

## Some Famous Bats.

BY HAROLD MACFARLANE.



UNDOUBTEDLY pride of place in our photographic collection of famous bats must be awarded to His Majesty, who has recently emphasized the great interest he has always taken in the game (an interest that must have cost him an enormous sum, seeing that Kennington Oval, which was let to the Surrey County Cricket Club for a nominal rental, would, had it been built over, have brought in a very considerable amount annually to the Duchy of Cornwall) by causing to be laid out at Sandringham, under the direction of that popular cricketer, Chatterton, of the Derbyshire team, a new cricket ground for the use of the tenants on his Norfolk estate.

Although a celebrated professional, Bell, of Cambridgeshire, who was sent up from Eton to coach the young Princes at Windsor in the sixties, remarked when he returned that he "could make nothing of 'em," it is none the less a fact that His Majesty played cricket at Oxford during his University career, though the local Press of the period did not appear to be cognizant of the fact, seeing that no details of the Royal batting feats at the University are available, whilst the inscription upon the well-worn bat reproduced herewith, which bears on the back a silver medal engraved with the Three Feathers of the Princes of Wales, surmounted by a coronet, states that "this bat was used by H.R.H. the Prince of Wales when a member of Prince's Cricket Club."

Whether this bat was used when the King assisted the I Zingari to beat the Gentlemen of Norfolk at Sandringham on July 17th, 1866, we are unable to say, but it is interesting to note that the fact that

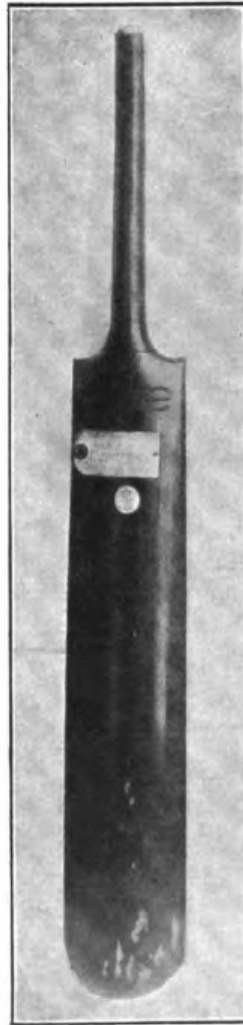
Fortune knows no distinctions in the cricket-field was emphatically exemplified on this occasion, for a fast underhand ball seemingly of the "sneak" or "grub" persuasion, and of diabolical straightness, lowered the Royal wicket, and the score-sheet henceforward bore the entry:—

"H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, b. C. Wright, o."

It should be mentioned, *à propos* of this match, that the Zingari took down a very strong team, including several old Blues in the Hon. T. De Grey (Camb.), W. H. Dyke (now the Right Hon. W. Hart-Dyke), R. A. Fitzgerald (Camb.), who was at one time secretary of the Marylebone Cricket Club, and Lord Royston and a few representatives of the Gentlemen of England in C. F. Buller (a relative of the General) and Captain Arkwright, in addition to the already-mentioned "Blues." That the Zingari team, for whom the King fielded at short square leg, won by an innings and thirty-eight runs is not altogether surprising.

Although the name of Her Royal Highness Princess Louise is not included in that great work of cricketing reference, "Scores and Biographies," as having run up any notable score or performed any redoubtable bowling feat, that she takes a keen interest in the national game is evidenced by the fact that the bat shown in our second illustration was once her property. This bat, a most admirably balanced weapon for attack or defence, was purchased by Her Royal Highness in 1897 at the stall devoted to the sale of cricketing implements under the direction of Messrs. Feltham at

the Imperial Fête of that year, and bears, as will be seen from the illustration showing the shoulder of the bat alone, the signatures of cricket's only "Champion," Dr. W. G. Grace;



THE KING'S BAT, USED WHEN HIS MAJESTY WAS A MEMBER OF THE PRINCE'S CRICKET CLUB.

From a Photo. by Sands, Hunter, & Co.



