

Sporting Stories.

Heard and Told by Well-known Sportsmen.

LORD HAWKE.

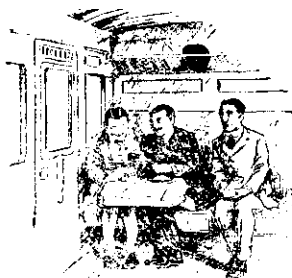
The Lay of the Lobster.

FOR downright fun some of my cricketing tours in America would be hard to beat. While in New York on one occasion I caught a chill, and was unable to play for the next day or two. The reporters at once stated that I was laid up through eating too much lobster salad, and someone sent me the following:—

THE LAY OF THE LOBSTER AND THE LORD.

There was once a lobster in New York. They made him into salad; His lordship ate, almost too much, It made him very maudlin.

Their criticism of Sammy Woods was very tickling. "After Demon Woods arrived the Staten Islanders were mowed down like wheat before a sickle. He is a big, brawny fellow; but nobody knows where he has got his speed from, unless it may come from the bottom of his pockets. During the over he thrusts his hands deep into his flannels, and only



J. B. HOBBS'S STORY.

"The other fellow looked on with hungry eyes."

withdraws them to field a ball. In bowling he takes a few fancy steps like a skirt-dancer, and kick out like a Georgia mule before letting the ball go."

On another occasion, while the members of a cricket team were journeying to fulfil an engagement, the sorry pair of horses attached to the conveyance which they had hired came in for a good deal of adverse criticism.

"I say, driver," at last remarked the captain of the team, "you've got a whip; just touch 'em up a bit. At this rate we shall never reach our destination."

The driver explained that he had never had occasion to drive that particular pair of horses before. "As you remark," he added, "I've got a whip, but I don't like to take the risk of using it."

"I see," was the grin rejoinder; "you're afraid of knocking 'em down, eh? Very well. Here's sixpence for you. That ought to cover the damage if you do knock 'em down. Now, then, hammer away."

C. GRAHAM-WHITE.

The Monoplane Hunt.

To the ordinary individual there might appear little that is humorous in aviation; it would seem, rather, to be a grim and grisly business, with sudden death always at the pilot's elbow. But the dangers of airmanship are ridiculously exaggerated, and there is, as a matter of

fact, much that is amusing in what I might call everyday aviation, and particularly in regard to the operation of a flying-school.

And now as to the most amusing incident I can think of. Well, here it is.

A pupil, after landing at my Hendon aerodrome one evening at the end of a



W. G. GRACE'S STORY.

"I struck with one of my outside bats."

fight on a monoplane, jumped out of the machine before it had stopped running along the ground. Stumbling, he not only let go of the machine, but accidentally touched the engine-switch and accelerated the motor to a high rate of speed.

The result was that the monoplane darted away like a big, angry bird; and, as though rejoicing in its new-found freedom, it ran this way and that about the aerodrome, its motor humming defiance.

With confident mien, some of the mechanics hurried out to catch the runaway; but they had not reckoned upon the ridiculously eccentric actions of the machine.

Soon we who were watching were convulsed with mirth. Whirling hither and thither under the impulse of its propeller, but without the power actually to



"PLUM" WARNER'S STORY.

"Bravo, Massa Pelham! I taught you to bat, sah."

rise, the monoplane seemed instinct with the desire to elude pursuit.

Buzzing away across the aerodrome, it led the mechanics a fatiguing chase. Then, suddenly wheeling round, it plunged at them, and scattered them with the fear of its spinning propeller.

Again they chased it; again the machine, as though a thing alive, wheeled round and made a vicious dart at them. This time one man managed to grip its tail, but he was shaken off and fell flat on his back.



LORD HAWKE'S STORY.

Demon Woods takes a few fancy steps like a skirt-dancer, and kicks out like a Georgia mule before letting the ball go."



SIR THOMAS LIPTON'S STORY.

"Tell me, Mon, how long has this thing been going on"

Perspiring freely, and with many terse remarks to express their annoyance, the mechanics again took up their weary pursuit. Meanwhile, quite characteristically, unfeeling onlookers merely laughed.

Up and down, to and fro, the men ran and dodged and slipped and fell, their furious, unavailing shouts and cries mingling with the spiteful sputter of the monoplane's engine.

At length, having laughed at the ludicrous spectacle until we could laugh no more, some of us who were standing by the sheds made a move to join in the game.

