

Some Famous Cricket Balls.

BY HAROLD MACFARLANE.

Illustrated with Photographs by W. Goshawk, Harrow-on-the-Hill.



HE who glances over a copy of the *Times* dated August 15th, 1862, which copy was published at the awkward price of 4½d., will find a leading article on the Civil War in America, in which McClellan's army is described as being surrounded and shut up forty miles from Richmond and in a precarious situation. Farther on he will discover from a leader on the report of the Inland Revenue Commission that tobacco is frequently adulterated with cabbage and rhubarb leaves, snuff with "the ground acorn cups of Valerian oak," and pepper with "finely-ground quartz." In the body of the paper, when he has digested the information that Prince Henry of Prussia shook his "mailed fist" in the face of the world for the first time the previous day, he will gather that, so far as the United Kingdom is concerned, the most important item of news is the non-appearance of the singing bullfinch at the International Exhibition. Should the eye of our wayfarer steadily pursue its path down the columns of that particular issue of the "Thunderer" he will, given that his eyesight is keen, discover a report of a match at Canterbury that will be remembered in England when the "maily phist's" birthday is forgotten, when cabbage and rhubarb no longer enter into the composition of tobacco, and singing bullfinches are no longer regarded as striking features of an exhibition.

The first ball in the match in question—Twelve of M.C.C. v. Twelve of Gentlemen of Kent—was not bowled until the clock struck four, the start being somewhat delayed owing to an objection on the part of the Kentish captain to Mr. E. M. Grace's presence in an M.C.C. eleven, he not being a member of that club. The difficulty being smoothed away and the home side dismissed for 141 runs, Mr. E. M. Grace began his famous innings "with an excellent hit, but only scored one, the field being too nimble for him," a statement that distinctly contradicts the legend that E. M. was out first ball, but was given in by Fuller Pilch on the ground that he wished "to see the young gentleman bat." At 29 Mr. Grace made

a good drive for 2; in the next over, however, "one of the balls was caught in the short-slip, but the umpire gave it as 'not out,' so Mr. Grace retained his post at the wickets." At 64 we are somewhat mystified to learn "the Hon. E. C. Leigh then joined Mr. Grace, who attempted the sensation dodge, but missed the ball"; there is nothing in the context to enlighten the reader as to the nature of the "sensation dodge," but it was probably his famous drive over the bowler's head, or his equally famous—or, before it attained its present popularity, infamous—pull.

After a few changes of wicket-keepers and amidst a drizzling rain, at 130 odd, "Mr. Grace gave a good leg-hit which was missed by long-leg; another ball, and Mr. Grace made a queer hit, intended for a drive, which he turned behind him, making a leg-hit of it," a stroke that sounds as if it ought to have been, but was not, classed amongst the sensation dodges of the great batsman. At the close of play Mr. Grace was 105 not out; the *Times*, however, in both editions presents him with an additional 90, and we read that Mr. E. M. Grace is not out 195 out of a total of 229.

The following day Mr. Grace promptly broke his bat, but scored a single from the stroke; and twelve runs later, having tried, but unsuccessfully, the "sensation hit," again sent the ball up "into the air almost perpendicular—a tremendous skier—and Mr. Kelson (the wicket-keeper) ran forward to catch it, but the ball was in the air so long he lost the proper sight and missed it." Before the innings came to a close, and Mr. Grace carried his bat, to be "warmly cheered as he returned to the booth, when Lord Sefton presented him with a bat on the part of the M.C.C.," he gave a "sky-drive" on the off-side, but it was again missed in the long-field.

