



CRICKET REMINISCENCES OF PAST CONFLICTS.

BY GEORGE GIFFEN.



WHAT are "The Ashes"? Nothing more nor less than the ashes of English cricket. A London paper immortalised them when the 1882 Australian Eleven defeated England at Kennington Oval; and ever since newspaper writers have alluded to test matches between representatives of England and Australia as the Fights for the Ashes. Until 1882 there were no ashes. In 1877 an Australian Eleven defeated eleven representative English professionals at Sydney; but although that contest has always been regarded as the first of a series of half a hundred test matches, no one for a moment considered that Lillywhite's team thoroughly represented the Mother Country. England's supremacy was unquestioned, and continued so until the 1882 Eleven won so sensationally at the Oval. Since then there have been many gallant fights for the ashes, and numbered amongst them are some of the greatest games recorded in the annals of cricket.

Who would ever have imagined twenty years ago that cricket matches, mere games, after all, would have excited such intense, such thrilling, such world-wide interest as we have seen in recent times when the representatives of the two countries have faced each other? The issue of a battle on which depended the fate of a dynasty could scarcely have been awaited with greater anxiety. Certainly its every phase would not have been described with greater attention to details. It has been my privilege to bear

arms in many of these historical cricket battles, and as I have written these reminiscent pages, my blood has warmed within me at the recollection of some of the thrilling situations in which I have stood alongside my comrades.

The greatest match which had until that time been played—and for many years no other game led to such sensational incidents; certainly there has never in an international contest been a more remarkable finish—was the one test to which the Australian Eleven of 1882 submitted. England placed a magnificent Eleven against us, at Kennington Oval, when the fateful day arrived. Just look at the array of cricketing giants—W. G. Grace, Hornby, Steel, Studd (who had the best batting average against the 1882 Eleven), Lucas, Alfred Lyttelton, Barlow, Barnes, Ulyett, Peate, and Maurice Read. It is questionable whether at the time it would have been possible to materially strengthen that combination. We, however, suffered irreparable loss from the inability of George Palmer, through illness, to play, Sam Jones, who was the one unsuccessful player of the tour, being but an inefficient substitute for the Victorian bowler.

From the commencement of the game it was evident that we were in for a Titanic struggle. The Englishmen who had been sent into the field bowled with splendid precision and fielded magnificently. Who could wish for finer all-round play than was seen when Peate and Barlow sent down more than a dozen successive maiden overs to Murdoch and Bannerman? Not a loose one from

either of them, while the way the ball came back on the treacherous wicket put the batsman through a severe ordeal. Small wonder that we had 6 wickets down for 30. Blackham and Garrett then made 27 between them, and the total reached 63. Dicky Barlow's bowling was responsible for our downfall. We ought to have made at least 100. When Spoff yorked W. G.'s leg stump we were in a great feather, but good hitting by Ulyett and Maurice Read, and a clever innings by Steel, gave the Englishmen a lead of 38 on the first hands, which had been completed on the first day.

I am free to admit that Fortune smiled upon us on the Tuesday morning, when for a little while we had the wicket fairly



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[Havolcins.

PEATE.

easy, as the result of a shower of rain. This gave us a golden opportunity, and fortunately for us we had the man for the moment in Hugh Massie. Never on a slow wicket have I seen a batsman do a grander bit of hitting. Only for

twenty minutes or so was the pitch really easy, but in that time Massie had got his eye in, so that when the ball did begin to bite he could bang away with as great certainty as before. It is worth noting that the only fair, genuine chance given during the great match came from Massie's bat, and it cost England 17 runs—10 more than we won by. At last A. G. Steel came on and bowled Massie, but our hitter had given us a chance in the game. If one praises Massie's hitting, what can be said of Murdoch's batting, for long before he had completed the putting together of his 29 the wicket was as difficult as bowler could wish? W. L. M. demonstrated then how great a batsman he really was, and I only once felt sorer to see a

man run out than I did when Murdoch, after seeing seven of us out, was run out through a bad call of Tom Garrett's.

England needed 85 runs to win. Would they get them? As we excitedly discussed our chances during the interval, Spofforth said they wouldn't. Spoff's faith in himself and Murdoch's cheery assurance inspired the rest of us, and we filed out of the dressing-room to make the effort of our lives. When the Demon had bowled Hornby and Barlow with only fifteen runs scored, we felt assured of victory; but the hitting of the Champion and Ulyett changed the complexion of the game, which then appeared to be gradually drifting away from us. Ulyett did not bat particularly well, but W. G.'s innings was a masterpiece. They were, however, separated at last, and with 53 up both had been sent to the right about.

Now began a tremendous struggle. Boyle maintained a grand length, Spofforth was well-nigh unplayable, and the fielding was perfect. The English batsmen were in the pickle Barlow and Peate had had us in on the previous day. Gradually we tightened our hold on the game; and the moment, I fancy, it was really clenched was when Steel was dismissed without scoring. So long as he remained we could not feel perfectly safe. The situation was one of those trying ones in which I think the batsmen invariably appeared at a disadvantage. A bit of fearless hitting might have snatched the game from us; but after Lyttelton and Lucas went, none of the great English batsmen could muster up the courage to have a bang, and, considering the magnificent way in which Spofforth was bowling, there was some excuse for them. Irresistible as an avalanche, he had bowled his last 11 overs for 2 runs and 4 wickets—the finest piece of bowling I have ever seen! Nevertheless, as I have said, the English batsmen were blamed, even ridiculed, and it was at this time that the London *Sporting Times* created the ashes by publishing the following "In Memoriam" notice:—

IN AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE

of

ENGLISH CRICKET

Which died at the Oval,

on

29th August, 1882.

