

## RECENT CRICKET MATCHES IN FICTION.

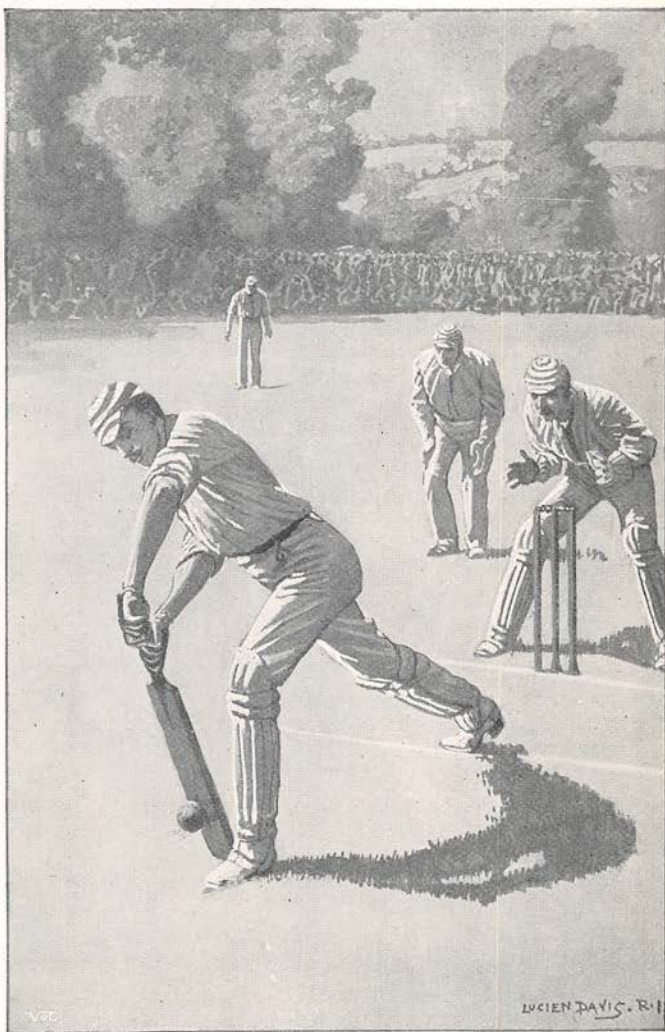
By EDMUND B. V. CHRISTIAN.

*Illustrated by* LUCIEN DAVIS, R.I.

ALMOST within the memory of boys now living it was said that the literature of cricket was inadequate. The game had made no mark in the world of books proportionate to its importance in the world of men. There were the annuals, and "Box," and Mr. Pycroft's "Cricket Field," and a few manuals for the young player; but that was all. The "Scores and Biographies" were for rich men only; Nyren and the other classics were hardly procurable, and recent publications were rare. But a few years have changed all that. A library of cricket books has appeared in a decade; Dr. Grace has told us how to play and how *he* played; we have had also the reminiscences of Richard Daft and George Giffen; Messrs. Steel and Lyttelton have given the most excellent advice to the players; even the latest hero, K. S. Ranjitsinhji, has furnished his admirers with two books. Mr. Norman Gale has sung songs worthy of the glorious game; the chronicles have been reprinted; volumes of all sorts have multiplied. The enthusiast can spend his winter evenings over cricket books as easily as his summer days in the field.

The change is not less notable in fiction. A few years ago that picture of the national life was strangely imperfect in its representation of the national game. The mirror was held aslant to Nature, and failed to reflect the pitch. There was, of course, Dickens's famous farce, "Muggleton *v.* Dingley Dell," in "Pickwick," a source of perennial joy. Mr. Meredith

had shown himself in the right tradition by occasional allusions and a most excellent summary of the virtues of the game. The lesser masters occasionally wandered on to



