult stroke to time than even the left-foot cut, which is hard enough. And if it be made in the least too late, wicket-keep or short-slip get a most engaging catch. So it comes about that when a player is accustomed to make this stroke, and gets a little out of practice, he will succumb to the off balls more readily than to any other: especially when, having passed the first bloom of youth, he finds his wrists weak at the beginning of the season. Again, when the ground is poppy, he is in danger, but perhaps not more so than if he used the left foot. But, more serious perhaps than any, should he play a fast bowler who now and then breaks a few inches, he is liable to get ready for his late cut, and find his off-stump shot out of the ground or ever he can bring his bat near the ball. Here his rival unquestionably has the advantage of him. Lastly, there is the danger, peculiar to young cricketers, of moving the right foot, not only to off-balls, but to others also, with fatal results to defence. It is such a job to get a youthful batsman to keep the right leg firm, that it is best

to bar him from a stroke which involves its movement. Still, if a boy shows an early prepossession for this stroke, and has evidently a good turn for batting, it is best to leave him, and purge the stroke from mischievous tendencies. If he is checked, the loss to the country might be serious.

LEG-HITTING.

Really good leg-hitters are rare, but where they exist they often win a match for their side. The moment a bowler begins to lose his freshness, and sends down a few to leg, it is a terrible thing for him to see them mercilessly whacked for four or five runs. It instantly lowers his value as a bowler, and the field begin to think it is costly work waiting for that good ball to come which every bowler thinks he has in prospect. So learn to hit to leg as you have learnt the other strokes, by practising the following motion without the ball. Imagine a ball bowled outside your legs, either of a good length or further up (short of a tice), and you then advance the left leg right out, but not so that you straddle or lose balance, turning the left foot towards mid-on, and keeping both eyes sternly fixed on the ball. Then all in one motion bring the right shoulder well round, and deal a mighty blow, the bat being swung slantwise or nearly horizontally according to the pitch of the ball. There is no doubt that pointing the left foot to mid-on is an important manœuvre in leg-hitting. It gives ease to the bringing round of the right shoulder, and prevents that uneasy stumbling which is often noticeable after a hit has been made, and occasionally prevents the batsman from starting fairly on his run. But it is not at all easy to secure this habit, and therefore you should remember it carefully in your bed-room. All leg-hitting depends upon your not being afraid of the ball ; it is terribly common to see some

well-made lusty lad feebly stroking outwards with his bat, his eyes being averted as from a horrid sight, and his whole body lurching uneasily towards point, plainly showing that his main idea is to save his precious person from a knock,



The beginning of the leg hit, spoilt by the left foot being too straight and the right knee bent.

rather than score runs for his side and honour for himself. There are countless leg-balls missed by good players simply from ignorance of these directions, and also many bad high

hits are made because the stroke is attempted with a nearly vertical bat, swung across the line of the ball close to the legs, instead of well out towards the pitch.

When balls are pitched short outside the legs, it is best to quickly snick them away for two or three past long-stop. It is a difficult stroke to make, but safe and effective. Many batsmen find it best to do this also to left-handed bowlers, whenever the ball is outside the legs. But if you have a good eye, you can often hit them with lucrative results. If the ball is coming *at* your legs it must obviously be checked somehow. If a short ball, draw the left leg back close to the right, keeping the left side towards the bowler, and give the ball either a little push away from you, so as to snick it, or a smart tap in front of short leg. If the ball be pitched far up, deal with it either by the hit or by forward play, as if it were straight. The latter stroke is one of the most beautiful in the game, but very rarely made, as it demands a perfect judgment of the pitch, besides utter fearlessness as to a possible contusion, and a good wicket; which three conditions are not always fulfilled at the same time.

We have now considered the chief strokes which present any difficulty, and have to be learnt. There are others which, if your batting progresses, you will come to learn, but which are best not pressed upon the attention of a beginner. They can be treated of under the head of refinements. But before entering on this part of the subject, it seems advisable to explain the reason of a direction that has more than once been given, viz. to make the different motions that belong to any particular stroke simultaneously. It is in reality a matter of style: that is to say, if fairly carried out it produces the maximum of force with the minimum of effort. Now, the force of the stroke depends on two things: first, the power that is given to the bat; secondly, the exact point

of time at which it comes in contact with the ball : the momentum and the moment of the stroke. The share taken by the legs and shoulders in the stroke affect the momentum in this way. The bat strikes the ball, not only because the arms move it, but because the striker walks towards the ball as well. Indeed the particular motion of the left leg in the forward stroke and leg hit, is much more like a leap out at the ball, and the force brought to bear on the ball is therefore enormously increased, since it is the result of a double motion. And if it be supposed that the body motion is inconsiderable, I would ask the reader to recall the nature of the impact made by his person upon an inanimate object in the dark, when he has been walking quietly and unsuspectingly along a passage or a shaded lane. Most people have experienced something of the kind, and unanimously testify that the shock is surprisingly violent. And that is only consequent upon a quiet walking motion, but the stamping forward of the left leg at cricket is a motion far more pronounced than that of a quiet walk.

