

The results of the last two matches played by the Australians have caused much surprise in England, and many and ingenious are the excuses offered as reasons for the ignominious defeat sustained by the Englishmen. The match against the Gentlemen in 1878 was decided against Gregory's team in one innings, and it is strange that the order of things should be thus reversed. The eleven, composed of both classes of players, which sustained a still greater defeat to that experienced by the Gentlemen, was by no means a representative one. The amateurs were few in number, and the professionals were not by any means the best of their sort. It is a pity that a really good combined eleven had not been pitted against them.

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The strongest objection against the existence of the Ontario Cricket Association is the unfortunate antagonism that it breeds. This objection, however, is not confined to the Association, for we have recent information of the very unpleasant treatment of an eleven at the hands of their hosts, in a purely friendly contest, with no honours at stake but the prestige of either club. Such conduct is to be deprecated in the strongest manner. In the case in point the captain is only indirectly to blame for allowing the uncontrollable temper of one of his fledglings to get the better of him. Novices at the game require more captaining than older hands, and so the steersman should be all the more carefully selected when greenhorns are to be guided. The sooner the club to which we allude learns that it will effectually banish all chance of further visitors coming to them by such displays of nasty temper and selfish tendencies as it was guilty of on Monday last, the better for itself.

### STOLEN RUNS.

Overheard in the North!—"Do you think we can beat 'em, Jack?" "Well, you might—you'll be wanting a good local umpire, though!"—*Sporting Times*.

Rather late in life he took to boating with the not altogether unexpected result of being upset almost every day. When this wild excitement began to pall, he transferred his athletic attentions to cricket. By-and-by, he was invited to make one of a team assembled at a country-house for the purpose of annihilating a local eleven. The day was hot, the drink was plentiful; and when the shadows of the tall elm-trees began to lengthen on the green sward beneath, the novice was nobody's enemy but his own. Friendly hands steered him to his bedroom, and it was thought that there he would be all right. But presently the inhabitants of the neighbouring apartments were startled by a loud shouting and splashing. Rushing into the novice's chamber they found him head downwards in a huge bath, which an unforeseeing housemaid had left filled for the morning. Seizing him by some of his garments they endeavoured to extricate him from his unfortunate position, but he continued to strike out valiantly with his feet, landing one of the rescue party in the mouth and a second in the stomach. When at length the little man got his head above water he gurgled: "Shave your shelvish, you fellowsh. I can swim!"—*Sporting Times*.

### CRICKET, AND HOW TO EXCEL IN IT.

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#### CHAPTER V.—PRACTICE.—Continued.

On the other hand, if the object be improvement, and the practice be really undertaken for the more skilful playing of the game, I would earnestly impress upon my readers this often-forgotten fact, that the more nearly the practice-game approaches to a match, and the more steady and painstaking

the player is, the better. One of the best methods of practice I know of is for sixteen people to play amongst themselves; eleven to go into the field, two to go to the wickets, two to be umpiring, and one scoring. An afternoon's practice, to last say for four hours, will thus give a quarter of an hour in each position to every player, and each player will gain experience in every department of the game, getting half an hour's batting (fifteen minutes at each wicket, no matter how often out), half an hour's bowling (fifteen minutes at each wicket), half an hour's umpiring (fifteen minutes at each end), a quarter of an hour's scoring, and two and a quarter hours' fielding, being fifteen minutes at each place: overs of four balls being bowled and discipline kept up throughout as in a match, a note being made of the results of the batting, the figures being arrived at by dividing the number of runs gained by each player, by the number of innings, and the bowling record worked out in the usual way, showing so many wickets for so many runs. One or two afternoons, devoted to steady practice of this kind, in which each player has a fair chance of improvement, cannot fail to be valuable. Parties of less than sixteen could work on a similar principle, and in cases of fewer players nets could be used—double wicket being played whenever possible.

The advantage of having eleven in the field when you are practising is that you thereby best learn how to judge the runs, and there is nothing so important to a cricketer as to be able to do this well. Quickness between wickets is most essential, but quickness without judgment is useless. A man at the bowler's end who knows what he is about will always back up, that is, go a few paces up the wicket after the bowler delivers the ball, and thus make many a run which could not be secured were he like some players, to stand as still as a scarecrow waiting till the ball is played. When a man backs up properly he has a much shorter distance to cover in making the run than when he remains level with the wicket and has to run the whole twenty-two yards. Tip and run is good occasional practice for smartening up a field, but two good batsmen should be at the wickets, it being shockingly bad practice as far as batting is concerned. The way in which runs can be scored when, as in this game, the batsmen are determined on making them, is astonishing, and calculated to considerably open the eyes of a sleepy field.

In running, batsmen should always keep straight up and down by the side of the wicket and never cross unnecessarily: they should not run on the pitch, or they will spoil it by heel marks, and they should always keep their wits about them and avoid collisions. The rate of running must be the rate of the slower of the two, as there is no use in running a man to a standstill, and of course there is no gain in running him out. In running a four or five run moderately, not at top speed, and do not begin batting again until after you have recovered your wind.

The striker should judge all hits in front of the wicket, the other batsmen those behind, and when a run is to be made one should call to the other. Call in a decided tone, not hesitatingly and apologetically, and mistakes will never occur. It always takes too long to make a run, so neither should start off on his own judgment and advance too far to return to his wicket before the ball gets there, in case the other man declines to move.

When a ball is hit you should make the first run at the top of your speed, and thus often get a couple where you would only have made one; in the same manner threes are made out of twos, and so on. Never over-run the bowling crease, as bad players invariably do, for it is a very common cause of runs being lost. Always watch the fieldsmen, and be ready to make a run at the slightest mistake. Two good judges of a run in together will often find that these runs from fieldsmen's blunders are the easiest made of any. If a ball is thrown in from the long-field you can nearly always score one while it is on its way. The effect of stolen runs upon the opposite side is not to be despised—first, the fielding gets wild and loose and the men demoralized, great becomes the temptation