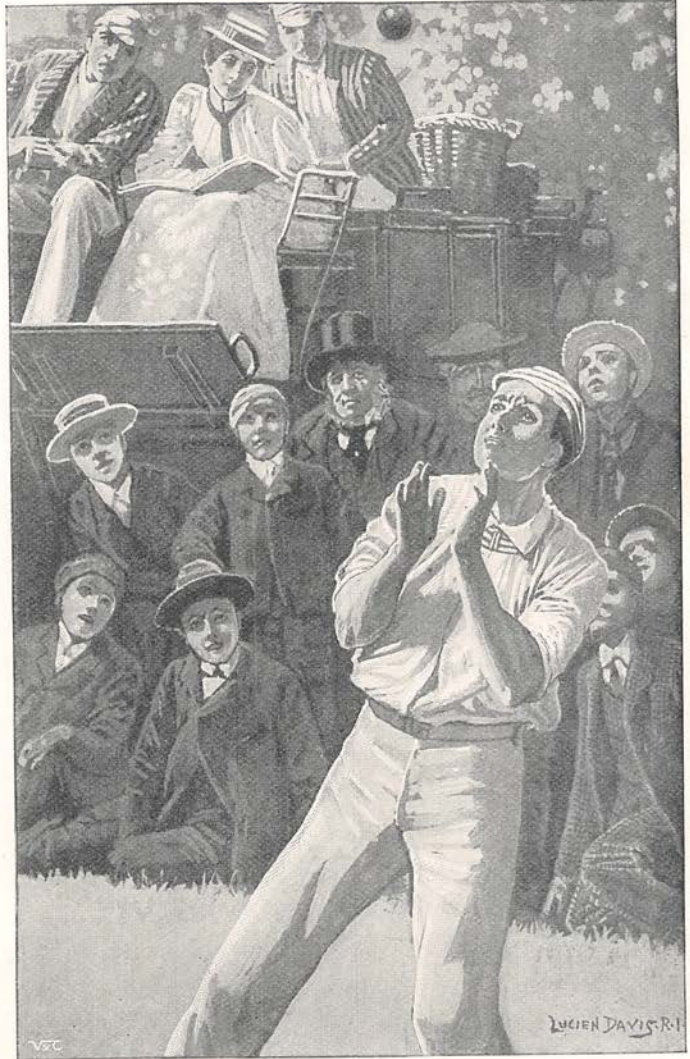
DIMSDALE BATTING IN THE LITTLE CLUMPTON *v.* HICKORY MATCH.

the field. Among these, however, knowledge of the game was not always great; it was not difficult for the critical to detect flagrant errors in their descriptions. But

now all the young novelists are full of the true faith of an Englishman; they are all zealous for the game; their knowledge is above suspicion. Mr. Barrie and Dr. Conan Doyle, if they have not yet been persuaded to write of the sport, are known to engage in it. Mr. Cochrane, a Blue, has given us verse and prose equally charming in its honour. Mr. Pett Ridge has made Lord's the scene of a good story; and another of his heroes, Mr. Staplehurst, is sent to St. John's Wood to report a game, and notes "the modest manner" in which it is usual to applaud there. Mr. Phillipps-Wortley introduces his hero "Snap" as a bowler who plied the batsman with fast ones and slow ones, and "tried to seduce him from the paths of virtue with the luscious lob, to storm him with the *Eboracian pilule, or ball from York.*" Mr. Anthony Hope, it is true, has not yet done justice to cricket. In "Father Stafford" he leads us to expect a good match; we hear of it as the talk of the county for weeks. A shooting baronet undertakes to field even at long-leg in order to earn his shooting. In fact, we learn, he was tried in every place on the field, and did equally badly everywhere. Yet the match is dismissed in a mere paragraph, when we should have had a chapter; we are fobbed off with some bald statement that the game was successful. But Mr. Eden Philpotts, Mr. Pugh, Mr. Shan Bullock, and Mrs. Murray Hickson have all written with the right enthusiasm and intimate knowledge. And, more than this, we have had of late, in addition to Mr. Hornung's "Amateur Cracksman," two novels, delightful in themselves, made additionally delightful to cricketers by their breathing throughout the atmosphere of the game—Mr. Horace Hutchinson's "Peter Steele the Cricketer,"

and Mr. J. C. Snaith's "Willow the King."