Deeply lamented by a large circle
of sorrowing friends and acquaintances.

R.I.P.

N.B.—The body will be cremated, and the
ashes taken to Australia.

Punch congratulated us in the following lines :—

Well done, Cornstalks! Whipt us
 Fair and square,
 Was it luck that tript us?
 Was it scare?
 Kangaroo Land's "Demon," or our own
 Want of "devil," coolness, nerve, backbone?

It is not in the nature of Englishmen to smart under defeat without an effort at revenge. Accordingly, by the time the 1882 Eleven reached home, they found a strong English Eleven under the Hon. Ivo Bligh awaiting them. Of course, that team was not representative of England's strength with such giants as Grace, Ulyett, and Peate away, yet it was a strong one, and the series of matches which followed were extremely



From a photo by]

[Elliott & Fry.

HON. IVO BLIGH.

well contested. The Hon. Ivo had been called "St. Ivo," and his tour had been alluded to as a pilgrimage after the ashes, so that our matches were invested with something of the air of romance.

the English team three times, but unfortunately each game was sadly interfered with by rain. In the first match we had the best of the wicket, and won by 9 wickets; in the second and third our opponents were favoured by the weather, and they won one game with an innings to spare, and the other by 69 runs.

Three splendid bowling performances are the only features worth recalling in connection with these three contests. Bates, that brilliant all-round Yorkshire player, was the hero of the first and best of them. It was in our first innings of the second trial of strength, and he not only secured 7 wickets for 28 runs, but accomplished the hat trick, the only such record, unless I am very much mistaken, in test matches. Percy McDonnell

was his first victim, bowled; I was next, caught and bowled; and Bonnor, the third, caught by Walter Read. Bates's whole record for the match was 55 runs, and 13 wickets for 102 runs, and it says something for the generosity of the Australian crowd that for a visitor, who had been the principal instrument in defeating their own champions, they raised a collection of about £30.

Spofforth and Barlow were the bowling heroes of the last match, as they had been exactly five months before at the Oval. The wicket was a queer one, and the Demon, bowling throughout an innings of 144, captured 7 wickets for 44. This time it was our turn to have last innings, but with 153 runs between us and victory, we faced a practically impossible task. Barlow was unplayable, as an analysis of 7 for 40 indicates.

These three matches had aroused intense enthusiasm, and upon their conclusion a number of Australian ladies presented the English captain with a tiny urn containing



From a photo by]

[Hawkins.

G. J. BONNOR.

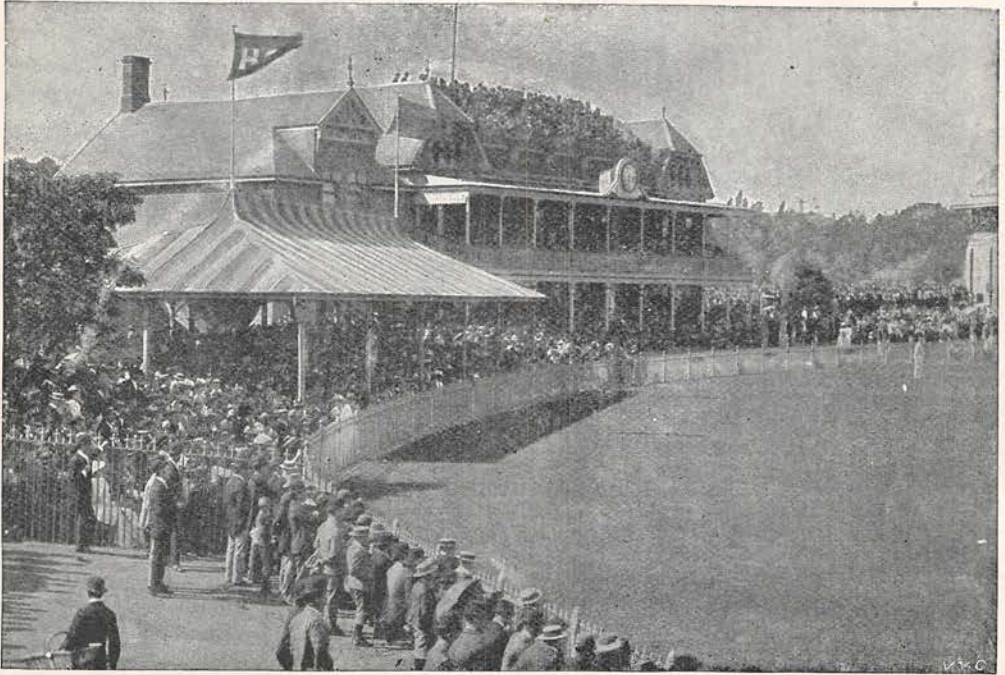
ashes, upon the souvenir being inscribed, "The Ashes of English Cricket."

St. Ivo was, however, not destined to take the ashes back with him. Neither the Australian players nor the public were satisfied with the result of the games, for one thing, because the elements had played so unfortunate a part in them, and for another, because some of our men had shown that they were clean out of form. Therefore an extra match was arranged, and McDonnell, Massie, and Garrett, who had done nothing, were replaced by Evans, Boyle, and Midwinter. I give the names of our Eleven,

because I consider it to have been the strongest Australia had until that time placed in the field: Murdoch, Bannerman, Horan, Spofforth, Blackham, Boyle, Palmer, Bonnor, Evans, Midwinter, and myself.