But the machine seemed possessed. It wrenched itself away from the grip of several pairs of eager hands, and then hopped and floundered to some other corner of the aerodrome. One or two of the pursuers sat on the ground, quite exhausted. Others were laughing too much to pursue effectually. And still the monoplane buzzed at large.

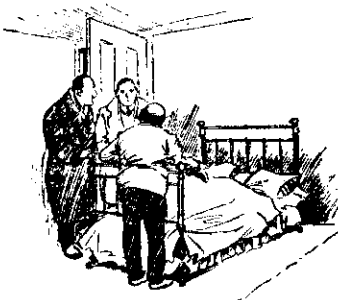
Finally, when we were all weak from running or laughing, I managed to get hold of a wing-tip. The monoplane whirled round and round furiously, but I was able to hold on. And then a mechanic ran in and switched off the motor. At once the machine stopped its absurd gyrations. But while it lasted the monoplane hunt was the funniest sight you could imagine.

J. B. HOBBS.

The Mean Professional.

I remember on one occasion a certain team finishing up at Lord's at half-past six one evening, and having to open the next morning at Manchester, necessitating a railway journey the same night.

As there was no time for the men to get anything to eat before leaving London, and there were no restaurant-carriages on the train, it was decided that a luncheon-basket would have to serve each man. Now, one professional on that side was awfully mean, and he



CHARLES JARROTT'S STORY.

"The two travellers inspected the famous feather bed."

openly vowed that he wasn't going to pay for a basket. "A pork-pie will do for me all right." And he proceeded to fetch one. In the meanwhile, the captain had luncheon-baskets, with half a bottle of wine in each, put in the professionals' compartment, paying for them himself, a fact of which all but the man who had gone for the pie were well aware.

The train started, and one of the players told the mean one that they had secured baskets for all, purposely omitting the information that they were a present from the captain. "I don't

want one. I've got all I want here," said he.

"Very well," said the other, "we must divide it between us."

And they did, although the other fellow looked on with hungry eyes. When all had been demolished the captain walked in from the adjoining compartment and asked them if everything were satisfactory.

"Splendid, sir," replied the pros., "and thank you very much. It was very kind of you."

The other fellow immediately wanted an explanation of the gratitude, and when he was told he nearly went raving mad.

W. G. GRACE.

Cricket Under Difficulties.

The following story may be a chestnut to some readers, but it amused me greatly. A cricketer who was to go in sixth on his side, seeing that the preceding batsmen were making prolonged stands, betook himself to the refreshment tent. Suddenly wickets began to fall, and his captain, in hunting up the man to tell him to prepare to bat, found him in a state bordering on intoxication.

"I am afraid," said the batsman, "that I can't do much good. I am sure I shall see three balls."

"Never mind," said the captain; "smack at the middle one."

The batsman survived one over, and was then bowled by a straight one. As he walked back to the pavilion his captain went out to meet him, and imperiously asked why his advice hadn't been taken.

"I did exactly what you told me,"



LORD CHARLES BERESFORD'S STORY.

"The first bird I ever shot was a squirrel."

replied the batsman. "I struck at the middle ball, but in a moment of indecision I struck with one of my outside bats."

GEORGE HIRST.

New use for Toffee.

Probably some readers are aware that I have had certain investments in a toffee factory, and it was this fact which led to the following amusing incident. During a match at Bramall Lane some time ago a strong wind kept blowing the balls off when I was batting. "Stick 'em on with your toffee. Garge!" yelled one of the crowd.

"PLUM" WARNER.

"The Man Who Taught Me Cricket."

I was once touring with Lord Hawke's team in Trinidad, and there scored the first century ever made in the island. At its conclusion a nigger, who had bowled to me as a youngster, came rushing up, shouting: "Bravo, Massa Pelham! I taught you to bat, sah. You play well, sah. I proud ob you!"

FRANK MITCHELL.

(Captain of South African Cricketers.)

"My Niggers."

I do not think my reminiscences contain a more amusing incident than the following. A lady friend wrote to ask my wife and myself to stay at her house for the Worcester match in May last. The invitation was accepted, and in a subsequent letter she said: "Bruce (the young son) amused me to-day when I told him you were coming to stay with us, by asking if Mr. Mitchell would bring his niggers with him when he came."

NAT GOULD.

"My Lucky Day."

In my early days I came a "cropper" in Sydney. In other words, I severed