Mr. Hutchinson had, indeed, already made the cricket enthusiast his debtor by that capital book, "Creatures of Circumstance," with its pictures of the game in the villages and at Lord's, and a hero capable of routing



"She proceeded to criticise the players freely and to offer excellent advice."

the Players and saving England from defeat by the Australians. But Peter Steele is even better than Robert Burscough; the hero of Swivel-Pipkin outdoes his cousin the champion of Little Pipkin, where they reckoned the years that were dead by the result of the matches against White Cross. The heroes of fiction, like other heroes, learn

their cricket in the villages; the novelist is not yet born daring enough to make his hero learn how to play a straight bat and keep his right foot firm at Peckham or Nunhead, at Willesden or Hornsey. So it was at Swivel-Pipkin, coached by Uncle Bunny, that Peter Steele learned the elements of the game, improving at school, and going to Oxford with a reputation made. It was Peter's good fortune to grow up among lovers of the game. Lord Tankerdine represented the old school, and thought batting had ceased to be a science since wickets had become so good. Any man, he said, could score on a bowling-green. "The sad fact remains, however," as Mr. Hutchinson remarks with manly pathos, "that many men do not." Lord Tankerdine "was sorry, too, that single-wicket had gone out. . . If a man insulted your cricket, two courses were open to you: you could call him out, or you could challenge him at single-wicket!" It must have been a difficult choice, if the insulter bowled very fast, on those rough wickets; probably pistols were safer. Peter was a batsman of the sort the crowd loves; he was full of "antics" and unorthodox strokes. But when he went in for Oxford, at Lord's, his responsibility as captain sobered him, and he played carefully; and "that mournful catastrophe, which is the ultimate fate of ten men out of every eleven, had not yet overtaken Peter when the luncheon bell rang."

After the luncheon interval Cambridge began afresh with its original bowlers, the fast and the famous slow. The latter had bowled almost unchanged in the morning. He had only taken one wicket, but no one except Peter had scored off him heavily. The fast bowler had been rested twice. Maurice Crobyn had been tried as one of the changes, but his immaculate bowling was not suited to the immaculate wicket. Both Peter and the other batsman had dealt with it most severely.

For a while the post-prandial cricket was steady. Peter took fewer liberties than ever as his score approached the century. A late cut off the fast bowler brought it to ninety-three. He added a single, then a magnificent on-drive, all along the ground, raised it to ninety-eight, and a smartly stolen short run brought him within one point of his century. Excitement by this time was at fever point all round the ground. Interest in the match was merged for the moment in the individual interest of seeing whether he would make the coveted three figures. Keenest of all that excitement beat beneath the pink sunshade which trembled in Lady Emily's hand.

The very first ball of the slow man's over was fairly far up on Peter's legs. Hitherto, since luncheon, he had not lifted a ball an inch from the "carpet." This one he might with ease have played away for the safest of singles and so have made the century secure. But the interval of waiting so near the goal had been a little trying. With an impulse of impatience he opened his shoulders and swung at the ball on the half-volley, caught it, for the first time, as it seemed, in his innings, not dead-centre on the driving spot of the bat. Up and

away it went, and for a moment a burst of applause rent the air, then suddenly ominously died. Straight away flew the ball—straight, as it seemed, for the Tankerdine carriage and the pink parasol; but would it get there? For there, awaiting the ball, immaculately motionless, in exactly the right place, with safest, coolest pair of hands that never were known to drop a fair catch, stood Maurice Crobyn—expectant. Right into his hands it seemed to be falling, Lady Emily, in an agony of suspense, watching round-eyed. Suddenly, just as the ball came to him, she called out—declared afterwards, when it was too late, that the exclamation came from her involuntarily, unconsciously, without her knowledge that she had spoken—"Oh, Mr. Crobyn!"

In the painful hush of expectancy all near her heard it, called in her clear, young, girlish voice. Most clearly of all, Maurice Crobyn, standing not five yards from her, heard it, half turned his head involuntarily for a tenth of a second only, but that tenth of a second was too much. When he turned again, scarcely aware that his attention had wandered, he failed to "sight" the ball, saw it only as a blurred mass when it was right on him, struck it with his hands impotently—anyhow, so that it bounded off and went beneath the ropes.

It was all the affair of less than a moment, and the next instant Lady Emily had sunk back on the cushions again, half-laughing, overwhelmed by the reproaches of her father and her sister.

