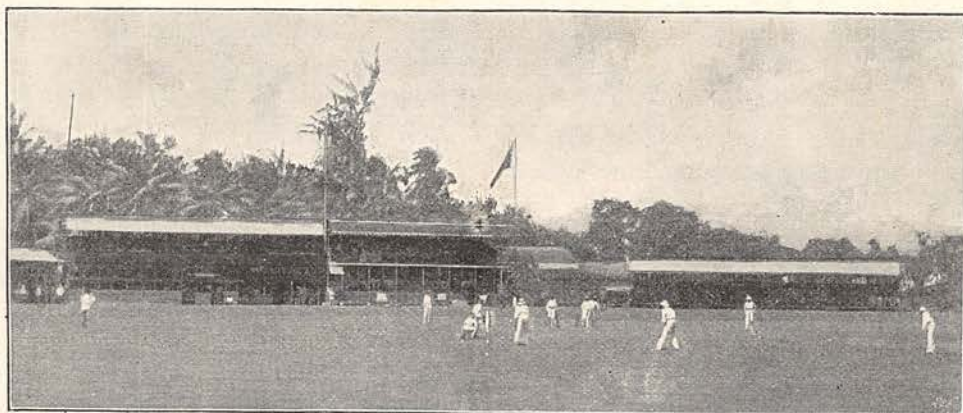


FRONT-RANK CRICKETERS OF TO-DAY.



BARBADIANS V. ENGLISH. THE OPENING BALL ON FEB. 5, 1895.

(From a photograph by S. Poyer.)THE INDIAN "BLUE," KUMAR SHRI
RANJITSINHJI.*(From a photograph by E. Hawkins & Co.,
Brighton.)*

Many have been the visits paid to and received from our Australasian cousins, and that they are little, if at all, behind the Mother Country in their proficiency at the game has been proved over and over again on many a hard-fought field; while at the Cape and in our Indian Empire the enthusiasm for the game is great. The extraordinary interest with which the tidings of Mr. Stoddart's team have been received in this country has proved that even in the hard days of winter, with almost Arctic weather, the interest in cricket is kept up almost as keenly as when we are basking in a summer sun. Never do we remember the result of any match being waited for with such intense anxiety as that of the final and rubber match between England and Australia which finished

on March 6 last, and resulted in such a brilliant victory for the Englishmen.

What has perhaps lent an additional interest to this tour is the fact that so many of the players belong to the younger generation—many of the great names who have scored so consistently on previous visits being conspicuous by their absence. An English team without "W. G.," Shrewsbury, Gunn, and others we could name, seems hardly complete; but we must face the fact that these famous players cannot keep on for ever, and that we must now look to the younger blood to keep up our reputation in the future.

Whether the players of the present are as good as, or better than, the champions of the past, is a subject on which there are and will be many opinions. True it is that the scoring is much heavier than in bygone days, though the great feat of Grace, in 1876, of scoring 1,278 runs in ten consecutive completed innings, will require a lot of beating. We must remember, though, that the wickets are now as near perfection as they can be, and the turf in much finer condition for rapid scoring. Again, boundary hits are much more frequent, and the batsman can thus husband his energies to a greater extent than he could in the days when nearly everything had to be run out. We read that in one match in the olden days, an out fieldsman flushed a covey of partridges—an event which in these days of well-kept grounds would be very unlikely to occur.

Standing out easily foremost among an unusually good lot of Australian cricketers, is George Giffen, who, although thirty-five years old, is at the present day one of the finest all-

round players who has ever stepped on to a cricket-field. His play against the Englishmen has excited the greatest admiration from friend and foe alike. To show, however, that there is no "royal road to success" in cricket any more than there is in learning, Giffen tells us that he started his career in senior cricket with seven successive ducks'-eggs, and remembers with amusement how, after achieving the third one, he sat on the fence of the park lands, too disheartened to be hungry, and too much ashamed to go home until all the household had retired. His subsequent success bears out the truth of W. G. Grace's testimony when he says—

"I should have liked to say that good batsmen are born—not made; but my long experience comes up before me and tells me that this is not so. I am strongly enough convinced that constant practice and sound coaching have everything to do with it."