His innings of 192 comprised 26 fours (the boundary appears to have been a short one), 7 threes, 9 twos, and singles. In the account of Kent's second innings the following picturesque specimen of reporting is given: "Mr. Traughton began the batting and made a capital drive that Mr. Leigh endeavoured to secure, and in doing so the ball struck him

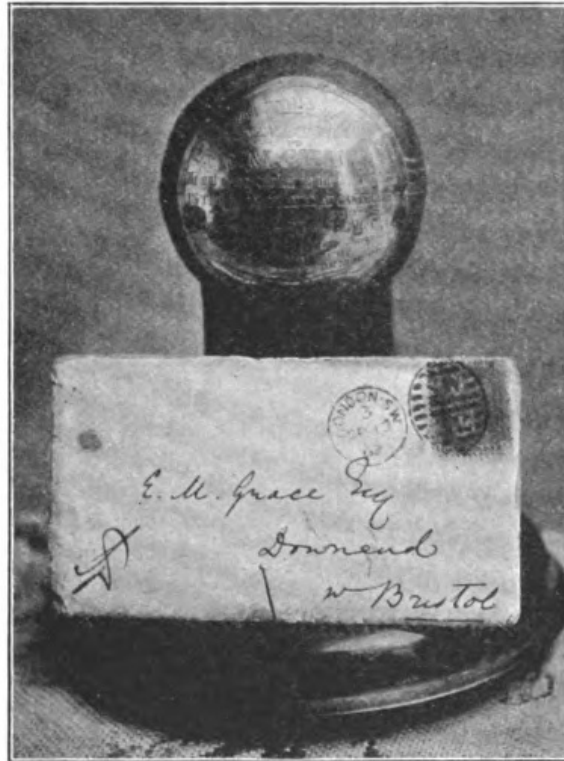
in the stomach, nearly doubling him up. A roll on the grass, a few fantastic twistings of the body, and Mr. Leigh was himself again." In this innings Mr. Grace apparently varied the pace of his bowling considerably, for at 69 we are told he "tried slow bowling with Mr. Biron," the implication being that he had previously been bowling fast. At the end of the match we find that Mr. Grace took all the ten wickets falling, one Kent man being absent, which feat, coupled with his famous innings, surely called for a leading article, or, at all events, a pæan of praise; but, alas, not a word is meted out to him for his great performance in the following day's paper. His bowling analysis is omitted, perhaps through lack of space; but the reason why the bullfinch stopped piping, on account of the crowd assembling in the Swiss department in their anxiety to hear its dulcet notes, damaging the exhibits at neighbouring stalls, is given at length. Mr. Grace, however, we doubt not, was more than consoled for the non-appreciation of the "Thunderer" by the receipt, a few days later, of the letter shown in our photograph, in which the Hon. Spencer Ponsonby, writing from the Lord Chamberlain's Office, says he has forwarded by Great Western Railway the ball we see above the letter, "with which you demolished every wicket in the second innings of the match at Canterbury in which you scored 192 not out," and is requested by the Marylebone Cricket Club to beg Mr. Grace's acceptance of the same, together with their best thanks for the assistance he rendered them, as a memorial of what is aptly described as "an unprecedented feat."

This brownish-yellow relic, in a splendid state of preservation, of a marvellous performance bears a silver plate inscribed as follows:—

With this ball—presented by M.C.C. to E. M.

Grace—he got every wicket in the second innings in the match played at Canterbury, August 14-15, 1862. Gentlemen of Kent v. M.C.C., for whom he played as an emergency, and in which, going in first, he scored 192 not out.

On July 14th, 1866, we find the leaders of the *Times* wrestling with the situation in Austria, where the Prussian army was making a vast impression, with the Chancellor of the Exchequer's (Mr. Disraeli) speech in Buckinghamshire, and with the appointment of a Receiver by the Court of Chancery for the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway; diligent search, however, reveals in a corner of the paper a report of the Harrow and Eton match of that year, from which we gather that Eton began their innings at six o'clock, and "shortly afterwards Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales, accompanied by the Countess of Dunmore, honoured the ground with her presence, and was received with great enthusiasm," which was renewed when the Duke of Edinburgh and the Hon. Elliot Yorke arrived. We are afraid their Royal Highnesses saw very little play, and that they left the ground with a distinctly poor opinion of the spirit in which the game is played, for, after a few Eton wickets had fallen,