Perhaps, if a sufficient number of ladies could be gathered all round the ropes, even the duffer, who has never reached his hundred, with such assistance might attain that haven of unspeakable delight; one likes to think so, but doubts invade. Peter Steele, at least, profited by the incident, hit out freely, and sent the ball to the boundary time after time; and his uncle, who had promised him a five-pound note for every run he made over a hundred, was for a short time living at the rate of £2,564,000 per annum! Of course Oxford won; Peter's side generally did. But once he scored three consecutive duck's eggs, and the reader feels more kindly towards him. Peter, indeed, is of a heroism sufficiently moderated, he is humanised enough to win anyone's liking; except at cricket he was no genius, and his uncle often told him he was an ass. It was he who put right an overdraft at his banker's by a cheque on the overdrawn account; perhaps it was he (though Mr. Hutchinson does not record this) who argued that he could not have exhausted the sum paid in to his account because there were several blank cheques left in his cheque-book. Even at cricket his genius was narrowed; his bowling was not great, and his uncle declined to field short-leg to him unless there was a very good long-leg behind him. Peter played for the Gentlemen at the Oval ("it was no place for ladies," Lord Tankerdine declared), and there on the ground—"again as hard as a road—a trifle less turnpiky, perhaps, than the wicket at Lord's, but that was due entirely to the kindlier nature of the soil at Kennington"—hurt his shoulder, and could

play no more cricket that year. The account of how the doctor—the doctor who has for many years been in the Gentlemen's team—examined the injury and declared, "I don't know what it is, but it's something pretty bad"; and how other doctors, eminent surgeons, differed from one another, and the great bone-setter from them, and the general practitioner agreed with them all, and the shoulder got well unaided except by time, is full of humour. There are many more games in the book, all good; and there is some charming love-making, with the proper inequalities in the stream, and a wedding, at which Peter receives so many presents in the guise of cricket bats and balls, inkstands, pencil-cases, "and altogether such a plethora of toy cricket apparatus" that Lady Emily, the bride, "actually declared, at last, between laughter and earnest, that she wished to goodness she had never heard of a bat or a cricket ball." But so good a novel could not end upon so treasonable a note, and the reader leaves Peter blessed, like most men, with a better wife than he deserves, and captain of the County Eleven.

Mr. Hornung introduces the reader to a very different hero. That Mr. Hornung could write well of cricket, "Kenyon's Innings" had shown us. But a hero who makes a duck at Lord's against the Players, a hero who cares little for the game, is a novel hero indeed. Yet A. J. Raffles, so his friend declared, as a cricketer was unique.

Himself a dangerous bat, a brilliant field, and perhaps the very finest slow bowler of his decade, he took incredibly little interest in the game at large. He never went up to Lord's without his cricket bag, or showed the slightest interest in the result of a match in which he was not himself engaged. . . .

