



## THIS YEAR'S AUSTRALIAN TEAM.

BY GEORGE CRANLEY.

**N**OW that the Australians have fairly started their campaign in this country, readers of the *WINDSOR* can judge for themselves how they are likely to fare against English cricketers and on English soil. As this judgment may be helped by a knowledge of what the Colonials have done at home, we give here a short biography of each member of the team, with an account of his best performances up to the time that the team sailed for England.

The new men in the team, as everyone knows, are Trumper, Worrall, McLeod, Laver, Howell, and Noble. Worrall certainly has been in this country before, when he visited England with Percy McDonnell's combination in 1888, but as he has improved out of all knowledge since then he may fairly be regarded as a stranger. Noble has had a comet-like career. In the season of 1896-7 he jumped to the front in one bound, and it appeared that New South Wales had for two years been entertaining an angel unawares. Three years previously, Noble had scored 152 not out for Eighteen Sydney Juniors against Stoddart's team. One would have thought that such a feat would have brought him into prominence at once, but he had only one opportunity of showing his skill that year in inter-Colonial matches, and as he did very little he was dropped till 1896, when he actually headed the first class Australian tables with the splendid average of 68. In the season that is just completed Noble scored 100 against Victoria, and 101 against South Australia, and secured fourth place in the list of first class averages. But it is as a bowler that Noble is being watched most eagerly over here. A couple of years ago he discovered that, after the fashion of American baseball pitchers, he possessed the faculty of making the ball curl in the air.

He then set to work to cultivate this gift, and his success was immediate and extraordinary. One of the most wonderful sights of cricket was to see the way, in 1898, he bowled down the wickets of such batsmen as Stoddart, Hayward, and Hirst, with full pitches. Whether, as English cricketers



M. A. NOBLE.

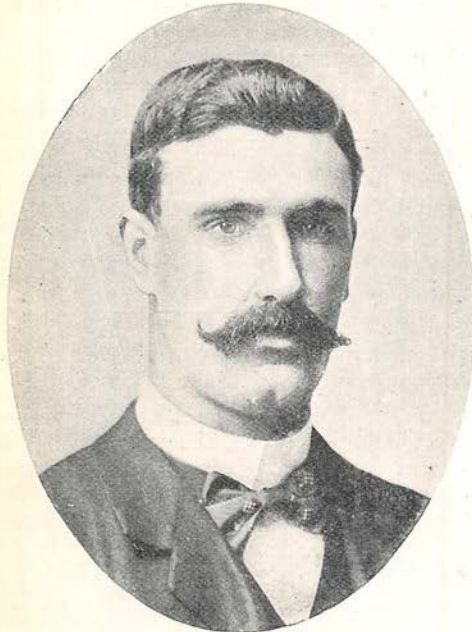
*Photo by Kerry, Sydney.*

become accustomed to Noble's "air-breaks," he will continue to be so deadly is an open question.

Charles McLeod, who must not be confused



with his brother Robert, who was a member of the 1893 team, is a left-handed batsman of the safe rather than the brilliant order,