We won the match by 4 wickets, after a curious mixture of poor and brilliant cricket, such as one has fortunately seldom seen repeated in a test match. The Englishmen got in first and made 263, of which Steel's share was 135 not out. He was missed before he had broken the ice, and three times more during the next hour, but after that his batting was perfect. Faulty as our

himself with Alec Bannerman. The start was not encouraging. The bowling was so accurate, and the fielding so smart, that even Murdoch could not score, and with Alec stonewalling for all he was worth, maiden after maiden was bowled; in fact I have never seen slower scoring, from a pair of batsmen, for so prolonged a period. With three men, including Murdoch, out for 56, our chance was not a rosy one. Then I went in with a man to run for me, and Bannerman and I put on 56. At 107 Bannerman, who had latterly scored at a furious rate, was disposed of for 63. Black-



MELBOURNE CRICKET GROUND.

fielding had been, what can be said of that of our opponents, who missed Bonnor no fewer than seven times! No wonder the Magog of cricketers made 87. We finished up one run to the bad. This prepared the way for an exciting finish, and we did indeed have one almost comparable with that when we won by seven runs.

The all-round play of each side in the second innings was of the finest description. Seven of the Englishmen reached double figures, yet the total was only 197. We had to make 199, and as the wicket had not worn any too well, the task was a serious one—so serious that Murdoch went in first

ham came in, and began to lay about him in his characteristic way. In the first innings he had made 57, and when he had got going again our hopes were raised. The bowling was splendid; but when he got a start on a hard wicket, our fearless wicket-keeper was always apt to make any bowling look simple. At 162 I was stumped, and as Evans was straightway run out, the chances were about even, as we had only Midwinter, Palmer, Spofforth, and Boyle to come in. Sturdy, imperturbable Mid, the only cricketer who has played for both England and Australia in test matches, joined Blackham, and, cautiously defending his wicket, watched his

partner knock off the runs, which he did without once faltering. Blackham carried out his bat for 58, and he himself was chaired to the pavilion on the broad shoulders of several of the delighted spectators—an experience probably unique in the annals of the test matches.

When in 1882 we had defeated All England, regret had been expressed that the players of the Old Country had not been given an opportunity to avenge their defeat, so that we of the 1884 team found three test matches arranged for us. When we arrived, we saw by the papers how keen Englishmen were for revenge. Of the three matches played, however, only one was finished, and England winning that one, regained the ashes, although we had the best of the two drawn games.

In the initial game at Manchester there was some cricket of high quality on a slow wicket; the best individual performance was Boyle's 6 for 42 in England's first innings.

We were outplayed in the return match at Lord's, and were beaten by an innings, after we had won the toss and gone in first. Our first innings realised only 229, and our second fewer still—145—Ulyett, on a worn wicket, on the last day, holding us at his mercy, and securing 7 wickets for 36 runs.

The catch with which Ulyett dismissed Bonnor I regard as one of the most brilliant I have seen. Bonnor was sent in third wicket down to knock off the dangerous Yorkshireman, and he tried hard to fulfil his mission. He got one fourer, then made a mighty drive. Everyone looked down the ground to see where the ball landed, and the spectators began to open a space in the ring, but the ball did not reach the crowd. Ulyett put up his hand, and meeting it with the right spot of his hand, held it. I was Bonnor's *vis-à-vis* at the time, and thoroughly appreciated the merit of that effort.

A. G. Steel was, however, the real hero on the English side. He went in when W. G., Lucas, and Shrewsbury were out for 90. Things might easily have turned against England had not a batsman of Steel's calibre barred our way. Before Palmer bowled him he had made 148, and the total

was 379. This was the very best innings I saw Steel play, and one of the finest contributed against us in test matches.

The interest taken in the third 1884 match was tremendous. Having one game on the slate, England was determined not to lose her advantage, and to this end the team to oppose us was not chosen till the last moment. Then the following magnificent Eleven was put in the field: Lord Harris, the Hon. Alfred Lyttelton, W. G. Grace, A. G. Steel, W. W. Read, Barlow, Barnes, Shrewsbury, Peate, Ulyett, and Scotton—the strongest side which, in my humble judgment, has ever represented England.

The weather being exceedingly hot was all in our favour. The cold English days have often seriously incommoded Australians, who have found their warm blood so chilled that they have been unable to enjoy fielding as it should be enjoyed, and mistakes otherwise unaccountable have been made. On August 11, 1884, however, we were in our element; it was so warm that several of the spectators fainted.

That first day was one of the most glorious Australian batsmen have had at the expense of English bowlers. The early dismissal of Bannerman did not augur well, but during the remainder of the afternoon only one wicket fell. The total when we adjourned was 363 for 2 wickets, and three men had made centuries—Murdoch, 145 not out; McDonnell, 103; and Scott, 101 not out. And this against Peate, Barlow, Barnes, Steel, and Ulyett! Surely no other team ever had quite so hopeless an afternoon's work. There were mistakes in the field, but on the whole the batting was magnificent. Next day we concluded our innings for 551, of which Murdoch made 211, the highest individual score recorded in the whole series of test matches, and probably the masterpiece of Murdoch's brilliant career.

One of the interesting features of the innings was that every man on the English side had a try at the bowling crease, and a notable circumstance was that when all the cracks had failed Alfred Lyttelton went on, and with underhand lobs took 4 wickets for 19, which shows what wonders a change may accomplish.

With the wicket in such splendid order



From a photo by

[Hawkins.]