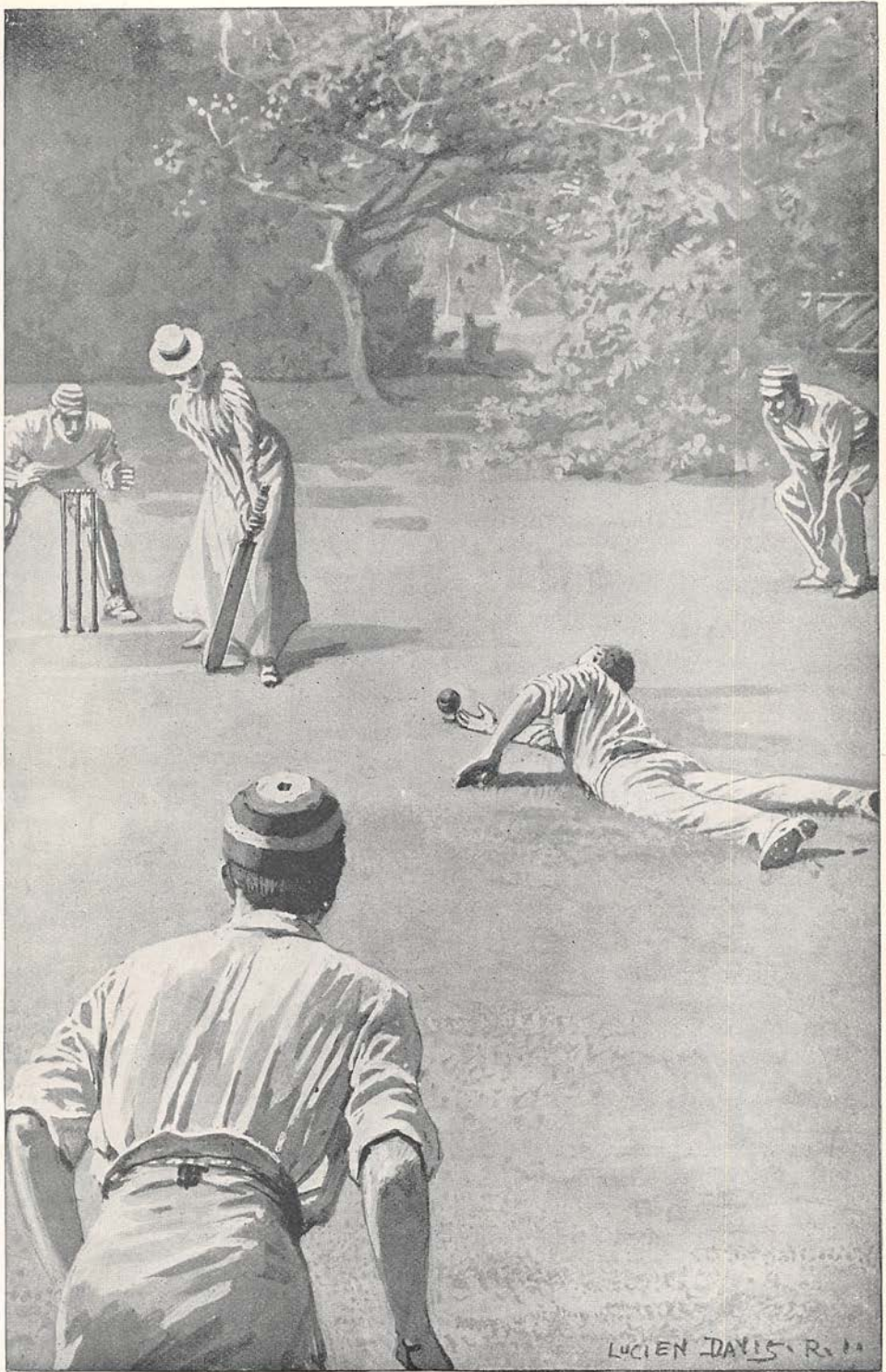
Nevertheless, when he did play there was no keener performer on the field, nor one more anxious to do well for his side. I remember how he went to the nets, before the first match of the season, with his pockets full of sovereigns, which he put on the stumps instead of bails. It was a sight to see the professionals bowling like demons for the hard cash, for whenever a stump was hit a pound was tossed to the bowler and another balanced in its stead, while one man took £3 with a ball that spread-eagled the wicket. Raffles' practice cost him either eight or nine sovereigns; but he had absolutely first class bowling all the time, and he made fifty-seven runs next day.

Seen from the top of the pavilion Raffles' bowling was an intellectual treat. He was "the Buttress of the period," bowling "his peculiar twisters," of whom Calverley sang, and something more. The spectator could not fail to admire "his perfect command of pitch and break, his beautifully easy action, which never varied with the varying pace, his great ball on the legstump—his drooping head

ball—in a word, the infinite ingenuity of that versatile attack. . . . It was not that Raffles took many wickets for a few runs; he was too fine a bowler to mind being hit." In the short time we are allowed to see his play he took three of the four Players' wickets that fell. And yet—this great cricketer was a burglar, the amateur cracksman of the title. His cricket, indeed, was merely the requisite semblance of a different occupation. "To follow crime with reasonable impunity," said the astute criminal, "you simply *must* have a parallel ostensible career—the more public the better. Fill the bill in some prominent part, and you'll never be suspected of doubling it with another of equal prominence."

This is a daring conception; but ought our feelings to be thus shocked? We have prided ourselves so long on the moral and educational qualities of cricket, that the possibility of a criminous athlete is too painful for belief. The restraint, the discipline, the patient and assiduous toil essential to success in cricket, we have always been told by our pastors and masters, must make for righteousness. To ascribe all the undiscovered crimes of the century to men high up in the averages, to conceive a champion slinking down coal-hole gratings to rob a till, is impossibly blasphemous. Bold as is the invention, this is not the hero for cricketers. "What," asks the amateur cracksman, "is the satisfaction of taking a man's wicket when you want his spoons?" Let us abjure the heresy that a cricketer could ask such a question; let us get back quickly to "Peter Steele" and the honest creed of Uncle Bunny—"A boy who can stand up to a yorker on the leg stump will never tell a lie!"