The visit this winter of a team of amateurs to the West Indies, under the captaincy of

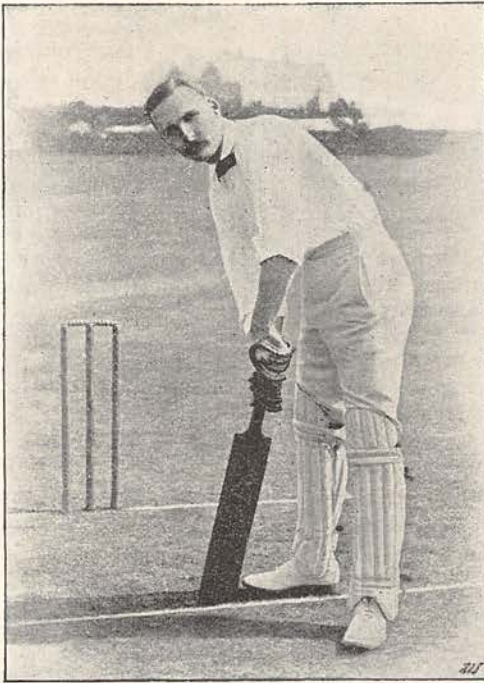
Her Majesty's dominions. The result, from a sporting point of view, has proved highly successful; and our players were probably surprised not a little when, at Barbados, they had to field out in a blazing sun while their opponents piled up the nice little score of 500 or more. There was a most curious similarity in this match to the now historical contest played at Sydney.

In each case our opponents made the huge score of over 500 runs in their first innings, while our players, following on in a large minority, ultimately pulled the match out of the fire, turning what at first looked like a heavy defeat into a splendid win.

These two matches deserve to stand on record as illustrations of the truth of the old cricket adage, that "a game is never lost till it is won." The future career of Mr. Lucas will be watched with much interest. Hailing from Merchant Taylors' School, which has up to the present turned out very few prominent cricketers, he worked his way through club cricket into the Middlesex eleven, in much the same way as Mr. Stoddart did before him. His best performance last year was at the Oval, against Surrey, when, with Phillips, he put on 140 runs for the ninth wicket, he himself somewhat unluckily getting out when within three of the century. He also scored a fine innings of 99 against Sussex at Brighton, certainly a curious instance of a batsman twice in one season just failing to secure the coveted hundred.

Another young amateur who has reached the front rank with great rapidity is Mr. A. C. Maclaren, of Lancashire fame. Receiving his early cricket training at Elstree, where so many fine players have been turned out, he proceeded to Harrow, where, when under sixteen years of age, he made his first appearance at Lord's, against Eton, in 1887, heading the score in both innings with 55 and 67. In 1890 he captained the team, again playing a fine innings of 76. But his most extraordinary achievement in this year was when asked to play for his county—an unusual honour for a schoolboy—he at the first time of asking got his century, scoring 108 against Sussex, at Brighton. We cannot remember any other case of a boy coming straight from his school eleven into a first-class county match performing such a feat. During the last season he captained the Lancashire eleven with great success, and has played most brilliantly in Australia. His fine scores of 228 against Victoria and 120 against Australia at Melbourne will be fresh in our readers' memory.

Another notable instance of a schoolboy getting into his county team is that of the



MR. A. C. MACLAREN.

(From a photograph by E. Hawkins & Co., Brighton.)

Mr. R. S. Lucas, also marks an epoch in the game.

Great efforts were made by Dr. Anderson and Lord Stamford to bring off this tour, to open the eyes of English sportsmen to the amount of keenness that prevails for the game in these comparatively little-known parts of



THE ENGLISH TEAM IN THE WEST INDIES.
(From a photograph by W. Taylor, Barbados.)

young Kentish amateur, Mr. J. R. Mason, who was captain of Winchester in 1893, and played twelve innings for his county during that season, his average for the county being nearly 28—a highly creditable performance; while for the school it was 55. During last season he also did well for Kent, his best score being 102 against Lancashire; and he also had the honour of playing for the Gentlemen of England against the Players at Lord's. As he is now only twenty-one years of age, we may hope to hear much more of him in the future.