G. PALMER.

we entertained no real hope of getting England out twice; but so finely did Palmer bowl at a critical period of the first innings that for a short while we thought we might squeeze home, as eight wickets had fallen for 181. Then, however, Walter Read came in—as *tenth* man, mind—and knocked our bowling all over the field until he had made 117. Scotton, it will be remembered, played a grand defensive game, and 151 runs were put on for the ninth wicket.

Of course the game was drawn, but in our favour. Nevertheless, we had the satisfaction of knowing that we had demonstrated that an Australian Eleven could make a fight, on the best of wickets, with England's champions. This was eminently pleasing to us, because it had been said that we had no chance of defeating All England save on the sticky pitches whereon our Demon bowler was so deadly.

In 1884-85 a remarkably powerful professional team toured the Colonies, but with W. G. and Steel at home it was not an All England Eleven. Nevertheless there were several test matches.

The first was played at Adelaide against the returned 1884 Australian Eleven. McDonnell, Blackham, and myself practised assiduously for a fortnight to get into form, but none of the others took the interest they should have in the match, and some of them played without having had more than a day's practice since they left England. Consequently only one double figure score was made by our men beyond those which the three of us who had practised contributed. Moreover, we were without Spofforth, who had not returned from England, so that it was not surprising that we were beaten by 8 wickets. For the Englishmen, Barnes, 134-28 not out, was in great form; while for us, Percy McDonnell batted beautifully for 124-83. Everyone who saw those two innings of Percy's agree to this day that they never saw prettier batting. He hit more brilliantly at Manchester in 1888, but at Adelaide he played perfectly true cricket, and the way he placed the ball was a treat to watch.

Four other games were played by Shaw's team against selected Elevens of Australia, but not one of the Australian Elevens was representative, owing to an unfortunate dispute with the visitors over money matters, which was prolonged further than it should have been. However, some of the 1884 team played in the last two matches. Of the four, England and Australia won two each.

Unquestionably the strongest of the four Elevens Australia placed in the field that season was the one which played in the third match, and won by 8 wickets, after our opponents had opened the contest with a score of 269. I bowled nearly throughout the innings, and secured 7 wickets, 6 clean bowled, for 117 runs. Bonnor, who made 128, hit magnificently when the chances seemed against us, and he and Jones put on 154 for the eighth wicket. A useful lead of 40 runs was thoroughly appreciated, for when rain came the Englishmen could only make 77.

Against a weaker team in the last match England won in grand style by an innings and 98 runs. Arthur Shrewsbury batted splendidly for 105 not out in a total of 386, while Ulyett took 7 wickets for 77 runs.

I shall not attempt to go at length into the three test matches played in England by the 1886 Australian Eleven. The first we lost by 4 wickets, the second by an innings and 106 runs, and the third by an innings and 217 runs. In the first game we made a real good fight, inasmuch as, though England only had to make 106 runs in the second innings, the wickets of Grace, Scotton, Shrewsbury, Walter Read, Barlow, and Ulyett were lost before the runs were hit off. In the other two games we were crushed.

Arthur Shrewsbury played a masterly innings for 164 at Lord's, undoubtedly the best though not the highest hit against our bowling during the tour. The wicket was none too clever. It was a fiery Lord's pitch, and most first-class batsmen know what that means; but his defence was perfect, and he played all the bowling as though it were simple as A B C.

This was Briggs's first test match in England, and he signalled the event by capturing 11 wickets for only 74 runs. Merry Johnny was then, and for many years afterwards, one of the most formidable of Australia's opponents, and had he been a more reliable batsman he would, to my mind, have ranked with Steel as an all-round player next to W. G. At his best he was a very fine bowler, one who was always worrying the batsman, and always had to be watched.

Just as we had been beaten at Lord's, mainly through the instrumentality of two men, so was it the case at the Oval; but here the players were different. Shrewsbury batted finely, but it was W. G. who made 170, a score which for nine years stood as an English record in test matches. Briggs

again bowled well, but it was George Lohmann's bowling that upset us, his analyses being 7 for 36 and 5 for 68.

January 1, 1892, the opening day of the first test match with Lord Sheffield's team, may be regarded as the dawn of a new era in Australian cricket. While the ashes of Australian cricket were being scattered to the four winds in England, the critics had said that now that Murdoch, Spofforth, Boyle, Palmer, and McDonnell had passed out of the arena, Australia could not replace them: they had been phenomena. And this argument probably brought some consolation to Englishmen for the 1882 defeat. But in the era which began on New Year's Day at Melbourne six years ago we were to demonstrate that Australia had produced another generation of cricketers, who were worthy successors to the Tritons of former days.

The Australian Eleven, in the first match against Lord Sheffield's Eleven, comprised Blackham, Bannerman, Moses, Lyons, Turner, Bruce, G. H. S. Trott, R. McLeod, Donnan, Callaway, and myself; so that there were only three of us—Blackham, Bannerman, and myself—who had played in the sensational match at the Oval in 1882. Maurice Read was the solitary member of the Earl's Eleven who had played in that game.