Yet Mr. Snaith has a greater surprise for us than Mr. Hornung. His book is full of cricket; in "Willow the King" the game is presented in its true light as the principal—nay, the sole—business, solace, and delight of life. Yet the chief character of the book is a woman. Grace Trentham—she was christened Laura Mary, but they called her Grace, because she kept five portraits of that hero on her bedroom mantelpiece, and was believed to treasure in secret "strands of his beard"—was the centre and mainspring of cricket's vitality in the parishes of Hickory and Little Clumpton. With two brothers playing for their county, and a third, captain of the Harrow eleven, with a father who had been one of the finest amateur bowlers of his day, and a circle of curates and other admirers all fit to play for the Gentlemen,



"Grace personated 'W. G.' in the county matches on the lawn."

she yet possessed more knowledge of the game's history and science, more appreciation of its rare excellence, more zest in its practice, than them all. A single passage will prove what a queen among women Grace Trentham was. It was at the tremendous struggle between the neighbouring parishes which gloried in her near presence—a match, success in which made a man "a classic in his lifetime"—that the incident occurred.

As Miss Grace came along the confines of the boundary to rejoin us, swinging her gloves as she walked, an act of self-denial denoted that here was no ordinary girl. The bowler was in the act of delivering, and she was compelled to cross the screen at his end. The ordinary girl would have been quite unable to resist the fascination of passing behind the bowler's arms, and thereby delaying the game until she had gone on her way rejoicing in her crime. Miss Grace, however impossible it may actually seem, waited while the bowler delivered the ball, and afterwards ran across the screen as hard as she could in order to be well clear of his arm by the time he was ready to send down the next. The Optimist saw this also, and is prepared, I understand, to affirm it on oath in the presence of witnesses. And the pair of us will no doubt one day persuade the authorities at Newnham to recognise the pious character of her act by erecting a stained glass window to her honourable memory, even at the risk of causing that home of the higher learning to build a chapel in which to put it.

Having regained her seat on the drag she proceeded to criticise the players freely and to offer excellent advice to her brother, the captain of the fielding side. Her knowledge of the game was complete and her opinion decided. To public schoolboys' batting she objected that "their style consists in jolly well going forward to every jolly thing"; even Varsity bats she said were only "lions on lawns." The curate's bowling, she said, was quite proper for a clergyman, because it had no devil in it. Her own style, when she played at home on the rectory lawn, was not orthodox; and her father declared that the way in which she pulled everything blindly to leg was "a reproach, a disgrace to her family." To this the young lady replied, with much force, that it was all very well to complain, "but if I was Ranjy, or Clem Hill, or Archie Trentham, or one of those big pots, people 'ud say it was a marvellous hook stroke, and the fruit of my wonderful original method." But her fielding was above reproach, and for a missed catch she had no mercy. "I don't care about the spin," said the inexorable Miss Grace, "or the height, or the flight, or the light, or the sight, or anything—Toddles ought to have had that catch. Jimmy Douglas 'ud have had it in his mouth." She was, moreover, a great commander. "In addition to her other gifts she possessed that rare but invaluable

quality in a captain of practically dictating the decisions of an umpire. There was no doubt that the Gloucestershire captain"—Miss Grace personated "W. G." in the county matches on the lawn—"was invariably conscientious in her appeals, and the umpire equally so in their decisions. But their common faith in one another was beautiful."

The matches played upon that lawn ought to have been included in "Scores and Biographies." When Mr. Dimsdale, who tells the story of "Willow the King," first visited the rectory a game was in progress. Complaints were heard:—

"Grace, if you will keep covering the sticks every time with your confounded skirt, you'll be out petticoat before."

"Oh, shall I?" said the audacious person thus addressed. "If you can't bowl me, you'd better bowl for catches and get me caught. Put Toddles on. He might get me collared in the long field like anything." . . .

It was a single-wicket match. Grace herself was batting. A. H. was bowling slow breaks; Captain George was keeping wicket; Elphinstone was in the country; T. S. M., H. C., and Carteret were all disposed on the leg-side; whilst an old, foxey-looking individual was acting in the responsible capacity of umpire. I had not been there a minute ere Miss Grace, in attempting a tremendous blind swipe right off her middle over the cucumber frame at deep square leg, was saved by her skirt from being clean bowled.

"How's that?" cried A. H., lustily.

"Not hout!" cried the umpire, in a tone that plainly told A. H. what he, the umpire, thought of him as a man and a gentleman.

"Very good decision, Biffin," said Miss Grace, calmly patting down the turf to show that the ball had turned a bit. However, Nemesis waited on Miss Grace next ball. With another mighty swipe she fetched a real good one round like lightning, and the youthful T. S. M., fielding short-leg, jumping up, effected a wonderful one-handed catch.