C. McLEOD

*Photo by Thomas, Chespside.*

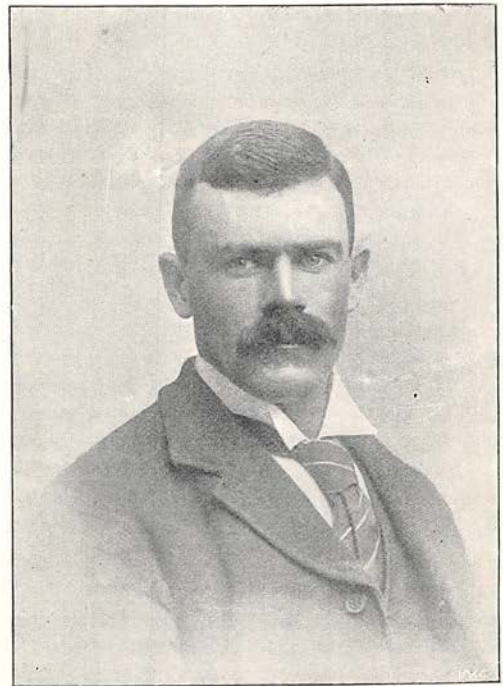
though he owes his place to his bowling more than his batting. During Stoddart's last tour McLeod batted with the most consistent success and secured an average of 58 in the test matches, but as a batsman in the past season in Australia he went all to pieces and came out no higher than 38 in the tables, with the proud average of five. As a set-off against this, however, he was third in the bowling averages, with 21 wickets for 17 runs each. McLeod is one of the coolest individuals in the world, and in Melbourne, where he is very popular, he is known as "Lightning," because off the field and on he has never yet been known to hurry himself.

Some seven or eight years ago W. L. Murdoch, then on a visit to Australia, expressed the highest opinion of Frank Laver's batting; but though he has invariably scored well for Victoria, it was not until last season he showed form which could entitle him to a place in a representative Australian team. Last winter he came along with a rush and obtained second place in the Australian first class batting averages, with 61·80, being only beaten by a fraction for first place by Clement Hill. His highest score was 137 not out against South Australia. Laver is

the giant of Australian cricket. He is a most ungainly batsman, but an extremely useful one; in addition to what he has done in first class cricket, he is one of the most prolific scorers in minor matches in Australia.

The Benjamin of the team is Victor Trumper, who is not yet twenty-one years of age. Trumper's success against Stoddart's XI. in 1898 was not striking—that is, if success is to be measured merely by the number of runs scored. But according to Ranjitsinhji he has in him the makings of the finest batsman in Australia. In the trial fixtures just before the team sailed Trumper scored 75 and 46 twice. In the inter-Colonial matches of the past season he had an average of eighteen only, though he made 292 against Tasmania—a match which corresponds with what we call a second class fixture in England. As a fieldsman he is electric, and during Stoddart's tour he dismissed Hayward with a catch which Ranjitsinhji describes as the finest he has ever seen.

When Worrall last appeared on English



J. DARLING.

*Photo by A. Pickering, Leicester.*

ground he was a batsman of a strongly pronounced agricultural type. He "hit high and hard," but he didn't hit often, for the simple