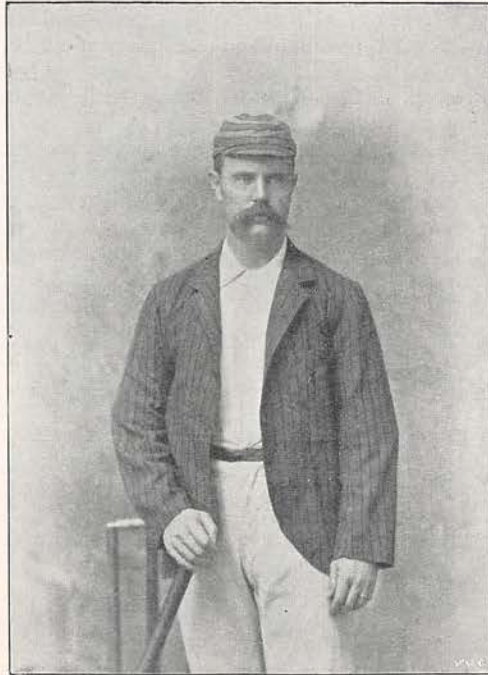
Our 240 runs were earned by as fine batting as one could wish to see, for the bowling of Sharpe, Peel, Attewell, and Lohmann was splendid, and the fielding perfect. The Englishmen scored faster than we did, and headed our score by 24. Then we replied with 236, and left them needing 213 to win. W. G. told me that he thought they would make the runs with the loss, at most, of six men, and when he and Stoddart had run up 60 for the first wicket, it appeared as though his prediction was going

to be vindicated. Suddenly both were disposed of, and although Abel struggled manfully, the backbone of the team was gone, and in the end we won by 54.

I have said this was the most stubbornly fought game I had then played in. It ran into five days, and during that time, although the wicket was always first class, and some of the best batsmen in the world went to the wickets, the highest individual contribution was only 57. The fact of the matter was that directly a batsman gave a chance he was caught. Indeed, not a single chance that went to hand was missed, which can be written of very few matches. How differently games would result if the fielding were always so remarkable!

The batting of our men was the soundest all round we had ever exhibited. It had taken twenty years for the English batsmen to teach us that, on good wickets, matches were to be won by sound, rather than risky, batting. This match was the first great one in which Australian batsman after batsman put these precepts into practice, even Lyons and Bruce batting with remarkable patience. For once in a way the English batting was of the brilliant school, so that our victory was the triumph of the pupils over the masters. To give an idea of the different style of batting adopted by the two teams, I need only say that, although there was only 54 runs difference between us, the Englishmen bowled twice as many overs, and more than three times as many maidens, as we did. Many of the maidens were, however, accounted for by the presence in our team of a Bannerman—they had none. Alec scored 45 and 41, and batted in the respective innings three hours and a quarter and four hours.

And now we won the rubber. The return match was played at Sydney, and we were



From a photo by]

ALEC C. BANNERMAN.

[Hawkins.]

the favourites; even our opponents thought we would win with four or five wickets to spare. We started badly. The ground was drying after rain, and when Jack Blackham won the toss he was in a quandary. The wicket, though not a bad one, would help the bowlers slightly, and unless more rain fell it was bound to improve. However, the only game was to go in first. This we did, and our opponents got rid of us for 145, or, rather, George Lohmann did, for he secured 8 wickets for only 58 runs. The wicket assisted him a little, but really he bowled magnificently. He was at his best then, and on that day was unplayable. I had a great admiration for Lohmann's bowling. He was a bowler after my own heart. Seldom troubling to try to weary batsmen with off-theory, he preferred to out-manceuvre them, and I doubt whether England has produced, in my time, a bowler of more resource and one who had greater command over the ball.

England responded with 307. Almost entirely to one man was a score of that magnitude due, and that one was Bobby Abel, who carried his bat through the innings—the only occasion, I believe, on which it has been done for England in a test match. His contribution was 132; the next score to his was 28! It was a perfect display, as fine a one as I have seen him give. Without taking the slightest risk, he met all the bowling with provoking confidence, and made some beautiful strokes.

Australia lost one—Trott's—wicket on the second day for one run, and, as Moses was incapacitated, our task seemed a hopeless one. But there was in store for us one of those marvellous innings which have made Australian hitters famous. Much as one admires and commends steady batting, one realises that there are occasions when desperate remedies, when kill-or-cure hitting, alone can win a game. When Lyons joined Bannerman we were 162 runs in arrear; when he left we were 13 runs on. But in this innings Lyons did not hit in the ferocious manner which was to set England agog eighteen months later. He really played sound cricket, such as many had not dreamt him to be capable of, yet his strokes made the ball travel like a cannon-shot. It took him nearly three hours to compile his 134, which for him was slow-scoring. Bannerman and I were not parted for some time, and at the close of the day we had 263 runs up, having during the afternoon scored 262 for the loss of two wickets.

Next day rain fell, and the innings closed

at 391. Alec Bannerman was responsible for the odd 91. I shall never forget the sight of the field crowded around him as he stonewalled. There was W. G. at point, almost on the point of his bat; Lohmann a couple of yards away, at slip; Peel at silly point; Stoddart only a dozen yards away, at mid-off; and Briggs at silly mid-on. One gentleman remarked that it reminded him of the famous painting, "Anguish," in which a bevy of crows are swarming round a dead lamb, over which the mother is watching. A barracker once called out, "Look out, Alec, or W. G. will have his hand in your pocket." But Alec stonewalled on, imperturbably blocking the straight ones, sardonically smiling at the off theory, and judiciously tapping a rare loose one to leg. Suddenly he swished at an off ball, and cut it past W. G.'s ear to the boundary, and then what a yell rent the air! He was eventually caught by W. G. off Briggs, who had simply tossed the balls down slowly, with as much twizzle as possible on them, in the hope that he might lead Alec into an indiscretion. But the Englishmen had to wait seven and a half hours for that indiscretion! Truly, patience is a virtue.

