

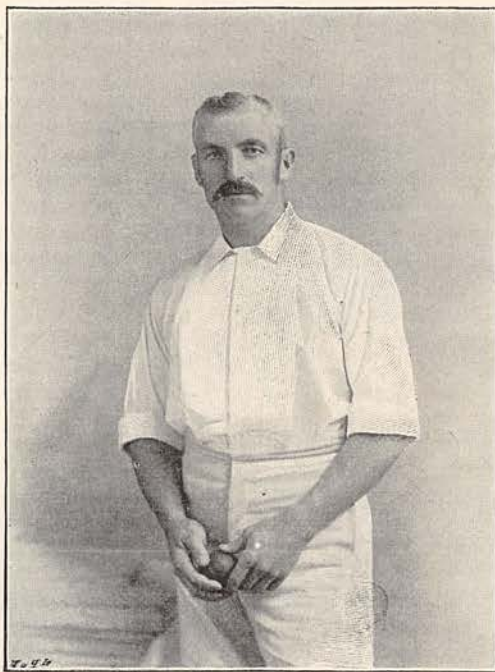
THE AUSTRALIANS IN THE CRICKET-FIELD, 1896.

BY A. C. MACLAREN (THE RECORD BAT OF 1895).

NOW that every arrangement has been made for an Australian team to visit us next summer, people are already beginning to speculate on the probable results of the three test matches to be played at Lord's, the Oval, and Manchester. I have told all who have asked for my humble opinion that I think that they will be short of bowling, for they have no really good first-class fast bowler in Australia; they can do without them in their own country, for they so seldom get a crumbled wicket, notwithstanding the fact that their matches often run into five days; but over here, on the last day of a match, they will often long for a Spofforth, especially if the wicket is fiery. There will be plenty of bowling to select from, but I feel sure that C. J. Eady is not up to the standard of the fast bowlers they have sent over to us. I expect he will be the only fast bowler

in the team, for it is not likely that Jones, of South Australia, will be selected. We must not forget that one member of the committee which decided that an Australian team should be sent over refused to vote in favour of the motion, his reasons being that since A. E. Stoddart's team had defeated them in Australia, their chances of winning the rubber in England were remote. This shows rather a lack of confidence in the powers of their own men. Undoubtedly it would have been a safer policy to have waited for another English team to have visited them again first, as it is naturally easier to win in their own than in our country. We have seen many Australians, coming over for the first time, with great batting reputations, which they

fail to maintain only because they are not accustomed to our wickets, often on the soft side; indeed, anyone who looks through Wisden's Almanack from 1879, the year of their first visit to England, will find that almost every man, who was selected solely as a batsman, always did far better on his second visit to us, only because he had taught himself how to score on soft wickets. Cricket in England and cricket in Australia are two totally different games. Owing to the lack of rain the wickets in Australia are most favourable for long scores, and it is quite a common occurrence to see only a moderate bat making his century, and that bat would probably be lucky to get fifty in England. Australia must send over her very best team next summer, and even then, with equal luck, I shall be very much surprised if she succeeds in lowering our colours. Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, and occasionally Bris-



G. GIFFEN.

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

bane supply all the players for an Australian team. Eady hails from Tasmania, but is an exception; and all the cricketing counties of England contain many first-class players, which gives us a vast majority to select from. I always thought that the Australians were a better team, on their own grounds, than A. E. Stoddart's eleven, but they were unfortunate in losing an excellent captain in Blackham, who could not be replaced, for good captains are rather scarce in Australia. The Australians are fully aware of the inadvisability of making G. Giffen captain, and I believe they will endeavour to find someone else to fill this important post; but now that Blackham has again severely damaged his thumb, it is almost a certainty that we have seen the last of



H. TROTT.

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

him as a first-class cricketer. It is rumoured that A. Bannerman will be in the team, and there are no better judges of the game than he is, but as he was not considered good enough to represent his country last season, I doubt if he will be included in this team. The Englishmen were not very sorry he was left out of the last five test matches, and there are a good many worse captains going about than Bannerman.