So much for the momentum. Important though it is, I cannot but feel certain that the moment is more important still. The following anecdote will illustrate my meaning. Some few years ago a brawny young Englishman was watching the merry-making of a number of French country folk in what is called a forest-fair, close to St. Germain's, and his eye was attracted by a small navy wielding a big wooden hammer with much effect on a small peg sticking out of the ground. This peg was connected with a tall grooved post, standing a few feet off, in such a way that at each blow of the hammer a piece of wood like a squail shot up the grooved channel of the post, and knocked open a door at the top, from which a sort of jack-in-the-box protruded his head, and a bell tinkled joyously, amid general applause.

Now the Gallic navy was about half the size of the Teuton, and as he accomplished the feat of ringing the bell at each stroke with the utmost ease, the Englishman thought he would do the same, and more also, with a mighty blow. So seizing the hammer, he smote lustily. The bit of wood mounted about three feet and a half instead of twelve. He walked away pondering sadly on this strange phenomenon. There was no doubt he had swung the hammer with greater force than the navy; still less doubt that the impact was of inferior power. The only explanation possible is that he had brought it into contact with the peg before or after (probably after) the moment of the maximum velocity of the swing.

This is unquestionably the meaning of what is called timing the ball in batting. An apparently gentle stroke with the bat swings it so that at one tiny moment of time it is moving very fast. If even a lanky youth utilizes this moment in his stroke the results are surprising. The bowler marvels, and point steps a yard further back. If a big man does so, and adds the momentum of his body, the speed with which the ball travels is more surprising still. If a giant like Mr. Bonner, the Australian, uses his huge limbs together at exactly the right moment the result is Titanic and well-nigh incredible. Hence any cricketer of some standing can look back upon wonderful experiences in his batting history when with almost no effort he has made the ball travel so as to wake the brazen throats of the spectators, and fill his own breast with a strange glee. But how rarely those are granted even to the best! It is clear that the very least conceivable miscalculation of time will affect the force of the blow till nothing is left in it but a sort of sloppy tired hit which seems to exhaust the strength of the batsman far more than any clean stroke possibly can.

Now this explanation has more than a theoretical interest ;

it will give you some clue to your trouble when you find things going wrong. It will render superfluous much abuse of the bat you may be using, since no stroke can drive that is not well-timed ; and it will show you why it is that some days your hitting is clean, and other days weak and uncertain. If it varies in this way it must be because something affects your eye from time to time, and it is your business to discover what that may be. If, on the other hand, it appears that your strokes habitually fail to tell as they should, it will probably be owing to your body not being properly utilized, and a spell of bed-room practice should at once be inaugurated.

ON CERTAIN REFINEMENTS.

We proceed now to the consideration of certain strokes and refinements of batting which are only for the advanced student of this science to aim at. The age at which any given player should attempt such things must of course vary with his proficiency ; and it is difficult to say that any one is too young to begin the finesse of cricket, when we remember what Dr. Grace was at seventeen. It may also be that some young players are fully advanced enough to take their own education in hand with a view to becoming first-rate, who yet have not the nerve and experience to adopt some of the recommendations that could safely be made to hardened public characters. With this proviso, we begin with some discussion of the important question of running out to slow bowling.

It is an undeniable fact that many newspaper critics, as well as some of the noble army who lay down the law from the pavilion benches at Lord's, have decided completely to their own satisfaction that a batsman who runs out of his ground is doing a rash and venturesome thing, such as

merits only a very faint approval even if successful, and if not, may with safety be reprobated. On the other hand, men have been known to run out frequently in an innings to slows, and drive them along the ground, scoring one each time. These are praised, and quite justly, even by the reporters. But in the attempt to do this it will happen that the striker will get stumped, and then, for some unknown reason, he is censured more than if he gets bowled.

The reason perhaps is that tradition is in favour of this view. Nearly thirty years ago an elderly lady was quietly sitting in her drawing-room in London, when her son, the father of a celebrated cricketer, came into the room with a look of unutterable shame and disappointment in his face. He flung himself into an arm-chair and groaned aloud, "I never should have thought it possible that he could have done it—he of all men in the world." "What do you mean?" asks the old lady, seriously alarmed. "Who? What?" "Charles," was the answer, in the same grief-choked voice. "Quick, what has he done?" "Why, he ran out to a slow and got stumped." The batsman's grandmother, it must be confessed, was somewhat relieved to find it was no worse, and that she need not expect the family name to be dragged through the mire in the next day's *Police News*. But the dialogue sufficiently indicates the opinion of a real old-fashioned critic on the subject.

In addition to which it is to be remembered that the popular respect is always on the side of the safe and cautious, though their surface-affection may be given to the dashing player. Compare the tone in which two innings are spoken of: the one amounted to twenty runs obtained slowly, painfully, and at the cost of letting off a large number of loose balls; the other a brilliantly hit innings of forty, with perhaps one chance. The latter is commended, but in a

slightly patronizing tone ; the slow innings is spoken of with genuine respect. Now, looked at in the cold light of reason, the one has done twice as much as the other to win the match which, as is often forgotten, is ultimately won by the side that obtains most runs. We should deduct from this the chance, and possibly something for the extra time during which the slow batsman may have baffled the bowling. But even as regards this latter argument, it is very doubtful whether a player who lets off loose balls does not steady the bowling rather than discourage it. Certain is it that a rapidly hit innings forces a change and disturbs calculations, and slowness *quâ* slowness is no recommendation. It is only gradually dawning on the intelligence of the paper critics that to let off loose balls is a fault. They still think it a venial fault, whereas it is a very serious one indeed, and constantly loses a match.