"Well, what a fluke!" cried Miss Grace; "that would have been the winning hit."

"But isn't," said Elphinstone, alias Toddles, cheerfully, "and Surrey have beaten Middlesex by two runs. First defeat of the champion county. Oh, Stoddy, why weren't you steadier?"

"Yes, why weren't you steadier, Stoddy?" said Carteret.

"Cause I didn't think there was anybody in this parish who could catch anything after yesterday's exhibition," said the famous Middlesex batsman dejectedly.

"What's the next fixture in the Middlesex list?" asked Captain George.

"Middlesex v. Gloucestershire at Chelt-nham," said Miss Grace. "Same sides. Let's toss for innings."

"You've got a man more than we, though," said T. S. M.

"As you play for Harrow, Tommy, you count two, you know," said Miss Grace.

"Hullo, there's Dimsdale here," cried H. C., as his eyes lit on me. "He's just the man we want for Gloucester. Go round, Dimsdale, to the gate."

A minute later I was on the rectory lawn and preparing to engage in my first county match.

"As it's Gloucestershire," said George the kindly, "somebody'll have to represent the Old Man. Now Grace herself is the only one with any pretensions to do that. Suppose Middlesex swaps her for me?"

"Ripping good idea!" said that celebrated person eagerly. "That's stunning! Biffin, just go and fetch me that red and yellow cap, while I go out and toss with Mr. Stoddart."

Middlesex won the toss and elected to go in. Archie

put on his pads and went in first, on a distinctly creditable wicket. Grace captained Gloucestershire, of course.

"As Roberts is suffering from a strain," said she, "and Charlie Townsend's lost his length, and Jessop's a bit on the short side at present, I think I'd better try myself to start with. Besides, I can get old Archie out."

She began with very slow, high-tossed, half-volleys. Considering that Archie was one of the most powerful hitters in England, this proceeding on the part of W. G. savoured of cool cheek.

"These are no use, you know," said the batsman,

driving one terrifically hard along the ground for a big single.

"You hit 'em and see," said the wily bowler. "If you do, Archie, sure as a gun you'll put 'em through the library windows."

Grace had shown her hand with a vengeance.

The bird entered the trap, the batsman broke the window (and under "Rectory Rules" was out), the rector protested, and the game suffered an interruption. But the rector was so good a cricketer that he withdrew his veto. It was yet to be a memorable day for the rectory party, for before the tea interval was over—

A maid-servant issued from the house with a pink slip in her hand. She delivered it into the care of the Harrow captain.

"The boy's waiting, sir," said she.

Tom tore off the wrapper. Thereon he was seen to grow noticeably pale, while he allowed the telegram to flutter from his fingers.

"By Jove!" he gasped.

Miss Grace pounced on the pink paper like a hawk, and read out its contents in a voice thrilling with excitement: "You are selected for Kent match,

Monday, Tonbridge. Reply paid, Webbe.' Hooray! Hooray! Isn't A. J. just a darling?"

The exuberant young person waved the telegram about in such a frantic manner that she overturned the teapot into the lap of Carteret.

"Terribly sorry, James," she said breathlessly; "terribly sorry. But lend me a pencil, somebody, and, Jane, just see as that boy don't go."

A pencil being promptly forthcoming, Miss Grace wrote in a hasty but firm hand on the slip attached: "Shall be very glad to play, Tenbridge, Monday.—

T. Trentham."

"There you are, Jane," said she; "give that to the boy," and fishing half-a-crown from her purse, added, "and this is for him, too."

"Laura, what unwarrantable extravagance!" said the rector, looking so happy that he could scarcely sit still.

"It 'ud be five shillings, father," said Miss Grace, "only I want some new gloves for Tonbridge on Monday. But isn't it glorious? Isn't it tremendous of A. J.? Tommy, I'm so delighted! And didn't I say from the first that they wouldn't pass you over? And you will take me to Tonbridge, won't you, father?"

"I think you are more likely to take me," said that indulgent man.

They were all good cricketers at Little Clumpton as well as at Hickory. The captain of Little

Clumpton (who smoked a corn-cob, which seems an infringement of the Humourist's rights) was a remarkable man:—

His mien had the wholly classic calm of those who have their biographies in Wisden. His language in its robust passages was as fragile as Mrs. Meynell's prose. If a small boy danced behind the bowler's arm, it was claimed for the captain that he actually employed "Please" and "Thank you." Even in the throes of a



"Read out its contents in a voice thrilling with excitement."

run-out his talk retained its purity to a remarkable degree. His strongest expletive was a pained expression.

