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### \*AT THE SIGN OF THE WICKET.

MANY of Arrowsmith's shilling volumes have been well worth their price, but never has the enterprising Bristol publisher given the English public so good value for their money as in the little volume which lies before us. It is a collection of essays on the glorious game of cricket. Lovers of the grand old game, and surely most of the readers of the REVIEW come under this description, will simply revel in its pages. We read it ourselves at one sitting, and another cricket enthusiast to whom we lent it, sat up half the night to finish it.

We know of no game except cricket which has a literature of its own, and we are sure that this book will find a place, and that a worthy one, in every cricket lover's library. But we are saying nothing about its contents. It consists of a series of essays and sketches, all more or less humorous in character, enlivened by many a good story, and of several poems, some of them excellent parodies. Of the essays, many of which have already appeared in various periodicals, one, "Lords in 1904," has already been copied into the pages of the REVIEW, and attracted, we remember, a good deal of attention.

The first sketch is entitled "A Socialist Cricket Match," in which a description is given of a game played under new rules promulgated by the County Council with the sanction of the Junior Lords of the Treasury. The main features of the new system were that the innings of all batsmen should be of equal length, the innings of the whole side (twelve in number) to last two hours, and that all the opposing team should bowl one over in turn. It is needless to say that though the match was not interesting, the account of it is. This is followed by a pretty little story "My First Appearance for the County," and that by a capital little sketch "How I got out." But we might go on throughout the book and mention every article, for almost without exception they are capital reading.

From some of the poems, however, we must quote.

Who could fail to sympathise with these lines:

When I am out, my scorer,  
Write no sad noughts for me,  
And if I score a fourer  
Oh, write not down a three!  
And if I fail to get one  
To me some others set;  
Thus, if I score, remember,  
And if I don't, forget.

Or again with these:

When in my dreams I take my stand  
To guard the stumps in Fairyland,  
I little fear the bowler's wile  
Nor dread the wicket-keeper's guile;  
They do not bowl me off my pad,  
No catches from my glove are bad:

\*By Edmund B. V. Christian: Arrowsmith's Bristol Library, Volume LIX.

The baled "leg before" is banned  
In matches played in Fairyland.

What better parody have our readers met than this Wordsworth's great ode:

Our innings is but going and returning;  
The hope that rises in us, like a star,  
The keen ambition burning,  
Are set and quenched, ere we have travelled far.  
Forth from the tent we go with modest joy,  
But ere we reach the crease  
Our confidence is mixed with some alloy  
Of growing doubt; we cease  
Our inward boast, and nervous take our block;  
Then almost ere the bowler ends his run  
We hear the sudden shock,  
The rattle, that makes mock  
Of hope, and tells us that our day is done.  
A sudden darkness falls; a half-heard shout  
Rises from all the ring, proclaiming we are out.

\* \* \* \* \*

There was a time when every ball did seem  
Plain, and to play it was a task but slight;  
I did not deem  
It hard, how'er deceitful were its flight,  
To drive it out of sight.  
I get not now, as once I did, a four;  
Go in where'er I may,  
How'er I play,

The scores that I have made I ne'er can make no more.

Here is another—not Mr. Christian's—but quoted by him from the *Oxford Magazine*. Might it not have been written by Walt Whitman himself?

### THE INNINGS.

#### I.

To take your stand at the wicket in a posture of haughty defiance;  
To confront a superior bowler as he confronts you;  
To feel the glow of ambition, your own and that of your side;  
To be aware of shapes hovering, bending, watching around—  
white-flanneled shapes—all eager unable to catch you.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### III.

To play more steady than a pendulum, neither hurrying nor delaying, but marking the right moment to strike.

#### IV.

To slog.

#### V.

The utter oblivion of all but the individual energy;  
The rapid co-operation of hand and eye projected into the ball;  
The ball triumphantly flying through the air; you, too, flying.  
The perfect fly of a fourer!

\* \* \* \* \*

#### IX.

To have a secret misgiving!  
To feel the sharp, sudden rattle of the stumps from behind,  
electric, incredible!  
To hear the short, convulsive clap, announcing all is over.

#### X.

The return to the position, sad and slow at first; gently breaking into a run amidst a tumult of applause:  
The doffing of the cap (without servility) in becoming acknowledgement;  
The joy of what has been and the sorrow for what might have been, mingling madly for the moment in cider cup,  
The ultimate alteration of the telegraph.

At present so far as we know the book has not been republished in Canada, but it can easily be obtained by post, and we are sure that those who obtain it will find themselves more than rewarded for any trouble they may have to take.