Now all this would be superfluous, were it not that many players are injuriously influenced in their style by the over partiality of the critics for steadiness, with the result that in their play they lose sight of the main object, to win the game for their side. We will suppose a common set of circumstances. A good slow bowler is trundling on a sticky difficult wicket, making the ball break dangerously. He has secured three good wickets, and there is every chance of the small score of sixty or so not being obtained by the in-side. There still remain three goodish bats, all of whom can play a fairly free game. One of them resolves on a bold game, and determines, in spite of appearances, to "give her the rush," as it is sometimes called ; in other words, to run out to the slow bowling. He knows that he is attempting a forlorn hope : that the best he can expect is to knock up twenty-five or thirty runs, giving at least three chances. He tries it, and is missed ; gets his runs

and wins the match. Now, if he had tried the alternative, what would have happened? At best he would have scored fifteen runs, in an hour perhaps, and his comrades might have followed suit, won endless credit for what really was very scientific play, and lost the match. There is no question whatever that some such choice as this is often set before a batsman. What is unreasonable is that, whereas the bold course is the *only* one that can win the match, it is habitually denounced as bad play; the truth being that, granted the above conditions, it is the only good play.

Here I will admit at once that there are many batsmen who ought never to attempt running out under any circumstances, simply because nature has intended them for other and less perilous ways of serving their country. But it is certain that in every eleven there are one or two batsmen who, under these or similar conditions, could adopt these tactics with the utmost advantage to their side; and if by chance there are no such batsmen in the team, there ought to be—the side is not fully equipped for probable emergencies. No one will ever overrate the immense strength that lay in the famous Australian eleven of 1882, owing to the fact that they had at least four batsmen who could play a resolute aggressive game against slow bowling on slow difficult wickets, making it impossible to calculate how many runs they might hit up before they were caught. It must not be forgotten that, for any but a first-class defensive bat, it is impossible to make twenty runs on a really difficult wicket against first-rate slow bowling, by so-called scientific cricket. Therefore, if a batsman is quite sure that he will be bowled if he stands still, it is his business to run out and risk appearances. He may do this with the best motives, simply for the good of his side; and yet he will only get sneered at by the press. He will be

accused of playing for the gallery, whereas he is really showing a healthy contempt for public opinion.

But to avoid all chance of misunderstanding, I say again that such tactics are not to be safely attempted by any but a skilled batsman of resolute nerve, and fitted by nature for such play. After a careful consideration of the question, I have come to the conclusion that it is a style of play which should not be attempted by school cricketers, but only begun cautiously by some older players—say at twenty-one or twenty-two. Very rarely indeed, by a properly qualified batsman, it might be attempted on a harder wicket, provided that the bowling be breaking, so as to render defence very difficult. Under these circumstances, and when the state of the match demands it, the safest course is now and then to dash out as the ball is leaving the bowler's hand, before you can see where it is going to pitch, but too late to allow of him altering the delivery. Supposing it is against a very steady good-length slow bowler, the chances of your getting to the pitch are very good. But you must run with the greatest resolution, utterly committing yourself to the ball, and oblivious of the wicket-keeper, and above all hit straight. There is no doubt that the risk you run is very great; moreover you may, after a few well-planned strokes, become intoxicated with success, and find yourself becoming more and more like Prince Rupert till you abruptly fall.

But this need not be: I only counsel it on occasions and for some batsmen; and though it sounds heterodox and dangerous matter to put in print, I could name some very eminent batsmen who have at a pinch done great things in this way, notably Lord Harris, Mr. Hornby, and Mr. A. G. Steele; and history records the bewilderment of such bowlers as Peate the Yorkshireman, and Mr. Boyle the Australian, when exposed to such treatment. There are,

in short, occasions when the only sensible prudence consists in the most startling audacity

STALENESS.

This is no new stroke in batting, nor can it be called a refinement, as it is thought to be common enough among all classes of players. Staleness is of the nature of a disease ; and yet no doctor, as far as I am aware, has rightly diagnosed it, or invented anything like an infallible cure for it. No Holloway or Mrs. Allen has drawn a fortune from the public by professing to stem its ravages, though there are few complaints which leave their victims in such depression of spirits, or general bewilderment of mind. The fact is, the word has been often profaned, as Shelley might have sung. It has been widely and thoughtlessly used ; and a good many cricketers have been accustomed to attribute any ill luck they may have had to this mysterious staleness. Now, in such a very complicated subject as cricket, it is exceedingly difficult to say if one man or many men or few men are affected with the same thing when they fail to score time after time. And this means that any discussion of the subject must necessarily be tentative, and at present incomplete. It is more with a view of promoting inquiry than of satisfying it, that I venture to give some ideas on this difficult question. Some investigation of the nature of staleness will lead us into a kindred and interesting topic, of the chief causes of bad scoring among batsmen, and how far they are preventable.

Staleness, then, so far as may be gathered from the use of the word among cricketers, is a certain indisposition towards cricket which is supposed to be the result of an excessive amount of play. It is not the same as fatigue, though one

of its symptoms is often a kind of lassitude ; but it might be described generally as the very reverse of keenness, and, when its sensations coincide with low scoring, a cricketer is apt to tell his friends that he is stale, as if that were enough to explain everything. Moreover it is exceedingly common to hear a University or public-school eleven spoken of as stale, when they are apparently playing below their form. And if questioned as to what it means, the speaker would say that they have been playing too much, they want a rest ; and that just as a crew may be over-rowed, so cricketers may be over-played. Let us consider what there is to be said for this point of view.