THE BALL OFF WHICH DR. E. M. GRACE MADE 192 NOT OUT AND WITH WHICH HE TOOK ALL THE WICKETS OF ONE INNINGS.

to quote a contemporary account of the affair, "a very unpleasant *contretemps* rose, which at one time threatened serious consequences. It was in this wise: during the innings of Eton, Mr. Lubbock drove a ball of Mr. Cobden's up the hill, which was impeded in its progress by some spectators, and according to reliable testimony it did not pass the ropes—three being the number agreed upon in such an event. Two were run for it, and in attempting a third, the ball being well returned, Mr. Foley's wicket was put down, and Hearne gave him out. To this Mr. Lubbock demurred and appealed to Shaw, the other umpire, who confirmed the decision. The

matter was referred to the committee, who, of course, supported the umpires, but so great was the uproar and confusion that the ground could not be cleared, and so no further play took place that night. On the Saturday morning the Harrovians chivalrously offered that Mr. Foley should resume his innings, but the Eton captain declined the courtesy. The Etonians seemed sadly 'at sea' on Lord's lively ground after their own heavy greensward, and Mr. Cobden's bowling, especially in the second innings, they couldn't look at."

According to the *Times* report, and a letter written to that paper by one who "writes as an Eton man, full of my usual, orthodox, annual two-day enmity towards all my Harrow friends, Harrow boys, ribands, and especially Harrow hits," it is "allowed on all hands" that the ball on reaching the fringe of the spectators seated on the ground in front of the ropes was thrown up by one of them and was consequently dead: the account is further supplemented by the news that the batsmen and fieldsmen returned to the pavilion and "the centre of the ground was thronged with spectators each discussing the point and giving vent to their opinions, the game being interrupted for three-quarters of an hour."

The match, which ended in a victory to Harrow by an innings and 136 runs, saw the first appearance at Lord's of Mr. F. C. Cobden, who was said at the time to have come out late in the season, and is described as "a first-rate fast bowler, a very fine hitter, rather slow in the field, but pretty safe at a catch." Although Mr. Cobden's performance in this match foreshadowed his remarkable bowling feat in the Varsity match of 1870, the "incident" eclipsed everything else, and his five wickets for 37 runs in the first and three for 10 in the second innings only elicited the following mild praise from the *Times*: "Mr. Cobden and Mr. Money bowled well throughout, and were aided by some very good fielding." There was, however, something better than praise from the *Times* awaiting the future famous Light Blue trundler; for after a few days had elapsed he was the recipient of the actual ball used in the match (the centre one of the three

shown in our second photograph), which was inscribed:—

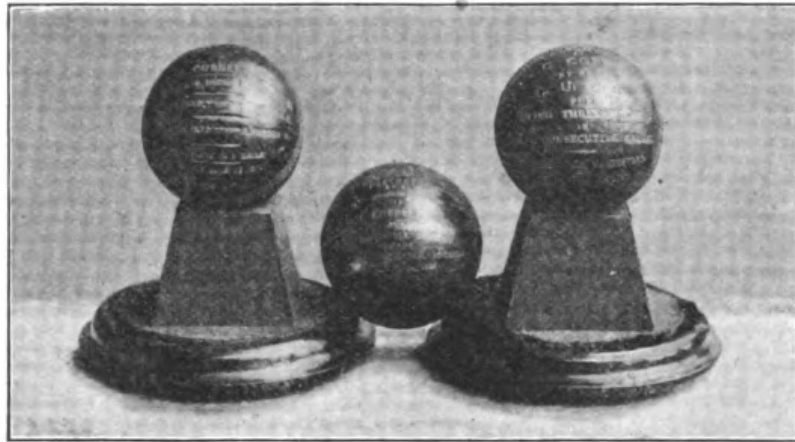
Presented by an Old Harrow captain to F. C. Cobden, Esq., for his admirable bowling in the Harrow and Eton match at Lord's, July 13 and 14, 1866;

and the donor was I. D. Walker.

