

are other players for whom the handle is never short enough, and who hold the bat down against the shoulder. The consequence is that their play is cramped and clumsy, and when the ground is lively they are continually getting their fingers knocked about. I prefer a handle of the ordinary length, and I hold the bat about half way up it, and you cannot do better.

Then hold the bat firmly, and do not flourish and twirl it about as you see some young people do. Hold it straight and in an easy position. Keep your left shoulder well forward, and you are sure to play with a straight bat. Keep upright, and watch well the bowler's hand; you will very soon find out which way he means the ball to twist, and this little bit of information is no slight help when you are batting.

You should not let the ball hit the bat, but rather make the bat hit the ball. A great many cricketers of the present day forget that the bat was made for this purpose, and simply hold it to protect the wicket, allowing the ball to play itself. Of course every now and again you have a ball that it is impossible to do anything with but stop, but on the other hand there are hundreds that ought to be punished, and are by indifferent players permitted to escape.

If you make up your mind to hit, hit hard. No half-and-half style as a rule will pay. And when you block infuse a little power into what you do, and do not be content to stop the ball by simply putting the bat in its way—any one can do that—but try and score off it. Hit with your arms, but use your wrists as much as you can—the wrist-work is the secret of balls that you block flying off far enough to make runs. Hit, then, hard, and get well over the ball, never spoon it up; the ball travels farthest when hit along the ground—a skying hit never goes so far as one that skims across the grass. It may please some people, but it is nearly all show—a high hitter is invariably a slow scorer.

Hit at the ball, not at the place where you think the ball ought to be, and watch the ball along the whole of its journey to the bat. Never make up your mind how you will play a ball until the ball is bowled and you ascertain the "manner of its coming." Practise both backward and forward play, and after a time you will instinctively feel, as the ball approaches you, how it should be treated.

Play forward whenever you can.

There is no hard-and-fast rule which will apply to every one as to how to treat the various kinds of balls; each will be met best by different men in a different way.

Long-reached men will smother forward many a ball that shorter-reached players can only play close back.

Never get too far back, and always beware of the bowler driving you on to your wicket.

Never play across the wicket, or pull balls over, and take care what you are doing if you step in. There is such a tendency among young players to swipe to leg, that unless it is checked they are scarcely able to do anything else, and never attain to even respectable mediocrity in the game. Of course an undeniable leg ball should be hit to leg, but take care that it is a leg ball.

In cutting keep the ball down—pat it, so to speak, and if you shift your right foot, be careful that you take up your old position before the bowler has another try at your wicket.

Never be in a hurry to get runs. Study the bowler's attack, and find out if you can what he thinks is your weak point and is aiming at.

Practise often but not too much at a time, and practise intelligently. Practise playing the ball and not merely slogging at it. Be as careful at the wickets when the net is behind you as you would be during a match. If you can manage it, get some one who knows the game well to bowl to you, and ask him to point out where your defence is weak and where you make mistakes, and give heed to what he says. Think what you are doing, and watch the effect of different hits on different balls. Notice the different angles made by different strokes, and try to apply the knowledge thus gained by placing the ball in different directions.

A great deal has been written as to the positions of the legs in making the various hits. I do not attach much importance to this myself, as I think it almost impossible to describe such things lucidly and correctly, certainly not without the aid of two or three diagrams to each subject.

This has been my object throughout, as I hinted at first. Watch a really good batsman and take your style from him; you cannot help modifying it to suit your own peculiarities, try what you will. Practise intelligently and assiduously until you have obtained a perfect familiarity with the powers of the weapon you wield, play with a straight bat, meet the ball, and hit hard, and you will very possibly soon excel the man you have taken as your model.

(To be continued.)

COMMUNICATION.

SEASONABLE REMINDERS.

To the Editor of the Canadian Cricket Field.

DEAR SIR,—Now that we are beginning to get under way for another season, there are many points to which the attention of cricketers may well be called. The following are a few of them:

1. "10.30 a.m." ought not to mean 11 or 12, and need not if every secretary or captain would promptly fill the places of absentees, of whatever eminence, at the time fixed for play, whether the match begins then or not, and accept no excuse whatever for the neglect of a positive engagement. This unpunctuality is most frequent on the side of the home club, and displays a gross lack of courtesy towards the visitors. The evil is one which is most injurious to the popularity of the game, and which can be very easily removed by the exercise of a little wholesome discipline.

2. One-day matches are drawn unless played out, or agreed to be decided by the first innings.

3. Batsmen who know no better than to ask for a "trial ball" at the commencement of an innings, are advised that no such right or custom exists. Where on earth did such an absurd idea originate?

4. A batsman has no right to dictate the position of an umpire. He may simply request him to stand as may suit his convenience, but the latter has the right to place himself as he may choose. It is well for a batsman to avoid as much as possible all nervousness at objects behind the bowler's arm, since such objects, if stationary, are really less troublesome than is supposed, and with some bowlers it is impossible for the umpire to avoid being in the way now and then.

5. If the bowler in the act of delivery, knock off a bail, it is not necessarily a "no ball."

6. A bowler may, if he choose, deliver with both feet behind the bowling crease so long as he has one foot within the limit of the return crease.

7. It has been decided impossible for a bowler to deliver the ball without his rearward foot being on the ground. Even had the question not been settled, common sense would show such delivery to be admissible by the spirit and intention of the rule, supposing it to be possible.

8. Umpires who may be in doubt should remember that, though it is impossible to describe in words the action of a throw, the said whip-like action may be detected by the protrusion of the elbow before the hand in the act of delivery, which it necessarily involves. A jerk generally consists in the hand touching and being checked by the side.

9. When the L. B. W. fiend comes along with his eternal and exasperating assertion that it is impossible for a man to be out L. B. W. when the bowling is "round the wicket," and talks nonsense about the meaning of "pitched straight from wicket to wicket," until you feel a righteous thirst for his blood, this is how to answer him. "Pitched straight" means pitched within the parallelogram, completed by joining the opposing off and leg stumps of the two wickets. If such a ball be stopped with anything but bat or hand, and the umpire be sure that it would have hit the wicket, you are out. With bowling "round the wicket" no doubt the accident can very rarely occur; still it can occur, and whether it does or does not in your case, is the umpire's business and no one else's.

10. Does it ever occur to any one that two minutes is the maximum and not the minimum time for a man to come in? Does any one ever consider that it is just as easy as not for the incoming batsman to meet his retiring comrade half way, and take his guard promptly, instead of dawdling about until he is fairly howled at; and then bothering the umpire three or four times, and digging away for a minute or so at a huge grave in front of the wicket, while his partner is becoming pleasantly chilled, and "getting his eye out," and every intelligent spectator is devoutly praying that the insufferable nuisance may light on a shooter for his first ball? This is what may be seen in any Canadian cricket match in the case of three out of four men, and the more useless the performer the more time will he waste on his unfortunate exhibition of ignorant and conceited self-importance. No wonder that the game is unattractive to those who know it not, when city clubs will sometimes spend a whole day over three innings of from 50 to 80 runs. How many matches, e. g., between Toronto and Hamilton have been finished in the past ten years?

There are many other little matters, Mr. Editor, which may be mentioned hereafter; but for the present, I fancy I have taken up quite enough of your space.

Yours, &c.,

SHORT LEAD.