It seems to be allowed that a crew may be over-trained, or a runner, or a racquet-player. In comparatively simple exercises, such as these, the exact meaning of over-training or staleness is not very difficult to seize. Certain muscles are brought into very violent motion day after day. As long as this continues, and there is no tax upon the rest of the system, the muscles of a healthy man grow stronger. But there comes a climax to this, when, consistently with his general health, he cannot give more to those muscles than he has given. He is at his best ; a further training will not improve him. Nay, it will almost certainly cause his power to deteriorate. It is well known that a judicious trainer of a boat's crew or of a race-horse will insure that the climax of strength shall just have been reached at the time of the race ; otherwise it might be argued that the more training the better.

Now, why does the set of muscles deteriorate after this point has been reached ? Simply because muscular power depends on nerve-power, and nerve-power depends on change and recreation. Monotony is the secret of the failure of nerve-power, and it is far easier for a man to reach

and overtop his prime in a simple monotonous use of certain muscles than it is in a complex exercise. This will, I think, be admitted, if we assume that any one is labouring to perfect himself in lifting heavy weights. For a time he would improve, but finding then that he ceased to improve, his instinct would persuade him to stop for fear of a decline. But the difference in respect of monotony between rowing or running and cricket is enormous. Cricket is the least monotonous game conceivable. It is really a trinity of games. Batting is a science in itself which contains more variety (if we consider differences of wickets, etc.) than almost any other game ; for instance, as compared with a game like tennis, it has the advantage of using both arms—that is, a double set of muscles,—and not a single set of muscles in one arm. Therefore I hazard the opinion, not without some confidence, that there is less chance of over-training in cricket than in any other game, especially if due and even attention is given to its three great departments, bowling, batting, and fielding. Indeed, I would go further, and express a grave doubt whether any batsman is ever affected by simple staleness, as long as he is playing matches. The only way in which the muscles can be overworked in batting is by incessant playing at a net to two or more bowlers at a time. Here the conditions are materially changed, and all in favour of monotony. The muscular effort is incessant, and there is a lack of the special stimulus given by the presence of a set of fieldsmen, and a crowd of onlookers ; and it must never be forgotten that anything which directly raises the spirits and cheerfulness of the player, indirectly lightens the strain on the muscles : similarly, dulness means fatigue.

These considerations have now paved the way for an investigation of the place really due to staleness among the causes of failure in batting. My conviction is, that its

influence is much overrated. It seems very doubtful indeed if, as defined above, it can ever be *proved* to exist at all ; and if any one feels sure that he has at times been stale, he will probably find, on careful recollection of the circumstances, that he is using the word in a wider sense than it is used here, and that he is attributing to staleness various results of ill health, bad luck, etc. It frequently happens that members of a school eleven, when things have been going bad, talk as if they had been over-exerted in batting, when they have got no runs to speak of for a fortnight, and bad weather has interfered with their practice. What then is the hidden cause of their failure to score? Probably dumps : simple unadulterated sadness. Cricketers use the expressive phrase, "going in with the tail down," to indicate that the batsman's *morale* is at fault. It is roughly recognized that, to bat well, the spirits as well as the muscles must be in good trim ; and a man who goes in sadly, generally comes out sadly.

Now the word staleness should not be used to express this. Gloom of spirit ensues on too little batting in the form of small scores, not on too much batting ; since it is very difficult to believe that any one ever yet got either downcast or over-tired from a succession of matches in which he made runs. For though the bodily exertion is enormous, the nerve-stimulus is enormous too, and he enjoys himself too much to talk of staleness. It is ridiculous, therefore, to use the same word to denote, first, a state of things which is supposed to be the result of too much batting ; and, again, a state of mind which is the result of getting no runs. Of the two influences it may reasonably be supposed that depression of spirits is a more potently malign influence than over-exertion. But be that as it may, it is at schools that the danger is greatest, because, owing to con-

tinuous practice alternating with games and matches, there is room for both evils at once.

Hence, in case of sudden failure in batting, a cricketer should consider if he has any reason to suppose that it is due to staleness, properly so called, *i.e.* over-exertion of a monotonous kind. He should beware of a tendency to ascribe it to this. There is something respectable about the sound of the word, and it seems to throw a certain decent veil over the fact that he has simply been playing badly. There may be reasons of various kinds to account for disasters, and any one would do well to think if they are preventable. His method of life may easily be injurious; he may be over-taxing himself in other ways: he may have developed a trick in his play; or simply his bad strokes may have come to hand, and out he has had to go. Analysis will often yield an explanation which each man may for himself find it useful to consider. But after all said and done, he had better not trouble his friends with all this, and he too will gain if he spares himself the delusive comfort given by the use of a word which he does not understand. The late celebrated bowler Morley, I think it was, was once (as often) coming out, after his middle stump had been uprooted, for a very paltry score. "Why, Morley," asks some sympathizing friend, "what did that ball do?" Morley, in provincial accent, "It bowled me out." Volumes could not have said more, and many of us would do well to imitate the plain speech of this natural philosopher.