Of the other two balls shown in the same photograph, that on the right, as the inscription states, was presented—

To F. C. Cobden, by the C.U.C.C., for bowling three wickets in three consecutive balls. Cambridge v. Oxford, June 26th and 27th, 1870.

The actual ball used in this match, which, says the oracle of Printing House Square, "viewed in all its bearings . . . is perhaps the most remarkable since it was first played thirty-three years ago," surmounts the left-hand stand, and bears the following inscription:—



BALLS WITH WHICH MR. F. C. COBDEN PERFORMED THREE WONDERFUL BOWLING FEATS.

F. C. Cobden, Esq.
 S. E. Butlerc Bourne, b Cobden o
 T. H. Belcher ...b Cobden o
 W. A. Stewart...b Cobden o
 3 wickets in 3 balls.
 Lord's, June 28, 1870.

Although the ball presented by the Cambridge University Cricket Club gives the date as June 26th and 27th, 1870, June 26th was, as a matter of fact, a Sunday, and the correct dates are June 27th and 28th. The match under ordinary circumstances would have been extended to the third day, but "Mr. Townsend came forward as the clock was striking seven (on the second day), the time for drawing the stumps, but as the game was considered lost to Cambridge, it was suggested by some that it would be well to finish it"—a "reckless and suicidal" policy (according to a correspondent to the *Field*, who wrote under the pen name of "Liberior") that was adopted by the Oxford captain, who very probably and rightly thought—as another correspondent pointed out in reply

to "Liberior"—that "when one side is getting runs fast and the fielding is demoralized, the advantage of continuing to play is with the batsman."

The details of this tremendous finish and marvellous over are set forth in great fulness in the Badminton "Cricket" by the players taking part in the encounter, but we doubt if more temperate language was ever used to describe an incident that is without parallel in Inter-Varsity cricket than that appearing in the *Times* on June 29th, 1870. At 176 we read, "Mr. Butler came and was caught at mid-off without scoring. Mr. Belcher had but one ball, which bowled his leg stump; and Mr. Stewart, the last man, who was only required to make 3, failed most signally—bowled also first ball; and then at 7.35

Cambridge were declared winners by 2 runs. Messrs. Cobden and Ward were the only successful bowlers of the seven engaged." We may supplement this vivid account so far as to say that the first ball of Mr. Cobden's over was almost the last of the match, for Mr. Hill, who carried his bat for 13 and was probably gnashing his teeth as his *confrères* went in and out without giving him an opportunity of knocking off the runs, hit it so hard that it would have gone to the boundary but Mr. Bourne with one hand so neatly stopped it that one run only accrued to the Dark Blues' total, and a very expensive single it proved to be.

Where do the balls rest to-day with which Mr. S. E. Butler enjoyed his revenge the year following the Oxford *debâcle* by taking all the Cambridge wickets in their first innings for 38 runs and five for 57 in the second; with which in 1875 Alfred Shaw earned a silver teapot and undying fame for the following bowling analysis:—

Overs	Maidens	Runs	Wickets
41.2	36	7	7

at the expense of an M.C.C. eleven, including W. G., I. D., W. H. Hadow, A. W. Ridley, C. F. Buller, A. J. Webbe, Lord Harris, H. W. Renny Tailour, A. S. Duncan, A. W. Herbert, and R. Clayton; with which Mr. P. H. Morton for Cambridge routed the Australians at Lord's in 1878 by capturing

12 wickets for 90; and that propelled by Mr. F. R. Spofforth, who wrought such havoc in the ranks of one of the strongest England elevens that ever stepped on a cricket pitch that the whole team, on August 29th, 1882, was sent to the right-about for a paltry 77 runs, England thereby suffering defeat by seven notches alone? Where these famous balls rest we know not, and so regretfully omit them from our gallery.