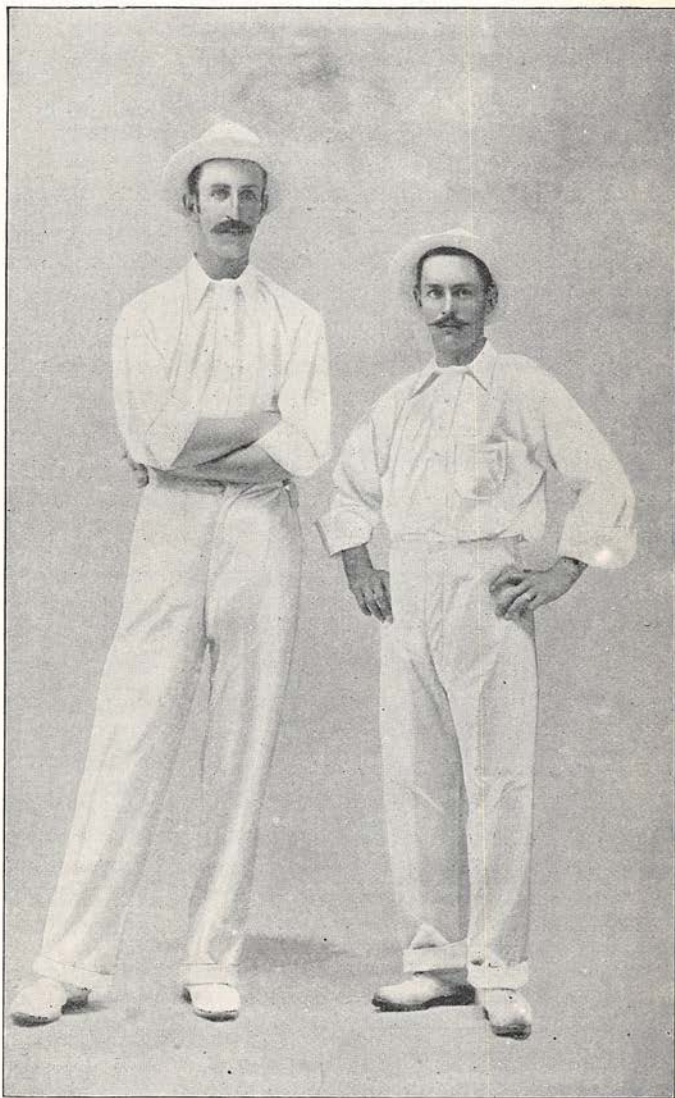


reason that the fieldsmen didn't give him a chance. But that was in his unregenerate days, and he is now, especially on bad wickets, one of the most skilful batsmen living. To show the extent of his improvement within the past ten years it need only be mentioned that his batting average in Australia was once no higher than 3, while in the past season he stood fifth in the list with an average of 48·71. Against New South Wales last Boxing Day he played an innings of 109 out of a total of 189 for the whole side, which was regarded by Australian critics as the finest display of batting on a bad wicket since the late Percy MacDonnell's historic innings of 82 out of 86 against the North of England at Manchester in 1888. Worrall also scored 104 against South Australia last season. He is the holder of the record Australian score, 417, made in 1896 against the Melbourne University. He is a magnificent fieldsmen, and according to George Giffen has never been equalled at mid-off.

Howell is a bowler of the Attewell type. His distinguishing feature is accuracy, though even on the smooth Australian wickets he has sometimes made the ball break considerably. He is right-hand, about medium pace, and last season stood fourth in the inter-Colonial bowling averages, with 20 wickets at a cost of 24 runs each. Howell isn't reckoned much of a bat in Australia, but it mustn't be forgotten that for New South Wales against Stoddart's team in February, 1898, he astonished the cricket world by scoring, as last man, 48 and 95, the latter in a few minutes over the hour.

The remaining men in the team have all been in England before, so there is no need to give a lengthy description of them.

Judging from their performances in Australia last season neither Gregory nor Darling has improved on his form of 1896. Darling was no higher than thirteenth in the table of inter-Colonial batting averages. His highest score in first class matches was



IREDALE.

GREGORY.

*Photo by Talma, Melbourne.*

70, though against Queensland he made 210. Darling, however, has so much cricket in him that even if his average in Australia had been 0 it wouldn't be safe to prophesy failure for him in England. Darling has had a peculiarly interesting career. Like A. C.



MacLaren, he made his mark as a schoolboy when he scored 252 in an annual college match which is the South Australian equivalent of the Eton and Harrow fixture. If he had remained in Adelaide he would have probably represented Australia before he was eighteen, but his father sent him away to manage a farm in one of the back blocks, and he was not seen in good cricket again till he had completed his twenty-third year. Then, with the firm conviction that he could make a name in first class cricket, he returned to Adelaide, and within eighteen months was playing in the test matches. In



CLEM HILL.

Photo by A. Pickering, Leicester.

his very first innings against English bowling he scored 117, and brilliantly concluded the season by making the highest score for Australia in the famous final test match against Stoddart's 1894 team. With his performances in England in 1896 everyone of course is familiar.