A very interesting prominent performer of late is the young Indian, Kumar Shri (or Prince) Ranjitsinhji. By sheer merit he obtained the coveted blue at Cambridge the season before last, being the first instance of a gentleman coming from our Indian Empire gaining that distinction.

His name caused much trouble at first to the papers, he being, as he tells us, to his amusement, described as Mr. K. S. R., K. S. R., Esq., and even as Kumar Shri R., Esq., which last considerably tickled his sense of humour. He is very popular on the cricket-field, and is as active as a cat, some of his

fielding being quite marvellous. He relates many laughable tales of his antagonists on the field, some of whom, having been told on one occasion that he knew little or no English, made audible remarks such as "Time that beggar was out"; and when hit on the face with a rising ball, they hoped "this joker would have some of the steam knocked out of him now." When they heard him talking English fluently at lunch-time, they sat very still, and looked sad. Last season he had the capital average of 32 in sixteen completed innings. We hope "Mr. Prince Ranjitsinhji, Esq.," will be seen in the field many times during the coming season.

Surrey fully deserves the position it again attained last season as the champion county, for in no part of the country is rising talent more carefully looked after than at the Oval, and any youngster who has cricket in him is watched with the closest attention.

The present state of Surrey cricket is largely due to that popular amateur, Mr. John Shuter, who, when he first undertook the arduous position of captain, found matters very different from what they are now. That famous bowler, George Lohmann (now, unfortunately,

invalided from English cricket), also largely helped this result. On his retirement, however, Richardson and Lockwood have well kept up the traditions of Surrey bowling, the former having done some fine performances with the ball in Australia.

Foremost among their batsmen stands William Brockwell, who, though born in 1866, has quite recently come to the front as a batsman of the very first rank. In fact, it was not till the year before last that he played at all regularly in first-class cricket. Last season, however, he jumped up with a rush, and stood out as the most successful batsman of the year. Five times at the Oval he played an innings of over 100, and ended the season, having made a grand aggregate of 1,491 runs, his average for the forty-five innings which he played being 45. He was included in Stoddart's team, but has by no means played up to his reputation, having failed time after time in a most unaccountable manner. On one occasion, however, his bowling helped largely to win one of the big matches.

Surrey has another likely young player in Thomas Hayward, nephew of the famous old Tom Hayward, of Cambridgeshire, who, many years ago, was generally regarded as the finest professional cricketer in England. Young

Thomas comes from the same county as his famous uncle, but has qualified for Surrey by residence. He soon made his mark for his adopted county, and in 1893 made his hundred against Leicestershire, following this later in the season by making 112 against Kent. Last season he was a bit "off colour" to start with, but he ended up very successfully with two more centuries, his 142 against Kent being a fine performance.

Another county which has run Surrey very close indeed, and virtually did quite as well last year, is Yorkshire. One of the best of the county's recent recruits is the now famous Cambridge captain of a year or two ago—Mr. F. S. Jackson. It may safely be said that he has risen in a short time to be one of the very finest amateur cricketers in England, and it was a subject of great regret to many that he did not take part in the Australian tour, where he would have been most useful. No team to represent England can be said to be complete without him, on his last season's form, both as a batsman and bowler. Born in 1870, he received his early coaching when quite a small boy at Locker's Park, a preparatory school of somewhat the same type as Elstree. Proceeding to Harrow, he was in the eleven for three years—1887 to 1889—and made a great school reputation, rising to the coveted post of captain of the eleven, a training which stood him in useful stead when he came to fill the same post at Cambridge. It may be remembered that it was when he was in command that the famous incident occurred in the Varsity match, which occasioned so much talk at the time, of C. M. Wells deliberately bowling a ball for four wides to the boundary, to prevent Oxford from following on. Last year, in conjunction with that popular all-round sportsman, "Sammy" Woods, he bowled unchanged for the Gentlemen through both innings of the Players in the Lord's match—a feat only performed by amateurs in this match on two previous occasions in the annals of cricket. Another brilliant all-round player in the Yorkshire team is J. T. Brown, who hails from Driffield, and has come suddenly to the front in the last two years, and who was only second to Mr. Jackson last year in the county averages. He is one of the little men of cricket, but manages to get over the ball wonderfully well. In the field he is very brilliant, and last season, at point, let few balls pass him, besides bringing off some wonderful catches. He was asked at the last moment to go to Australia with Stoddart's team, taking the place which had been offered to Abel, of Surrey. He has there been a great success, having exceeded the century on several occasions. As an example