Nevertheless there are causes of failure, some of which we have touched upon, which are to some extent preventable. In the first place it is clear that as the state of a man's spirits and pluck has a good deal to do with it, he may as well do his utmost to keep them as well as his muscles in

good condition. If he has made some bad scores, and can find no reason, he should remember that the chances which attend on each ball are infinite in number, and very often no explanation is needed except that a bad stroke has gone to a field and has been caught, whereas at other times just as bad strokes have escaped. It is quite undeniable that, as a test of character and temper, a good long spell of bad luck is unrivalled ; especially for a young fellow trying for high distinction, who knows that he has virtue in him. But it will be some help to him to bear in mind that his best chance is to continue constant and eager, and not to bore his friends in the street, or to fume over it in bed. And then, even if the runs do not come, he is laying up for himself a toughness of fibre for other spheres of life, which some more successful cricketers might well envy.

In the next place, he may be dieting himself foolishly. Considering the delicacy of the human eye, and its intimate connection with the digestion, it is foolish for a batsman to rave at fortune when he eats a huge dinner every night, and either goes to bed in a loaded condition, or sits up fooling till two or three in the morning. People differ about diet, but I should advise any disappointed cricketer, in default of other precautions, to begin by cutting down his dinner and try going to bed a little earlier. Next let him try getting up a little earlier, and a certain increase of abstemiousness all round, though of course a young cricketer's appetite demands generous treatment. But nowadays the rules of simple training are so accessible and so thoroughly sensitive, that it would be useless for me to insist further on any such recommendations as these.

Lastly, he may be taking it out of himself by headwork. The disorders which arise from this imprudence need not be pictured as very rampant among cricketers. Indeed

I am convinced that some headwork which is not too exciting, which is also moderate and regular, is very advantageous to cricket, as a counter-interest. But if it is allowed to interfere with sleep, or necessitates an early breakfast so that the batsman goes in hungry between twelve and two in the day, mischief will come of it.

ON A CERTAIN DELUSION.

It may not be out of place in a little book like this, to point out the strange notions which are prevalent on a very common phenomenon. When a good eleven, or one which is thought good, is got rid of for a small score, one cricketer after another who has not been present is apt to bombard those who were with the question, "I say, how do you explain that collapse the other day?" Now, a good judge of the game who has been following it carefully can often throw some light on what has happened, by describing how the wickets changed in character, or how a sudden gloom overspread the evening sky, and so forth. But in the majority of cases these collapses are not to be explained by any such reason at all. Let us consider the plain law of averages. Take any batsman and watch him through five or six matches when he is in full practice; once at least he will get out for a very small score in that time, in a way that he can't explain. He was bowled by a good ball, or caught off a bad hit, and there's an end of it. Excepting under very exceptional circumstances the above would hold good of any cricketer. Now, an eleven plays together throughout the year. Suppose there are six batsmen on whom they mainly depend; is it not clear that in all probability once or twice at least in the course of the season the bad days of those six batsmen will coincide? It would anyhow be

strange if they did not. The sort of eleven to whom it is least likely to happen is one like the Australians, if they chance to hit upon a really fine season, and play continuously on hard wickets. Then, of course, each individual continues for a longer time together without succumbing to any mysterious visitation in the early part of his innings; and the chance of collapses is diminished. Added to which, their best elevens, like some that are made up in England, consist of men all of whom are capable of knocking up fifty at a pinch, and they often do so when the front rank has been mowed down. This, of course, renders a collapse very unlikely. But it is bound to happen in the most natural possible way to any ordinary team, especially of young players who are given to having bad days; and often the best answer that could be given to the question alluded to above, would be in Morlesque language, "Some were soon bowled, some were soon caught, and so they did not make a large score."

These considerations also set the facts of so-called "rots" in a different light. It seems to be commonly held that any batting collapse, failing another explanation, must be due to fright, or nervousness, or despair, which may be thought of as seizing hold of those batsmen who go in just after the fall of one or two good wickets, and incapacitating them from playing their usual game. There is a deal of wild talk on this subject. If the records are candidly examined, it is seen in a few minutes that a so-called "rot" is just as often stopped as allowed to continue. In other words, the infection of failure after two or three good men have fallen is potent in a few cases, but quite as often fails to produce any effect at all. In short, if any one were to examine the scores of the third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh men of a large number of sides, of which the first two wickets had

failed to score, he would find that those scores were every bit as large on the average, as those of a corresponding number of batsmen going in after the first two wickets had been successful. Indeed, without having made the analysis, I should be inclined to think that these scores would be larger: since there certainly are many good-plucked cricketers who are directly stimulated by the facts of their predecessors' failure. Should this test hold good, the power of this kind of nervousness, which is supposed to exist, is at once shown to be non-existent, or at any rate greatly exaggerated. It is to be added, that even if the figures told in a contrary sense, no proof of such a thing as a collapse of a side from nervousness could be deduced. When the first two or three good bats of a side go out for small scores, it is most likely that the bowling is good or the wicket bad: and either or both of these facts will amply account, in most cases, for the failure of the remainder.

This discussion of the reasons of failure will, I hope, not be considered useless. It is distinctly deleterious to young cricketers to be blinded to facts; and nothing is so potent to do so as the use of an ill-understood expression, such as a "rot" or "staleness." For though we may reasonably doubt the prevalence of such causes as are commonly designated by these names, it would be ridiculous to deny that it is of importance, even for batting alone, that an eleven should be in good spirits about itself, and able to resist despondency after defeat. The effect on individuals, also, of such despondency is that they not unfrequently are tempted to give up the game in disgust.