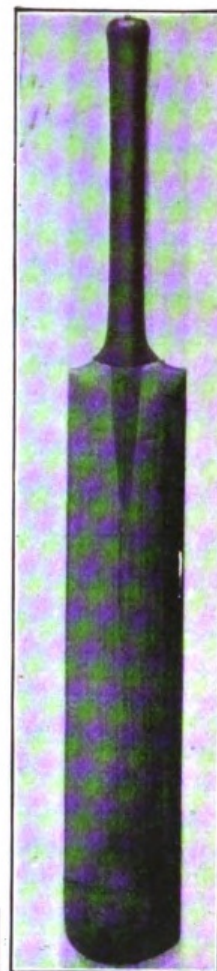
PRINCESS LOUISE'S BAT—  
FULL LENGTH.  
From a Photo. by W. Goshawk,  
Harrow-on-the-Hill.

of Mr. G. L. Jessop, upon whose shoulders the mantle of that magnificent hitter, Mr. C. I. Thornton, appears to have fallen; and Brockwell, Abel, and Hayward, three representative professional cricketers of English fame. At the time the purchase was made it was a matter of conjecture as to what purpose the bat would be turned, but it eventually transpired that the Princess had given it to a young friend, Lord Stavordale, who when at Eton was regarded as a promising bat, and to whom we are indebted for permission to present the two photographs herewith published for the first time.

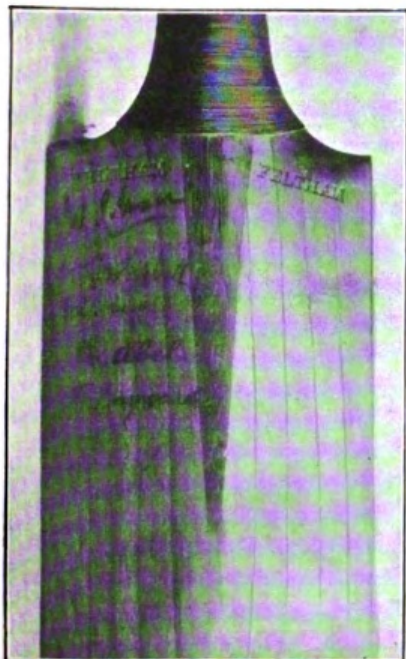
Some few years ago a red willow tree planted in 1835 beside the River Chelmar, at Boreham, was found when felled to be

10ft. long and  $5\frac{3}{4}$ ft. in diameter. From this giant of the species *salix* a firm of bat manufacturers in St. John's Wood made 1,179 cricket bats out of the prime cuts alone. With this data to assist him perhaps some energetic purveyor of popular statistics will kindly supply the answer to the query: "How many willow forests will have to be planted before the wood is grown from which a bat is produced that will eclipse the feat performed by the wielder of the third bat in our photographic collection?"

This bat which rendered such doughty service to its wielder until it split from shoulder to foot is now the treasured



A. C. MACLAREN'S BAT,  
WITH WHICH HE MADE  
THE RECORD SCORE OF  
424 NOT OUT.  
From a Photo. by W. Goshawk,  
Harrow-on-the-Hill.



PRINCESS LOUISE'S BAT—SHOWING SIGNATURES.  
From a Photo. by W. Goshawk, Harrow-on-the-Hill.



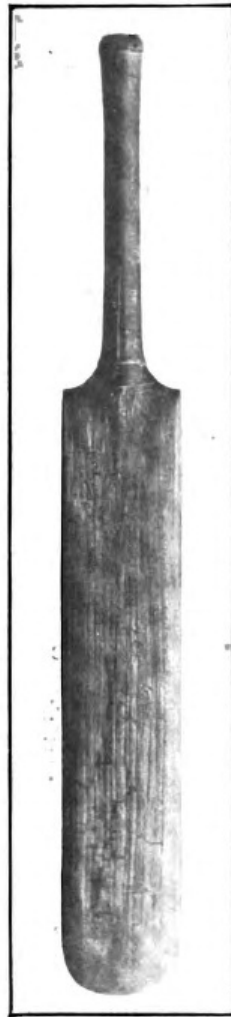
A. C. MACLAREN'S BAT—SHOWING  
INSCRIPTION.  
From a Photo. by W. Goshawk,  
Harrow-on-the-Hill.

possession of the Old Harrovian Club, the windows of which look out upon the Harrow School playing-field, where from 1887, the year in which he received the Harrovian equivalent for his colours in his school team—namely, the black and white

speckled straw hat and white flannel trousers—until 1890, Mr. MacLaren, its original owner, by many remarkable innings foreshadowed his great career in the cricket-field.