T. HAYWARD.

(From a photograph by R. W. Thomas, Cheapside.)



J. T. BROWN.

(From a photograph by E. Hawkins & Co., Brighton.)

of cool nerve and splendid pluck, his famous stand with Ward, of Lancashire, in the final match at Melbourne against Australia will long be remembered.

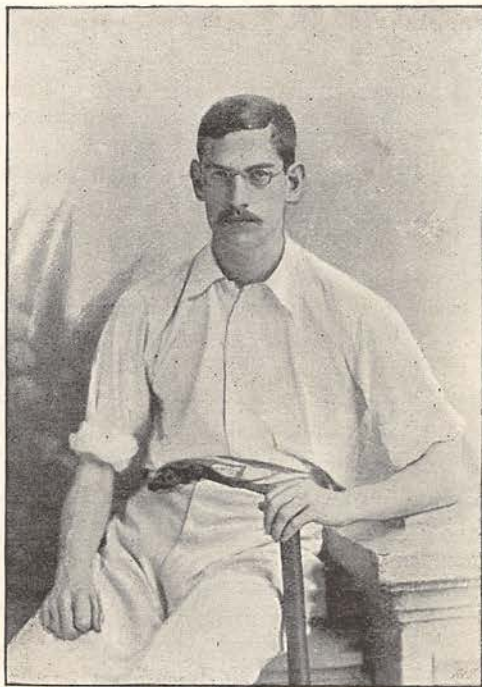
An instance of a county that has suffered severely from having paid too little attention to the encouragement of its rising players, is that of Notts. Many of the county's great players have grown old together, and without their great professional, Arthur Shrewsbury, who was unable to play all last season, they did very badly indeed. Too many of the team adopted an over-cautious style of play, which was very unattractive to watch; and while on many occasions cautious play is undoubtedly correct, yet it was much overdone; and the climax was reached when, at the end of the season, they remained at the wickets the whole of the day—against Kent—for 195 runs. In striking contrast to this slow play was the brilliant performance of Hampshire at Southampton, in August last, when Sussex having declared their innings closed, they were left with the seemingly impossible task of making 241 runs to win in three hours. Most teams would have played for a draw, but, thanks mainly to the magnificent hitting of Captain E. G. Wynyard, who made 117, the task was done, with four wickets to spare. This batsman has the credit of having performed the rare feat of scoring over a hundred in

three consecutive matches, in recognition of which the gratifying presentation of a pair of silver candlesticks was publicly made to him.

We have not space to enumerate the achievements of more of our prominent rising players; but many names may easily be recalled to mind, such as those of that Admirable Crichton of sport, C. B. Fry, of Oxford, who has obtained his triple blue; L. C. H. Palaret and H. T. Hewitt, the two brilliant Somersetshire amateurs, heroes of the famous record stand of 346 for the first wicket, against Yorkshire, in 1892; and many others whose deeds for the coming season are being looked forward to with so much interest.

Considerable curiosity was excited last year in the doings of "Young W. G.," who it was hoped would get his blue at Cambridge. Although, however, he was given a good trial, he was not quite successful enough to warrant his inclusion, even in a team which was certainly the weakest the Light Blues have sent up for years past. He bats very carefully, and also at times bowls well, and may jump into form suddenly. It would be a matter of great satisfaction to all cricketers should he succeed in doing so, as we hope the great name of Grace will be found in our score sheets for many years to come.

AN OLD PLAYER.



MR. W. G. GRACE, JUN.

(From a photograph by E. Hawkins & Co., Brighton.)