Thinking the wicket would be worse on the morrow, W. G. sent in his batsmen in the usual order, and we got rid of him, Abel, and Bean for 11 runs. The G. O. M. was blamed, afterwards, for not having sacrificed the tail end; but that was next day, when the wicket was found to roll out better than had been expected. Stoddart made a valiant effort, but we won by 72. And thus the English ashes returned to Australia, and we regained possession of our own treasured emblems.

We were beaten at Adelaide in a third match with Lord Sheffield's team by an innings and 230 runs; but, inasmuch as the Englishmen completed their innings of 499 on a perfect wicket, and we had to bat twice after the pitch had been damaged by rain, we had no reason to feel ashamed of the result.

Not long were Australians allowed to remain in possession of the ashes. They took them to England in 1893, and there they were compelled to leave them. The all-round cricket exhibited by our men in those matches was not worthy of their reputations; if our fielding had only been half as good as it had been in Australia in 1891-92, we might have come out of the ordeal in England with honours.

We had a wonderful chance in the first

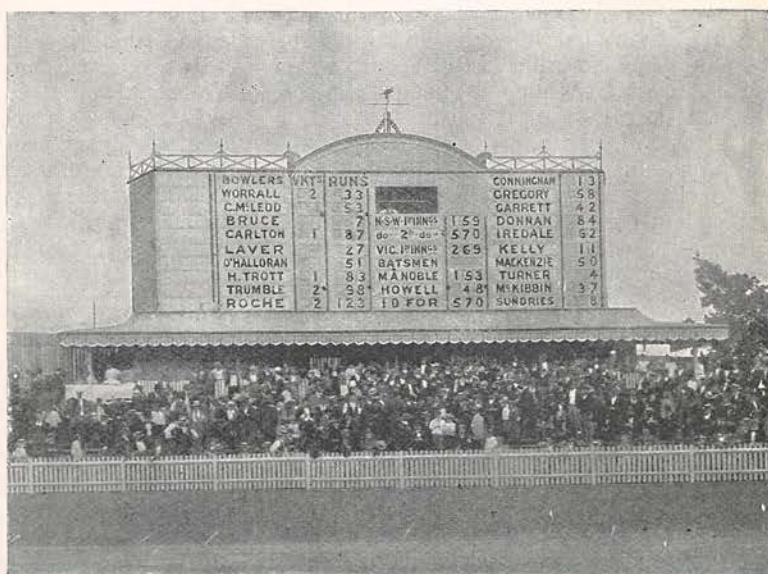
trial of skill at Lord's, where we met England without W. G. for the first time on English soil, an injured finger keeping the master-hand from operating upon us. The winning of the toss by Stoddart was of no advantage to him, on account of the dampness of the wicket on the opening day; but we threw away a golden chance by missing Shrewsbury and Jackson early in their innings, and both of them afterwards played magnificently—the one patient, the other brilliant. We had to face 334, at least 150 more than should have been the case. Then came Lockwood to upset our first batsmen, and we had five wickets down for 75. A plucky stand by Graham and Gregory saved us, and after all we were only 65 runs behind. The two famous Nottingham players, Shrewsbury and Gunn, wore down our bowling in the second innings, and the match ended in an unsatisfactory draw.

The second game was the only one finished, and it was a grand triumph for the Old Country, who massed the magnificent total of 483. Grace and Stoddart's 151 for the first wicket drove the first nail into our coffin, and Jackson sent a longer one home by hitting up 103. I conceived a great admiration for the young Cantab's batting from his displays in the 1893 test matches. He is certainly one of the finest, and at the same time most judicious, forcing batsmen England has produced for many a day.

Australia should have saved that game, considering that the Oval wicket remained in splendid run-getting order until the last ball was bowled. Wearied, however, by our long outing, we fell easy victims to Lockwood and Briggs, although weariness is not sufficient excuse for our first collapse for 91 runs. That we were capable of something better was demonstrated in the second innings, when we reached 349, Harry Trott batting grandly for 92. Still we could not avert the innings defeat.

As usual, we played better at Old Trafford than we had at either Lord's or the Oval. The game was the most stoutly contested of the trio, but was drawn slightly in favour of England. Here we faced Richardson for the first time in a test match, and he secured the fine analysis of 5 for 49. Once more a century was hit against us, so that we had had one in each of the test matches. On this occasion Gunn batted finely for 102 not out, at a time when it seemed on the cards that England would have been in arrears on the first innings.

Now one comes to that remarkable series of fights for the ashes which took place during the tour of Stoddart's team in



From a photo by]

[Kerry, Sydney.

THE LARGEST SCORING-BOARD IN THE WORLD, AT SYDNEY ASSOCIATION GROUND.

1894-95. One may fairly say that Australians were the favourites, the prevailing notion being that, although Richardson had bowled so grandly in England in 1893, he would not be in the least deadly on the hard, true Australian wickets.

The first game was played at Sydney, and it will be a long time before its sensational incidents fade from one's memory. Probably a more remarkable match has never been played. The start was sensational enough in all conscience, for at 10 Richardson bowled Lyons off his pad, and at 21 clean beat Trott and Darling with successive balls. Then, however, came a long stand by Iredale and myself. Here I may say that I had trained specially for that season's play.