As the statement on the bat itself, written and signed by the Lancashire captain, declares, it was with this bat, on July 15th and 16th, 1895, that Mr. MacLaren surpassed all previous individual scores in first-class cricket, including, of course, Dr. Grace's mammoth compilation of 334 against Kent in 1876, which remained a record for nineteen years. Mr. MacLaren had not attained his fifth birthday on the day Dr. Grace ran up his record score in first-class cricket; when he beat the said record in 1895 he had not quite attained the age of twenty-four.

Prior to the match with Lancashire in which Mr. MacLaren broke the record Somerset had had a very unpleasant experience at the bats of Essex, who in seven hours ran up the exceptional total of 692 runs, Carpenter scoring 153, Mr. C. McGahey 147, Mr. A. P. Lucas 135, and T. M. Russell 99. Tyler, it may be mentioned, took five wickets for 215 runs and Mr. S. M. J. Woods two for 171 in this match. After they had passed through such an experience it was a little unkind of fate to permit Mr. MacLaren to win the toss and go in on another perfect wicket, and even more unkind that the great batsman should elect to remain undisturbed at the stumps for seven hours and fifty minutes, during which time he can scarcely be said to have been idle, seeing that he hit one 6, sixty-two 4's, eleven 3's, thirty-seven 2's, and sixty-three singles. It should be mentioned that the Lancashire captain went in first, added 363 runs with Paul (171) for the second wicket in three hours and ten minutes, and was out seventh when 792 runs had been scored. When Lancashire were out for 801 runs, and the bowling

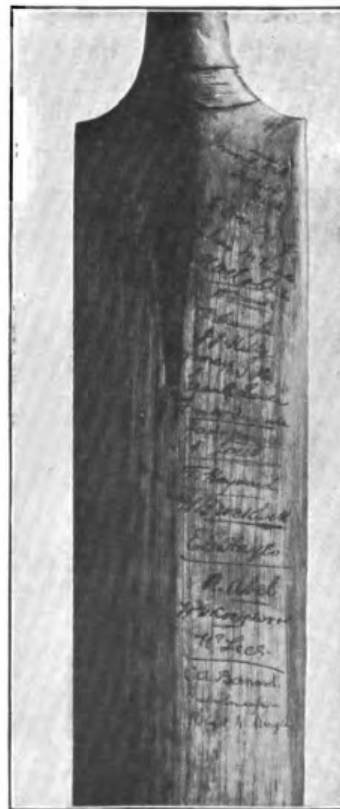


MR. V. T. HILL'S BAT,  
USED AS AN AUTOGRAPH  
"ALBUM."  
From a Photo. by W. Goshawk,  
Harrow-on-the-Hill.

analysis was made public, it was found that Tyler had taken one wicket for 212 runs and Mr. Woods two for 163. A few weeks later, playing against Surrey, Tyler captured all ten Surrey wickets in the first innings for 49 runs; it would be difficult to cite a more extraordinary contrast in any cricket season in the case of any first-class bowler. As a memento of his wonderful feat the Lancashire County Cricket Club presented Mr. MacLaren with a gold chronometer; had they given him the contents of a watchmaker's shop it would not have been more than his deserts.

When a year last July Mr. H. Martyn, of Oxford, was scoring off the Cambridge bowling at the rate of two runs a minute many of the spectators who applauded his Jessopian feat recalled a similar display, dating back eight years, of which Mr. V. T. Hill (Winchester, Oxford, and Somerset) was the hero. When Mr. Hill's great innings in the University match of 1892 began the Oxford total was but 157 for five wickets—as things go a very moderate score; when he left the wickets after a most exhilarating innings, lasting just a hundred minutes, the Dark Blue's total, thanks to his and Mr. Jardine's fine display of batting, had been augmented by 178 runs, of which Mr. Hill's share was 114, a score that contained more 4's than singles, the proportion being eighteen to thirteen.

A bat that had served its wielder so well obviously deserved a fate better than that which is usually accorded to a discarded implement, and Mr. Hill in having it planed and cleaned and using it as a novel sort of autograph "album" hit upon a very happy method of preserving it and adding to the undoubted interest it already possessed.