Now, if the above arguments are felt to be sound, a young cricketer may gradually learn to recognize what is beyond any question the true state of the case. It is this. He must expect that, according to the proficiency at

which he has arrived, he will make a certain number of bad strokes for every quarter of an hour that he bats : that this number will vary according to the state of the wicket, and the condition of his eyesight. Also that in that time he will receive a certain number of balls which to him are difficult ; which number, again, varies with the quality of the bowling. When his scoring is bad, it means simply that the difficult balls have come early in his innings, or that the bad strokes have been caught. Moreover he must be prepared, during his cricketing career, not only for times when such things will occur, but for spells of time during which they go on occurring ; and then it can hardly fail to be of some use to him to know that it is simply the alternations of fortune, or the law of averages, which are being exhibited in his case, because he may then be able to continue in robust hopefulness till a brighter day dawns. Beyond this he need not analyze, or hunt for causes, lest he gradually fall into the very despondency which he wishes to avoid.



APPENDIX.

ON the subject of staleness among batsmen, the opinion of three eminent cricketers may be of interest.

Mr. A. W. Ridley is sure that he himself has at times been stale, and that he has noticed others in a similar condition. He considers that it can be traced to too much consecutive play, and that rest is a certain remedy.

Mr. A. G. Steel writes:—"I have often considered the very same subject, 'staleness,' you are writing on, and though I have seen it, or something very like it, in others, I must say (with humility, be it understood, and with no boastfulness) that I never recollect having become stale at cricket. The cause of staleness is, I think, loss of confidence, probably brought about by several disastrous innings. If I am correct, this condition of a batsman is incorrectly called 'staleness,' as 'staleness' would imply some physical incapacity, whereas I think it is always a mental disease."

Mr. R. A. H. Mitchell writes:—" 'Staleness' is perhaps differently understood by different people, but I am certainly of opinion that, both at cricket and other games, men play worse at times from having had too much of it.

"As long as a man can keep in first-rate condition, with his muscles fresh, and his liver doing its duty well, he will possibly not become stale. But many men are not strong enough to play every day and keep fresh, and directly they begin to get over-tired the muscular power, the digestion, and the eye deteriorate, duck's eggs ensue, and loss of confidence. Under such circumstances, rest is required to recover bodily condition and nerve.

“The amount a man can play is in proportion, then, to his bodily strength and constitution. W. G. Grace beat other men in this ; he was never tired after the longest day's cricket, but seemed as fresh after 150 as he was before he went in.

“In first-class cricket now, things are made very easy for the batsmen and the field ; they have nothing like the work to do they had twenty-five years ago, owing to the universal system of boundaries. The men who now play in first-class matches, six days a week, would soon be reduced to a pitiable state of ‘staleness’ if they had to play every day on Chatham Lines, run out their hits, and ‘step and fetch’ the hits of their adversaries.

“I hope this explains with sufficient clearness my view.”

It will be seen that these authorities differ materially from each other, the opinion of Mr. Steel approximating most nearly to that given in the chapter on “Batting.” It is clear that the subject is at present very imperfectly understood.

LAWS OF CRICKET.

*As Revised by the Committee of the Marylebone Cricket Club,
1884, and 1889.*

The Game.

1. A match is played between two sides of eleven players each, unless otherwise agreed to ; each side has two innings, taken alternately, except in the case provided for in Law 53. The choice of innings shall be decided by tossing

Runs.

2. The score shall be reckoned by runs. A run is scored :—
- 1st. So often as the Batsmen after a hit, or at any time while the ball is in play, shall have crossed, and made good their ground from end to end.
 - 2nd. For penalties under Laws 16, 34, 41, and allowances under 44.

Any run or runs so scored shall be duly recorded by scorers appointed for the purpose.

The side which scores the greatest number of runs wins the match. No match is won unless played out or given up, except in the case provided in Law 45.

Appointment of Umpires.

3. Before the commencement of the match two Umpires shall be appointed ; one for each end.

The Ball.

4. The Ball shall weigh not less than five ounces and a half, nor more than five ounces and three-quarters. It shall measure not less than nine inches, nor more than nine inches and one-quarter in circumference. At the beginning of each innings either side may demand a new ball.

The Bat.

5. The Bat shall not exceed four inches and one-quarter in the widest part ; it shall not be more than thirty-eight inches in length.

The Wickets.

6. The wickets shall be pitched opposite and parallel to each other at a distance of twenty-two yards. Each wicket shall be eight inches in width and consist of three stumps, with two bails upon the top. The stumps shall be of equal and sufficient size to prevent the ball from passing through, twenty-seven inches out of the ground. The bails shall be each four inches in length, and when in position, on the top of the stumps, shall not project more than half-an-inch above them. The wickets shall not be changed during a match, unless the ground between them become unfit for play, and then only by consent of both sides.

The Bowling Crease.

7. The Bowling Crease shall be in a line with the stumps ; six feet eight inches in length ; the stumps in the centre ; with a Return Crease at each end, at right angles behind the wicket.

The Popping Crease.

8. The Popping Crease shall be marked four feet from the wicket, parallel to it, and be deemed unlimited in length.

The Ground.