W. Bruce would be the very man to elect as captain, but he has no intention, I believe, of allowing cricket to stand in the way of business.

This leaves but three to choose from—H. Trott, C. T. B. Turner, and S. Gregory, and the latter is reported a likely absentee; this trio knows all about the game, but as we seldom see bowlers make good captains, it might be a rash experiment to make Turner captain. It is the intention, I believe, of G. Giffen to remain at home unless he is captain, so it will be seen that there is a difficulty already facing the Australians. I shall expect to see him come over, for they cannot do without the services of such a sterling cricketer.

The team will probably be made up of the following:—G. Giffen (capt.), C. Hill, A. H. Jarvis, J. J. Lyons, and J. Darling (S.A.); G. H. S. and A. E. Trott, and A. Johns (Vic.); C. J. Eady (Tas.); C. T. B. Turner, S. E.

Gregory, F. Iredale, and T. R. McKibbin (N.S.W.)—a powerful combination, which would look all the better with the inclusion of W. Bruce. I have not included H. Graham, as he was far from well last season in Australia, for the great innings he played in the third test match seemed to knock him to pieces; he is, however, again playing well, and he cannot well be left at home if his health will allow him to join the next team.

There is not a good first-class fast bowler in the above team, for C. J. Eady alone can claim to bowl fast, and as he has played no really first-class cricket, he is sure to be a bit short of experience; he is undoubtedly a fine all-round player, and just the sort to do big things when he has had some experience with our wickets and players. He holds the record for having made two centuries for Tasmania against a weak Victorian team, scoring 116 and 112 not out, but when Peel beat him more than once at Hobart during the last English tour, he acknowledged he was not used to such tricky bowlers.

McKibbin, another bowler, as yet unknown to frequenters of Lord's and other grounds, is a slow right-arm bowler with high delivery, at times getting a great deal of spin on the ball; but last season he sent down too many bad ones, and was always punished by batsmen strong on the leg side. If he doesn't



S. GREGORY.

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



H. GRAHAM.

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

make the mistake of breaking the ball too much when the wicket helps him, he ought to get plenty of wickets next season here; for he is very likely to get the very best batsmen out any moment, as he occasionally sends down a very difficult ball to play, and is just the bowler to get a side out on a true, hard wicket when other bowlers fail. It was a great performance of his to take six for 123 and eight for 66 on a perfect wicket against South Australia last February. Giffen thought so much of him that he was selected to play in the last test match, but he was not a success, obtaining one for 73 in first, and one for 47 in second innings.

A. E. Trott will, I feel sure, be one of the best bowlers they have sent over for some time, for the English wickets ought just to suit his style of bowling—right-arm medium, varying his pace very well, and occasionally sending down a very fast one. Besides being a fine field, he is a most dashing batsman, who believes in hitting them all along the ground. When we arrived in Melbourne we were told C. McLeod would get us all out, but after the first day's play we all agreed that A. E. Trott was the best bowler they had in Victoria, and subsequent events proved our surmises to be correct. Of the many fine things he did against us, undoubtedly his best performance was in the

third test match, played at Adelaide, when he scored 38 not out and 72 not out, and took eight wickets for 43 in our second innings.

Of the other bowlers—G. Giffen, G. H. S. Trott, and C. T. B. Turner—there is nothing new to tell, but I should like to mention the fact that no bowler ever experienced more cruel luck than did Charlie Turner last season in Australia, frequently the simplest of catches being dropped off his bowling. It was the opinion of Stoddart's team to a man that he had lost but little, if any, of his bowling; and we must remember that he was very much troubled with sciatica last season. Australians in general rather overlooked that fact; indeed, they are rather too apt to down their champions when they are a bit out of luck, and this was so with Turner.