SIGNATURES ON BACK OF MR. HILL'S  
BAT.

From a Photo. by W. Goshawk,  
Harrow-on-the-Hill.

If the reader directs his attention to that photograph of the bat that shows a portion of the leather handle and back he will observe that the same is headed, in proximity to the shoulder, by the signature of Mr. Hill himself, who wrote under his signature, Vernon T. Hill, "Oriol College, 1892." Following the signature of the old Wykehamist come those of several members of the last Australian team, including J. Dar-

adjudicate upon their respective claims for premiership would be a difficult task, seeing that whilst the former owns unique specimens, such as the cricket implements used by the Arctic explorers who went out to search for Sir John Franklin and who played on the ice, the latter has in the King's bat—already shown in our photographic collection by the kind permission of the owners—a specimen that they probably would not ex-



SIGNATURES ON FACE OF MR. HILL'S BAT.  
From a Photo. by W. Goshauck, Harrow-on-the-Hill.

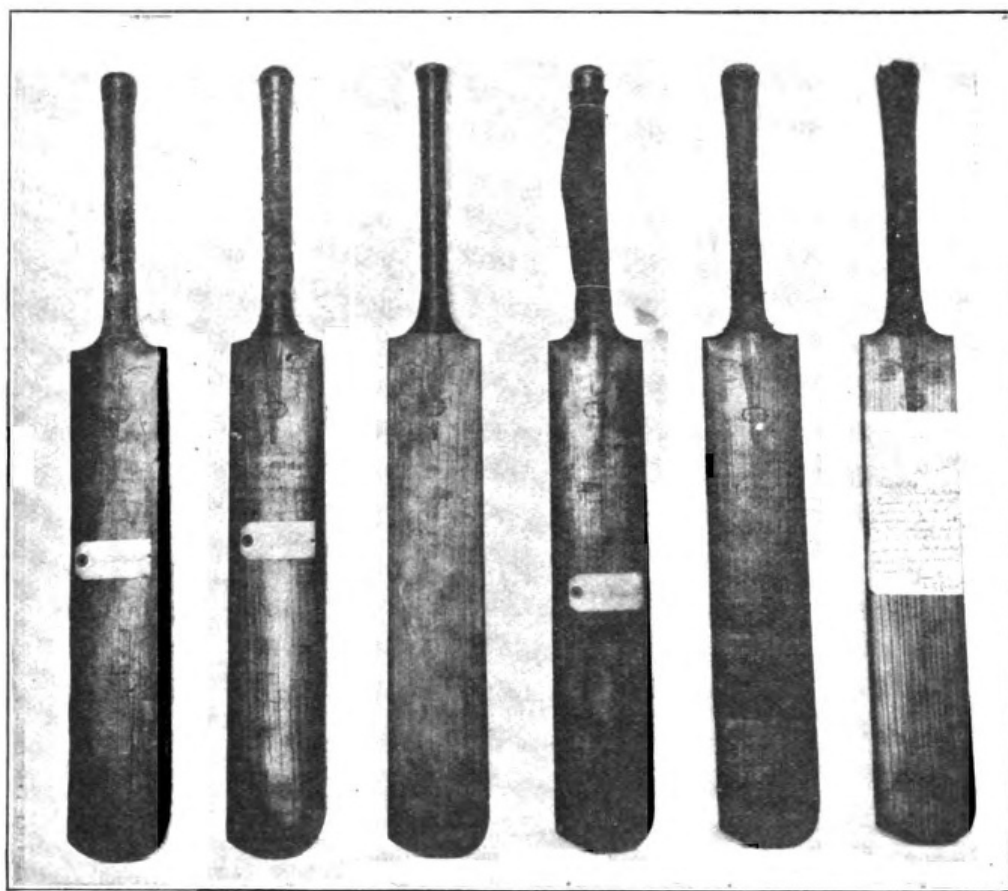
ling (the captain), Charles McLeod, M. A. Noble, H. Trumble, V. Trumper, J. J. Kelly, W. P. Howell (written upside down), Frank Laver, Frank Iredale, Jack Worrall, and E. Jones. Following these famous autographs can be discerned the calligraphy of T. Hayward, W. Brockwell, E. G. Hayes, R. Abel (who is apparently always ready and willing to add his signature to autograph bats), W. H. Lockwood, and W. Lees, of the Surrey team; C. A. Bernard, of Somerset; and Messrs. Gregor McGregor and Robert N. Douglas, of Middlesex. On that portion of the face of the bat shown in our second photograph the signatures of W. G. Grace, T. Richardson, W. N. Roe, K. S. Ranjit Sinhji, W. Newham, and George Brann stand out with great distinctness, whilst those of Messrs. Cyril O. H. Sewell, F. Stanley Jackson, George F. Vernon, S. M. J. Woods, A. O. Jones, J. A. Dixon, Lord Hawke, C. B. Fry, C. M. Wells, Francis G. Ford, and C. L. Townsend, in addition to others, are only just visible, these latter gentlemen being too economical in respect to the amount of ink they use for their signatures to permit the same to be quite so effective from a photographic point of view.

