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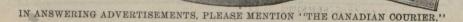
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### The Jam Sahib and Other Cricketers

By SIR HOME GORDON, BART.

By SIR HOME GORDON, BART.

In India everybody knows this finest of all batsmen as the Jam Sahib. In England every schoolboy used to worship him as "Ranji," and this year on his return to first-class cricket he will find himself as dear as ever to the hearts of all who love the game. There never was but one "Ranji," the greatest batsman the world has ever seen. Up to his time we all believed that "W. G." had shown us the last and greatest things it was possible to do with the bat, but Kumar Shri Ranjitsinhji came up from Cambridge to show us fresh strokes hitherto never conceived by any mortal, and be it added no one more ardently admired his prowess than "the Old Man" himself. "A fine batsman, eh," said Clem Hill. "He's more than a batsman; he is nothing less than a juggler."

THERE is no need to apologize for writing enthusiastically about the Jam Sahib. I had the great pleasure of being his guest for the Durbar, and as host he proved as incomparable as he has as batsman. At the state entry into Delhi, when he appeared in his silver coach, the enthusiasm broke out spontaneously, and when it at length subsided Major J. G. Greig, the Hampshire batsman, said to me, "That was a great cheer for English cricket," a compliment which the Jam Sahib immensely appreciated when I repeated it to him.

A T Delhi and Jamnagar he talked at length about his own experiences at the game. As may be believed he is an enthusiast about it, and he once observed that he would have come from Indian to England purposely to see Mr. F. R. Foster play if he had not been visiting home this year in any case. Few realize how carefully he prepared himself for cricket. He used to be coached daily by Richardson and Lockwood before term began at Cambridge, and there he spent long hours patiently fielding out at nets. There was deep prejudice against an Indian "teaching us cricket," and Mr. F. S. Jackson has since publicly admitted his error in not giving him his blue.

giving him his blue.

I ASKED the Jam Sahib to what he himself attributed his transcendent skill. "To practice and application," he answered. "But beyond that?" "Well, I believe I always see what the ball is going to do a yard further from the bat than other batsmen, and that gives me more time to play at it." In India I observed wonderful displays of his amazing eyesight when travelling with him, whilst at the conclusion of an extraordinary exhibition of batting at the nets which he gave to Lord Londesborough and myself, after he had been shooting for seven hours and had not held a bat for many months, he actually told us standing behind him as the balls were delivered where he would put them in the field, and in twenty-two out of twenty-four he did so. Seven bowlers—four natives, with Messrs. H. D. L. Simms, E. C. Lea, and Major Rose—all failed to put him in any difficulties.

simms, E. C. Lea, and Major Rose—all failed to put him in any difficulties.

PERSONALLY I believe if his health can stand the fielding he is still practically as good as ever, good enough to play for England, though I do not suppose he will be given an opportunity. He himself has made a bet that he will score a century against both the South Africans and Australians, and he will probably win this. But, as he told me since his arrival in England, he is not anxious in big cricket to stand in the way of younger men. Remember he has always played the game as a recreation and in the most sporting fashion. He says himself he was never cast down if dismissed for a duck, and I have a notion at the back of my head that he derived more pleasure from the wickets he captured than from the centuries with which he delighted thousands. His life average in first-class cricket is 48 for an aggregate of 24,103 runs. In test matches he has made 995 runs with an average of 44. Marvellous figures! As allusion has been made to his bowling, it may be added that he is credited with 132 wickets, which cost 33 runs apiece.—The Tatler.

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