9. The Ground shall not be rolled, watered, covered, mown, or beaten during a match, except before the commencement of each innings and of each day's play, when, unless the In-side object, the ground shall be swept and rolled for not more than ten minutes. This shall not prevent the Batsman from beating the ground with his bat, nor the Batsman nor Bowler from using sawdust in order to obtain a proper foothold.

The Bowler. No Ball.

10. The Ball must be bowled ; if thrown or jerked, the Umpire shall call, "No Ball."

11. The Bowler shall deliver the ball with one foot on the ground behind the bowling crease, and within the return crease, otherwise the Umpire shall call, "No Ball."

Wide Ball.

12. If the Bowler shall bowl the ball so high over or so wide of the wicket that in the opinion of the Umpire it is not within reach of the Striker, the Umpire shall call, "Wide Ball."

The Over.

13. The Ball shall be bowled in Overs of five balls from each wicket alternately. When five balls have been bowled, and the ball is finally settled in the Bowler's or Wicket-keeper's hands, the Umpire shall call, "Over." Neither a "No Ball" nor a "Wide Ball" shall be reckoned as one of the "Over."

14. The Bowler shall be allowed to change ends as often as he pleases, provided only that he does not bowl two Overs consecutively in one innings.

15. The Bowler may require the Batsman at the wicket from which he is bowling to stand on that side of it which he may direct.

Scoring off No Balls and Wide Balls.

16. The Striker may hit a "No Ball," and whatever runs result shall be added to his score; but he shall not be out from a "No Ball," unless he be run out or break Laws 26, 27, 29, 30. All runs made from a "No Ball," otherwise than from the bat, shall be scored "No Balls," and if no run be made, one run shall be added to that score. From a "Wide Ball," as many runs as are run shall be added to the score as "Wide Balls," and if no run be otherwise obtained, one run shall be so added.

Bye.

17. If the ball, not having been called "Wide" or "No Ball," pass the Striker without touching his bat, or person, and any runs be obtained, the Umpire shall call, "Bye;" but if the ball touch any part of the Striker's person (hand excepted) and any run be obtained, the Umpire shall call, "Leg Bye," such runs to be scored "Byes," and "Leg Byes," respectively.

Play.

18. At the beginning of the match, and of each innings, the Umpire at the Bowler's wicket shall call, "Play;" from that time no trial ball shall be allowed to any Bowler on the ground between the wickets, and when one of the Batsmen is out, the use of the bat shall not be allowed to any person until the next Batsman shall come in.

Definitions.

19. A Batsman shall be held to be "out of his ground," unless his bat in hand or some part of his person be grounded within the line of the Popping Crease.

20. The wicket shall be held to be "down" when either of the bails is struck off, or if both bails be off, when a stump is struck out of the ground.

The Striker.

The STRIKER is out—

21. If the wicket be bowled down, even if the ball first touch the Striker's bat or person ;—"Bowled."

22. Or, if the ball, from a stroke of the bat or hand, but not the wrist, be held before it touch the ground, although it be hugged to the body of the catcher ;—"Caught."

23. Or, if in playing at the ball, provided it be not touched by the bat or hand, the Striker be out of his ground, and the wicket be put down by the wicket-keeper with the ball or with hand or arm, with ball in hand ;—"Stumped."

24. Or, if with any part of his person he stop the ball which, in the opinion of the Umpire at the Bowler's wicket, shall have been pitched in a straight line from it to the Striker's wicket and would have hit it ;—"Leg before Wicket."

25. Or, if in playing at the ball he hit down his wicket with his bat or any part of his person or dress ;—"Hit Wicket."

26. Or, if under pretence of running, or otherwise, either of the Batsmen wilfully prevent a ball from being caught ;—"Obstructing the field."

27. Or, if the ball be struck, or be stopped by any part of his person, and he wilfully strike it again, except it be done for the purpose of guarding his wicket, which he may do with his bat, or any part of his person, except his hands ;—"Hit the ball twice."

The Batsman.

Either BATSMAN is out—

28. If in running, or at any other time, while the ball is in play, he be out of his ground, and his wicket be struck down by the ball after touching any Fieldsman, or by the hand or arm, with ball in hand, of any Fieldsman ;—"Run out."

29. Or, if he touch with his hands or take up the ball while in play, unless at the request of the opposite side ;—"Handled the ball."

30. Or, if he wilfully obstruct any Fieldsman ;—"Obstructing the field."

31. If the Batsmen have crossed each other, he that runs for the wicket which is put down is out ; if they have not crossed he that has left the wicket which is put down is out.

32. The Striker being caught, no run shall be scored. A Batsman being run out, that run which was being attempted shall not be scored.

33. A Batsman being out from any cause, the ball shall be "dead."

Lost Ball.

34. If a ball in play cannot be found or recovered, any Fieldsman may call, "Lost Ball," when the ball shall be "dead;" six runs shall be added to the score; but if more than six runs have been run before "Lost Ball" has been called, as many runs as have been run shall be scored.

35. After the ball shall have been finally settled in the Wicket-keeper's or Bowler's hand, it shall be "dead;" but when the Bowler is about to deliver the ball, if the Batsman at his wicket be out of his ground before actual delivery, the said Bowler may run him out; but if the Bowler throw at that wicket and any run result, it shall be scored "No Ball."