Of the many collectors of cricket bats two in particular are peculiarly rich in rare specimens, namely, Lord Sheffield, who has done so much for Sussex cricket, and the firm of John Wisden, so well known to wielders of bat and ball; to have to

change for any bat in existence, including that presented by the native sporting community of Calcutta on New Year's Eve, December 31st, 1898, to Prince Ranjit Sinhji, which bat took the shape of a small gold scarf-pin set in sapphires.

In addition to the King's bat Messrs. Wisden permitted us to add to our photographic collection the six bats shown here-with in the last of our photographs, that on the right belonging to Dr. W. G. Grace, and the other five from right to left being at one time in the possession of Messrs. Percy Perrin (of Essex), F. Stanley Jackson (Harrow, Cambridge, and Yorkshire), C. B. Fry (Oxford and Sussex), J. T. Brown (Yorkshire), and George Lohmann—all, with the exception, at the moment of writing, of Mr. Perrin, Internationals.

Undoubtedly the bat in the best state of repair is that of Dr. Grace, who states in the letter dated from the London County Cricket Club, pasted on its face, that he scored over a thousand runs with it, including the 126 he compiled for the South *v.* the North, at Lord's, in September, 1900, his highest score of the year. Mr. Perrin's bat, bound, it will be observed, in three places, bears an inscription to the effect that the popular Essex amateur scored a couple of thousand runs with it in 1898. The bat labelled "F. Stanley Jackson's bat" is not only thrice bound, but has a large piece of wood let into it, striking testimony of the fact that



Lohmann.

J. T. Brown.

C. B. Fry.

F. S. Jackson.

P. Perrin.

W. G. Grace.

From a Photo. by]

SIX FAMOUS BATS.

[Sands, Hunter, &amp; Co.

Mr. Jackson, who scored a couple of thousand runs with it, was in excellent form in 1893.

Upon the fourth bat from the right appears, in the handwriting of the celebrated Sussex cricketer, the inscription: "The blade to which this handle originally belonged was the best I have ever used.—C. B. FRY."

The fifth bat, that of J. T. Brown, is reminiscent of a great cricketing occasion, namely, the England *v.* Australia match played at Melbourne in March, 1895, and won by the former by five wickets. It was in this match that, England being set 297 to win and having lost two wickets (Mr. Stoddart's and Brockwell's) with but 28 runs on the board, J. T. Brown joined Albert Ward and, the former batting brilliantly for 140 and the latter playing a grand defensive innings of 93, no fewer than 210 runs were put on for their partnership, which practically won the match for the home country.

The sixth bat shown was once the possession of that popular Surrey cricketer, George Lohmann, who not only used it himself but apparently permitted all the other members of the Surrey eleven to do so also, with the result that in 1890-91-92 some 5,000 or 6,000 runs were scored with it. That it was a well-tried friend is proved by the wood that has been inlet, whilst other evidence is forthcoming in the shape of the numerous pegs introduced for the purpose of extending its career of usefulness.

In bringing this brief commentary on the bats portrayed to a close the writer takes the present opportunity of thanking Lord Stavordale, Messrs. A. C. McLaren, V. T. Hill, the officials of the old Harrovian Club, Messrs. Wisden's representative, and the other gentlemen who rendered him great assistance in preparing the accompanying photographic collection of famous bats, for their kindness in lending him the bats and giving him information concerning them.