The secretary, it seems, suffered from no such restraint; he had views on golf—"billiards gone to grass"—not fit for print; "he could be as persuasive as tobacco, he could unloose the wrath of Jove." Lawson was another valuable member. "When a rot set in, before going in to stop it, he would tell them to send him a cup of tea at five o'clock." Then there was the Humourist, whose conception of Paradise was a place of short boundaries and unlimited lob-bowling. The Humourist would ask, "Why is Bobby Abel batting like Lawson's small-talk? Because to look at 'em you'd wonder how they could." The talk of the pavilion, even of first class pavilions, Mr. Snaith hints, loses half its charm in print.

The book is full of good things and keen observation. The satisfied superiority of Lord's is recorded. "It should be noted," says Mr. Snaith, "that at the Oval it is invariably 'a crowd.' At Lord's it is correct to say 'a company.'" Very happy is the division of bowlers into "change" and "small change." There is a capital picture of Mr. Dimsdale practising batting with a chalk-line on his bedroom carpet, and trying "that blind hit of Gunn's between point and cover" to the destruction of the mirror. The innings that we all play, in fancy, before the match, approaching our century in a five minutes' walk, is well described; and nothing could be finer than the author's analysis of the batsman's fit of nerves when, "marching out to that wicket, before that crowd, to face that bowling," the hero "began to desire a gentle death and quiet funeral."

Mr. Snaith has not, perhaps, constructed his fable so carefully as the author of "Peter Steele," and it has to be admitted that his heroine has one defect; she is most reprehensibly "slangy." With a family of brothers like hers, who talk of living cricketers with such complete freedom, and speculate on their sister's marriage in her presence, and always in slang, this is not surprising. Doubtless the mirror is here held true. Cricketers, as a race, are not "literary and that"; their well of English is not free from trace of some admixture. Probably most readers will consider the resultant beverage more piquant; and to Miss Trentham's friends the slang seems to have been but an added charm. Proposals poured upon her. To one noble lord who sought Grace's hand, "and sank so low as to tell her what his income was," she had a crushing reply.

"Now, look here, Dick," said she, "I don't care a straw about your income; what's your batting average?" The story of Mr. Dimsdale's stormy wooing, and of the tremendous single-wicket match he played with Grace for her hand, is told with much spirit. How true love and a straight bat almost failed, but, despite bad bowling, keen fielding won some ray of pity from that Amazonian breast, the reader will learn with pleasure ere he closes the book, and opens it again to read once more so delightful a criticism of life and the game.

Mr. Quiller-Couch has lately deprecated the mixture of love with the national sport. "Girls," he says, "should not be allowed to meddle with the game. Above all things love-making should be avoided in a cricketing story. The rapture of love and of cricket are distinct and not to be confused." It is pleasant to find such deep devotion to the game, and one differs with hesitation from so very able a critic. But have not the novelists the facts of life on their side? Cricket is—unhappily; it is one of life's tragedies—for the young; and in the spring a young man's fancy turns not only to thoughts of the game. "Cupid puts on his pads," as Mr. Snaith says, and sometimes he takes the ball, too, and shows he has not lost his old skill. Few cricketers play all their lives for the Single against the Married, and there are intervals between the innings when love and the lesser concerns of life are remembered. May not the reader be made to feel both raptures? Mr. W. P. James, in his essay on "Romantic Professions," has pointed out that the bailiff and beadle and butcher are outside the list of possible heroes, and he defends the popular prejudice, "insisting on the undiminished need for physical prowess and the barbaric virtues in advanced and refined stages of civilisation." "A woman," he adds, "is right in demanding in a hero a stout heart and a strong arm—strength, courage, and loyalty, the soldier's virtues." But these are the cricketer's virtues, too. Why should he be sent with solicitors and stokers and stockbrokers into the limbo of the ineligible? Do his cricket feats detract from the interest which the reader feels in him, any more than Pendennis's books or Esmond's campaigns? For my part, I confess myself unconvinced. The cricket hero seems to me a capital fellow, and when we elect the teams for test matches by plebiscite I shall record my vote for Robert Burscough and Peter Steele and Grace Dimsdale, *née* Trentham.