36. A Batsman shall not retire from his wicket and return to it to complete his innings after another has been in, without the consent of the opposite side.

Substitute.

37. A substitute shall be allowed to field or run between wickets for any player who may during the match be incapacitated from illness or injury, but for no other reason, except with the consent of the opposite side.

38. In all cases where a substitute shall be allowed, the consent of the opposite side shall be obtained as to the person to act as substitute, and the place in the field which he shall take.

39. In case any substitute shall be allowed to run between wickets, the Striker may be run out if either he or his substitute be out of his ground. If the Striker be out of his ground while the ball is in play, that wicket which he has left may be put down and the Striker given out, although the other Batsman may have made good the ground at that end, and the Striker and his substitute at the other end.

40. A Batsman is liable to be out for any infringement of the Laws by his substitute.

The Fieldsman.

41. The Fieldsman may stop the ball with any part of his person, but if he wilfully stop it otherwise, the ball shall be

"dead," and five runs added to the score; whatever runs may have been made, five only shall be added.

Wicket-Keeper.

42. The Wicket-keeper shall stand behind the wicket. If he shall take the ball for the purpose of stumping before it has passed the wicket, or, if he shall incommode the Striker by any noise, or motion, or if any part of his person be over or before the wicket, the Striker shall not be out, excepting under Laws 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30.

Duties of Umpires.

43. The Umpires are the sole judges of fair or unfair play, of the fitness of the ground, the weather, and the light for play; all disputes shall be determined by them, and if they disagree, the actual state of things shall continue.

44. They shall pitch fair wickets, arrange boundaries where necessary, and the allowances to be made for them, and change ends after each side has had one innings.

45. They shall allow two minutes for each Striker to come in, and ten minutes between each innings. When they shall call, "Play," the side refusing to play shall lose the match.

46. They shall not order a Batsman out unless appealed to by the other side.

47. The Umpire at the Bowler's wicket shall be appealed to before the other Umpire in all cases except in those of stumping, hit wicket, run out at the Striker's wicket, or arising out of Law 42, but in any case in which an Umpire is unable to give a decision, he shall appeal to the other Umpire, whose decision shall be final.

48. If the Umpire at the Bowler's end be not satisfied of the absolute fairness of the delivery of any ball, he shall call, "No Ball."

48a. The Umpire shall take especial care to call, "No Ball" instantly upon delivery; "Wide Ball" as soon as it shall have passed the Striker.

49. If either Batsman run a short run, the Umpire shall call, "One Short," and the run shall not be scored.

50. After the Umpire has called, "Over," the ball is "dead," but an appeal may be made as to whether either Batsman is out; such appeal, however, shall not be made after the delivery of the next ball, nor after any cessation of play.

51. No Umpire shall be allowed to bet.

52. No Umpire shall be changed during a match, unless with the consent of both sides, except in case of violation of Law 51; then either side may dismiss him.

Following Innings.

53. The side which goes in second shall follow their innings, if they have scored eighty runs less than the opposite side.

54. On the last day of a match, and in a one-day match at any time, the in-side may declare their innings at an end.

ONE-DAY MATCHES.

1. The side which goes in second shall follow their innings if they have scored sixty runs less than the opposite side.

2. The match, unless played out, shall be decided by the First Innings. Prior to the commencement of a match it may be agreed :—that the Over consist of five or six balls.

SINGLE WICKET.

The Laws are, where they apply, the same as the above, with the following alterations and additions.

1. One Wicket shall be pitched, as in Law 6; with a Bowling Stump opposite to it, at a distance of twenty-two yards. The bowling crease shall be in a line with the bowling stump; and drawn according to Law 7.

2. When there shall be less than five Players on a side, Bounds shall be placed twenty-two yards each in a line from the off and leg stump.

3. The ball must be hit before the Bounds to entitle the Striker to a run, which run cannot be obtained unless he touch the bowling stump or crease in a line with his bat, or some part of his person, or go beyond them, and return to the popping crease.

4. When the Striker shall hit the ball, one of his feet must be on the ground behind the popping crease, otherwise the Umpire shall call, "No Hit," and no run shall be scored.

5. When there shall be less than five Players on a side, neither Byes, Leg Byes, nor Overthrows shall be allowed, nor shall the Striker be caught out behind the wicket, nor stumped.

6. The Fieldsman must return the ball so that it shall cross the ground between the wicket and the bowling stump, or between the bowling stump and the bounds; the Striker may run till the ball be so returned.

7. After the Striker shall have made one run, if he start again he must touch the bowling stump or crease, and turn before the ball cross the ground to entitle him to another.

8. The Striker shall be entitled to three runs for lost ball, and the same number for ball wilfully stopped by a Fieldsman otherwise than with any part of his person.

9. When there shall be more than four Players on a side, there shall be no bounds. All Hits, Byes, Leg Byes, and Overthrows shall then be allowed.

10. There shall be no restriction as to the ball being bowled in Overs, but no more than one minute shall be allowed between each ball.



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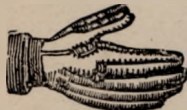
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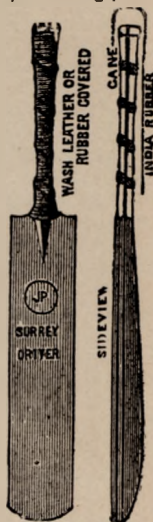
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