During Lord Sheffield's tour, being unwell, I did not do myself justice, and there were plenty of critics who said that, though I could score in intercolonials, it was significant that I had not done so in the great test matches. Determined to vindicate myself, I went through a severe course of winter training, and began the season in as fine fettle as ever I was in. To resume, then, the thread of my narrative, Iredale, who batted perfectly, made 81, and helped me to put on 171, and then Syd Gregory and I added 139. When I had made 161, Ford caught me at slip. This I consider the best innings I have played. The score at the close of the first day was 346 for 5 wickets, and that after we had had three men out for 21! Gregory batted magnificently, and he and Blackham added 154 for the ninth wicket, which is a record for test matches, just heading Walter Read and Scotton's 151 at the Oval in 1884. Our total at Sydney was 586. Little Syd's was a wonderful innings, one of the most attractive I have ever seen. It roused the spectators—and there were nearly 30,000 of them—to such a pitch of enthusiasm that a collection of £103 was made for him.

With 586 runs on the slate we never for one second dreamt of losing the game. We were even sanguine of getting rid of the powerful lot of batsmen on the opposing side twice before they had reached our score. They, however, fought an uphill game with wonderful pluck and persistence; but an injury to Blackham in their first innings—an injury which closed his first-class career—seriously handicapped us. The Englishmen were 261 in arrears at the end of their first innings, and if we had had a wicket keeper, I doubt whether their second innings would have reached 300. One was, however, bound to admire the English batting in the second innings. One after the other the batsmen went in and played "keeps," and gradually wore down the bowling, and in the end we were left with 177 to make.

Our task did not in the least appal us, because the wicket was as true as ever when we began our second innings; and when, at the close of the fifth day, we had scored 113 for 2 wickets, the match seemed as good as won. All of us thought so that night save Blackham, who feared rain. I know I turned in to rest with an easy mind on the subject. When I awoke next morning and found the glorious sun streaming into my room, I was in ecstasy. But the first man I met was Blackham, with a face as long as a

coffee-pot. The explanation of his looks came with the remark, "It has been pouring half the night, George." Even then, so beautiful was the morning, it seemed difficult to realise that rain had fallen; but when we reached the ground, and found the wicket ruined, we knew we would have to battle for those 64 runs.

Did ever a team have such cruel luck? To make 586 and then be beaten by the wicket! Someone said the rain beat us, but Blackham was nearer the mark when he rejoined, "No, it was the sun that did it." However, we could not entirely begrudge our opponents their victory, for against tremendous odds they had fought magnificently.

The second game, played at Melbourne, led to another remarkable exhibition of cricket. One incident is specially noteworthy. We began on a Saturday upon a heavy wicket, and, as the weather prospects were good, Stoddart and I agreed, before we tossed, that at the close of the day's play we should have the wicket rolled out; otherwise the marks made by the feet in the soft turf would by Monday have hardened, and the wicket would have played badly. On the first day each side was disposed of, we leading by 48 runs.

Then, on the Monday, with the wicket perfect, began the struggle. The Englishmen became stonewallers. Even Stoddart completely discarded his usual tactics, and played almost as slowly as a Bannerman, until it was impossible to recognise in him the brilliant batsman who, going in first with W. G. in England in 1893, had slated our bowling so severely. But Stoddart was captain now, and he had to set his men an example. Nobly he accomplished his task, for he notched 173, and, by topping W. G.'s 170, gained an English test match record.

If the captain had batted patiently, what of Peel—three and a half hours for 53, and 37 of his runs were singles? Someone—an Australian, of course—remonstrated with him. "I hope you are not going to develop into one of those wretched Scottons, Bobby!" to which he replied, "Aye, aye, but I must play the game."

We were set 428 in our second innings, and thought we had an outside chance. Bruce and Trott led off with 98 for the first wicket, and when, with 190 up, Trotty and I were still going, our prospects were really bright. But a sudden change came o'er the scene. Brockwell went on, and in half a dozen overs got rid of Trott, myself, and

Darling. Thenceforward our opponents held the upper hand, and won by 94 runs.

We won the next two games at Adelaide by 383 runs, and at Sydney by an innings and 147, but each time we had the Englishmen at a disadvantage. At Adelaide the heat, at Sydney the rain, "killed" them. Throughout the Adelaide engagement the thermometer registered from 102° to 105° in the shade! While most of us were in our element, the Englishmen were almost prostrated. Some of them took two or three shower-baths through the night, which, of course, was the worst thing they could have done. Next day Callaway and I dismissed them for 124.

Four of the younger generation of players distinguished themselves in that match: Iredale, who scored 7-140; Albert Trott, who knocked up 38 not out, 72 not out, and in the second innings captured 8 wickets for 43; Richardson, who captured 8 of our wickets, and was the only bowler to trouble us; and Callaway, who, besides making 41-11, secured 5 wickets for 37 in the first innings.

I doubt whether I ever felt greater admiration for Richardson than when he took 5 wickets for 75 in our first innings. With the broiling sun streaming on the back of his curly black hair, and the intense heat trying him severely, he bowled like a veritable demon. There is a good deal about the Surrey fast bowler to remind one of our own Demon of the 'eighties. Both are tall, and Richardson, like Spofforth, when he stands ready to make his run before delivering the ball, is the personification of determination. Other English bowlers are more subtle, but not one so deadly as Tom Richardson on a wicket which gives him the least assistance. England has not, to my way of thinking, had so deadly a bowler in my time.

Albert Trott's all-round performance must be ranked amongst the finest things done in test matches. Early in the season I had been commiserating with Harry Trott, who was at the time doing nothing. He replied, "Don't mind me, but keep an eye on that young brother of mine. You'll find him a good one before the season is over."