Like our Studds and Lytteltons, Gregory belongs to a family of cricketers. His uncle, David Gregory, captained the first Australian team that ever visited this country, while his father, Ned Gregory, was one of the leading lights of Australian cricket in the early seventies. Syd Gregory

was first taken to England as a fieldsman rather than as a batsman, but experience in good company rapidly developed his batting powers, so that in 1893 he acquitted himself with credit, while in 1896 he secured a higher average than any of his predecessors had obtained in England. During the past season in Australia he did nothing out of the common, as his highest score in inter-Colonial matches was only 89 and his position in the batting averages no higher than fourteenth, but, just as in Darling's case, Gregory's cricket is of such a nature that temporary failure forms no ground for believing that he has really gone off as a batsman.

Many enthusiastic Australian cricketers declare that at the present day Clement Hill is absolutely the best batsman in the world. Without discussing how far this sweeping praise is deserved, it may be confidently stated that Hill is the best left-hand batsman living. His scores for South Australia last season make most interesting reading—86 and 3 against Victoria, 73 and 109 against New South Wales in the first match, and 12 and 159 in the second match, 78 (run out) against Queensland, and 27 and 33 in the second match against Victoria; while for the Representative Eleven against the Rest of Australia, just before the team sailed, he scored consecutively 76, 101 not out, 51, 33, and 0. As mentioned above, Hill was at the head of the Australian batting averages, with 62.75 for eight completed innings.

To those who watched Iredale's batting in this country three years ago it seems a puzzle that there should ever have been any doubt as to his place in the present team. Yet he was only chosen at the eleventh hour. Why this was it is difficult to say, as not only has Iredale scored persistently well in test matches both here and in Australia, but in the past season his name stood sixth in the inter-Colonial batting averages with 47.57. Iredale, as is well known, is a bad starter—so bad, indeed, that, especially when fast bowling is on, the fieldsmen in the slips are surprised if he does not give them some sort of a chance before he has made half a dozen. But, as George Giffen says in his interesting volume, "With Bat and Ball," they may pray in vain for a chance if once he becomes set.

On his Australian form during the past season Hugh Trumble seems to be as good a bowler and a much better batsman than when he visited England in 1896. He stands at the head of the Australian bowling averages



with 34 wickets at a cost of 15·44, and has the useful batting average of 25. Trumble, it will be remembered, by his steadiness at a crisis practically won the test match at Manchester in 1896. But his batting average in Australia last season shows that he has improved appreciably since his last visit to England. Last winter he played an innings of 70 against South Australia without giving a chance.

There is no necessity here to allude to the probability of the renewal of the question as to the fairness of Jones's bowling. The stir created by his being "no-balled" during Stoddart's last tour is fresh in everyone's memory. Judged by his performances in Australia last season, when in inter-Colonial matches he secured 28 wickets for 28 runs apiece, Jones is certainly not the bowler he was; as a set-off, however, against his descent in the bowling averages Jones came on with rapid strides as a batsman. In 1898, Jones only averaged 12 runs per innings, but in the season just finished he had an average of 28·5, and this with only one not-out to help him. His innings of 82 in December, on



J. J. KELLY.

Photo by Kerry, Sydney.



E. JONES.

Photo by Scott & Barry, Adelaide.

the Adelaide Oval, against the bowling of Howell, Noble, and McKibbin, was worthy of a batsman of the highest class.

Although a Victorian by birth, Kelly does not serve that Colony now, for when he made his *début* in the cricket world the Victorians, rich in the possession of Blackham, did not appreciate him at his true worth, so he migrated to New South Wales. All English cricketers know what a painstaking and reliable wicket-keeper Kelly is. His last trip to England improved his batting immeasurably, and in the inter-Colonial averages of the past season he came out third with the magnificent figure of 53·25.

Kelly's understudy, Johns, according to Blackham, who ought to know something about the matter, is the finest wicket-keeper in the world. The Australians are accustomed to brilliant wicket-keepers, but some of Johns' feats behind the stumps for Victoria last season fairly electrified the critics. The only drawback to Johns is that his hands are too tender to stand the wear and tear of a whole season's work. Otherwise he would have come over here as stumper-in-chief instead of emergency man.