Another ball we should have been well pleased to have had the opportunity of including in this series is the silver sphere mentioned by Mr. Andrew Lang in his contribution to the Badminton "Cricket," which ball, once the property of the Vine Club, of Sevenoaks, was filled with snuff, and "tossed from hand-to-hand after dinner; he

who dropped it being fined in claret or some other liquor." Had we had the good fortune to obtain a photograph of this ball it would have formed a most acceptable companion picture to the one which, thanks to the courtesy of Mr. J. T. Hearne, we are able to present herewith, and which was given to the popular bowler after the England *v.* Australia match of 1896, at the Oval, by a world-renowned amateur, who himself took part in the



J. T. HEARNE'S GOLD CRICKET BALL.

fixture—the last in which England claimed victory over Australia in the home country. Although the gold ball depicted is but small in size, it is a memento of a very big performance, which will, however, be too fresh in the memories of our readers to require any lengthy comment. How the Australians were set 111 to win, and how W. G., after a single maiden sent down by Richardson (Hearne having bowled Darling in its first over), with rare discernment substituted Peel for the fast bowler, with the result that in the course of 130 balls our friends the enemy were dismissed for 44 runs, and how Hearne in the match took ten wickets for 60 runs and Peel eight for 53, are items of cricket lore enthusiasts love to dwell upon—items, too, that will not soon be forgotten. The actual ball used in the encounter, we believe, is in Abel's possession, and right well he earned it—his catch in the slips whereby the Australians' innings was

brought to a close was brought about by dashing across at full speed and taking the ball with the right hand, and was quite one of the features of this celebrated match.



THE BALL USED IN THE REMARKABLE MATCH YORKS V. SURREY, JUNE, 1898.

The inscription on the silver band circling the ball that graces the china ornament runs as follows :—

Rhodes, 12 wickets for 70.	At Bradford.	Surrey, 139 and 37.
Wainwright, 8 wickets for 53.	Yorkshire v. Surrey.	Yorkshire, 297—9 wickets.
Hunter, stumped 8 and caught 2.	June 6, 7, 8, 1898.	Hirst, 130 not out ; Haigh, 83, 192 for ninth wicket ;

and gives in a nutshell the chief features of what the *Field* described as a "most remarkable match." We may mention that Hirst and Haigh's prolific stand occupied two hours and fifty minutes, or just twice the time occupied by Surrey in scoring 37 runs in their second innings, during which period eight members of the opposing eleven trundled the ball depicted ; another noteworthy feature of the Surrey second innings was the fact that the last five wickets all fell through the agency of Hunter behind the stumps.

Those of our readers familiar with Lord Hawke's cricket career will not find their memories over-burdened with figures relating to his bowling performances in first-class fixtures, for it has so happened that he has generally occupied the post of captain in the majority of matches in which he has taken part, with the result that he has by modestly but consistently keeping himself

very much in the bowling reserve allowed the general public to gain the entirely erroneous impression that he is no trundler. On Saturday, October 24th, 1891, at Ottawa, however, for one over and three balls from which seven runs were scored, Lord Hawke broke down the reserve with which he had surrounded himself at Eton and Cambridge so far as bowling is concerned, and by tempting Mr. A. Z. Palmer to give Mr. G. W. Ricketts a catch, captured his only wicket of the tour, thereby surprising his own team considerably more than the natives. The ball rendered famous in this manner was mounted and presented to Lord Hawke by Mr. C. W. Wright, who facetiously had the base of the handsome stand engraved with the legend, "A. Z. Palmer, c. Ricketts, b. Hawke, 15!! Witness, Chawles! Ottawa, October 24th, 1891." Spurred thereto, perhaps, by his success in this encounter, the captain of the champion county has, since that date, captured seven wickets for 15 runs apiece in the West Indies and two wickets for 18 runs in South Africa.

The writer takes the present opportunity of thanking Lord Hawke, Dr. E. M. Grace, Messrs. F. C. Cobden, P. H. Morton, and



THE BALL WITH WHICH LORD HAWKE CAPTURED ONE WICKET DURING THE CANADIAN TOUR OF 1891.

J. T. Hearne for the loan of the famous cricket balls depicted, and for the information with which they and others most kindly furnished him.