To secure his 8 wickets for 43, Albert bowled magnificently, with an off-break that was well-nigh unplayable, so quickly did it rise from the pitch. Thereby hangs a good tale. When he first came to Adelaide he did not take a wicket, and I made a fair score against the Victorians. Soon after his

return to Melbourne, he erected three stumps, with a stout box in front of them, where a bat would be if a match were being played. Then he started to bowl, and with an occasional break-back, beat the box and hit the wicket. His brother Harry came along and asked what the box was for.

"Oh, that's George Giffen."

"Easier to get past than George's bat, isn't it?" Harry suggested.

"That's just it, Harry. I found at Adelaide that straight stuff would never get him, so I am learning to bowl breaks."

The Sydney match was spoilt by rain, and we had the best of the wicket. We had been sent in, and when 6 wickets were down for 51 it looked bad for us, but Graham and Darling tided us over until the stickiness left the pitch, and Albert Trott afterwards hitting up 85, we reached 284, after thinking we would be all out for under 100. Graham's 105 was the finest innings he has played, for until he had reached about 40 the wicket was a difficult one.

It was now our turn to have the Englishmen on toast, as they had had us a couple of months before, upon the same ground. Play had to be adjourned for a day on account of a record storm which raged at Sydney on the Saturday, and when resumed on the Monday the wicket was so bad that our opponents could only make 65 and 72. Peel, as in the Adelaide match, earned a pair of spectacles, and it is curious that in each innings at Sydney his score read, "st. Jarvis, b. Turner, 0."

With the record "two all," the excitement during the month which elapsed prior to the conquering match was raised to fever heat. We had been chopping and changing our team throughout the series, and considerable interest was taken in the selection for the final struggle.

By the time the 1st of March came round, thousands of people had poured into Melbourne from all parts of the Colonies. Coasting steamers were crowded. Special trains brought human freight in hundreds from Sydney and Adelaide. What wonder, then, that during the five days over which that great game extended, 63,469 people paid for admission, and that the receipts amounted to £4,003 14s.—records, not only for Australia, but for the world! The total attendance, including members, exceeded 100,000. The play which followed was worthy the mammoth attendance.

The excitement extended to the players, and not the least to the captains. I know

that when Stoddart and I went into the ring to toss and arrange preliminaries, he was as white as a sheet, and I have been told that the pallor of my own countenance matched his. It was a trying moment, for both knew that, with two such strong batting sides, much depended on the toss. I won it, and I felt as though a great burden had been lifted from my shoulders. Poor Stoddart gave me a despairing look, which said as plainly as words, "I'm afraid it's all over, George."

When we had made 414 we thought it was all right, and when we had Stoddart, Brown, Ward, and Brockwell out for 166, it still looked good enough for us. Then came a great partnership by Maclaren and Peel, who added 162. They, however, were lucky. I missed Maclaren badly through an injury to the little finger of my right hand, which made it painful for me to hold the ball (a ball from Lockwood did it just before I got out in the first innings), and I may be pardoned for the egotism when I say that this accident to myself contributed materially to the English victory. Apart from the chances, Maclaren's batting was very fine, and Peel's scarcely less so. The total reached 385, and we were thus only 29 runs on.

In our second innings we expected to make at least 350, but a terrible dust storm on the fourth morning made the light bad, and a gale blowing across the ground caused Richardson's fast bowling to be very awkward. This was the only occasion during the season in which he bowled me (I pulled an off ball on to the wicket), although in England in 1893 there was only one innings in which I faced him that he did not bowl my wicket down. Under the circumstances, our 267 was not half bad.

The Englishmen were set 297, and, as everyone knows, they got them for the loss of four wickets. A mild Scotch mist made the wicket on the last day as easy as it had been at any time during the match, and Johnny Brown and Albert Ward did as they liked with our bowling, Brown especially playing with wonderful brilliance for his 140. We had one large slice of bad luck. Immediately upon resuming play after lunch on the last day, Jarvis caught Ward at the

wicket; but the bowler got in the way of Jim Phillips, who could not see the catch, and gave Albert in. There can be no question but that Ward touched the ball.

Of the last three matches played in England in 1896 I do not propose to say very much, because the events are so clear in the minds of those who follow the noble game. One could not help noticing that W. G. and myself were the only pair who had taken part in the great struggle in 1882 who were still playing in test matches.

Nothing can be said in extenuation of Australia's miserable batting failure at Lord's—a failure which, considering the excellence of the wicket, is a greater reproach to Australian batting than England's was at the Oval towards the close of the 1882 match. The magnificent batting of Trott and Gregory in the second innings gave us a second chance, which we threw away on the last morning by faulty fielding.

Grand as was Trott's batting at Lord's, one is fain to admit that it was eclipsed by Prince Ranjitsinhji's magnificent play at Old Trafford in the second match. The Prince's 154 not out was absolutely the finest innings I have seen. Just think of it! He made 154 and was unconquered, although the ten Englishmen, including W. G., Stoddart, Abel, Jackson, Brown, and Maclaren, could only account for 151 between them. But then Ranjy is the batting wonder of the age. His play was a revelation to us, with his marvellous cutting and his extraordinary hitting to leg. I have never seen anything to equal it.

That last wretched match played in the mud at the Oval was a farce. What seemed likely to be the game of games, the greatest ever known, was completely spoiled. England won by batting for over an hour on the first day, when the wicket was easy.

Of the matches which have been played by Mr. Stoddart's team in Australia, lately, it would be superfluous to say anything, as the facts are fresh in all our memories.

What I should like to see, and I know it is scarcely possible, is five matches between the pick of the two great cricketing countries of the world, with wickets good throughout, and the matches played to a finish. One would confidently await the issue.