Of those selected solely as batsmen, the new members will be F. Iredale, J. Darling, C. Hill, and taking them in order named, Iredale's style of play is somewhat similar to that of Albert Ward, having plenty of patience and never throwing his wicket away. He played two very fine innings against us, making 140 at Adelaide in third test match, and 133 for New South Wales and Queensland combined, at Brisbane. His out-fielding, too, is sure to be admired, as he possesses a very safe pair of hands, and occasionally brings off some wonderful running catches. There is no knowing what he may not do with the bat next summer.



H. TRUMBLE.

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

J. Darling reminds one of H. T. Hewett, but he has not quite the dash of the late Somerset captain. He played a good innings of 117 in the first match of A. E. Stoddart's tour for South Australia, and in the last test match his 74 and 50 were two nice innings to watch. He gets almost all his runs in front of the wicket, being very strong on the on-side, often hitting very hard in that direction. He gives one the impression of being equally good on all wickets, and will no doubt be forcing the game when others fail on difficult wickets.

Hill, who will be only nineteen next March, is, like Darling, left-handed. He played a really great innings of 150 not out, for South Australia, in our last match of the tour, at Adelaide, a truly wonderful performance for a lad of eighteen, for Richardson bowled well throughout the match. He also came out with top score of 56 in the second innings. His best stroke was a drive between coverpoint and mid-off, and he was very clever at the glide-stroke. He seemed very much at home to the fast bowling, an exception to many Australians; for none of them ever quite liked Richardson's pace, even on their own perfect wickets.

Of the old members, I might add that S. Gregory is probably a better bat to-day than ever; he is making centuries almost every week this season in New South Wales, and his innings of 201 in the first test match was one of the most perfect exhibitions of batting ever seen. He is still *facile princeps* as a fieldsman. H. Trott, too, always played well, and no man ever got his runs by more correct cricket. He had, too, none of the best of the luck, as he was run out more than once against us.

Great things are expected of A. Johns as a wicket-keeper; he kept very well in the last England *v.* Victoria match, only giving away seven extras out of a total of 401. J. J. Lyons was a bit out of form last season; but he does not get his wickets at home, the softer they are of the greater value is he to his side.

Big hitters are not generally a success in Australia, for G. Bean, of Sussex, besides others, have often played below their form on those true, fast wickets. There are exceptions, of course; some, like A. E. Stoddart, can alter

their game and play more carefully. George Giffen was as consistent as ever, and seldom, indeed, did he ever fail against us; but he is generally considered to be a greater cricketer at home than in England.

As a batting combination they are very strong, and if they could unearth a really good fast bowler, they would probably have a more successful season in England than they have had for some time. If they are well captained they ought to do much better than the last team, for Iredale, Darling, and A. E. Trott of the new members cannot fail to prove successful, and Giffen, Gregory, and H. Trott are as good as ever. Charlie Turner, too, if he comes, will probably prove to us that he has lost none of his old cunning. They are sure to be a wonderful fielding combination.

I had almost forgotten A. H. Jarvis. Nothing could have been finer than his wicket-keeping against us. From a wicket-keeping point of view, the Australians lost nothing when Jarvis had to take Blackham's place, and I quite agreed with him when he remarked to me, "There's plenty of life in the old dog yet."

Since I wrote this article the Australian team has been selected. H. Donnan (N.S.W.), H. Trumble, J. Harry (Vic.), E. Jones (S.A.), I did not include in my probable team; I was not prepared to see both Jones and Eady included, but two fast bowlers are not too many. I am more than surprised at the exclusion of A. E. Trott, and feel sure he must have had an invitation to become one of the team. I was afraid Turner and Lyons might not be chosen, but I expect both will be very much missed. Clem Hill is very young yet, and will probably come with next team. Donnan is a sound, steady bat, and I believe was a better player three or four years ago than he is to-day. Harry played a good innings for Victoria against us at Melbourne, but I was not prepared to see him selected for this team. Trumble is known to all cricketers over here, and he will probably have more bowling than before, as he is the only medium pace bowler of the team. I cannot help thinking they are rather short of good bowlers. I rather think Harry keeps wicket; in that case, he will probably be a reserve in the big matches.

