

**FELIX ON THE BAT: BEING A  
SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY INTO  
THE USE OF THE CRICKET  
BAT; LAWS OF CRICKET**

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Various

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**VARIOUS**

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FELIX ON THE BAT;

BEING

A SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY

INTO THE USE OF

THE CRICKET BAT;

TOGETHER WITH THE

HISTORY AND USE OF THE CATAPULTA.

ALSO, THE

LAWS OF CRICKET,

AS REVISED BY THE MARYLEBONE CLUB.

1845.

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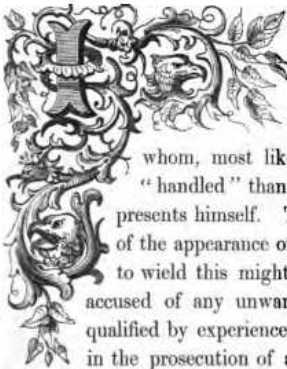
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# CRICKETING.

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## INTRODUCTION.

TO THE CRICKETING WORLD AT LARGE.



*Freshman 26 May 1936*

IN this pamphleteering, magazing, book-making age, I venture somewhat boldly to intrude upon your notice this little volume. Properly speaking, it ought to have emanated from a professional cricketer; by whom, most likely, it would have been more scientifically "handled" than by the humble individual who thus abruptly presents himself. Time not seeming to improve the probabilities of the appearance of a work wherein to look for directions how to wield this mighty sceptre of delight, I trust I shall not be accused of any unwarrantable vanity in supposing myself so far qualified by experience as to be able to convey a few hints, which, in the prosecution of an ardent desire to excel in the practice of this noble pastime, the young, as well as the more advanced practitioner, may find of some little value. My great aim is to discover whether this splendid game is or is not so connected with some of the beautiful laws of motion as to deserve the appellation of a science; and, if so, to institute a few inquiries, to ascertain what are the laws that regulate such honourable appellation. That



it is not wholly unconnected with some of the high and honour-stirring principles of Moral Philosophy, is a suggestion which may hazard the contempt of the self-sufficient; nevertheless, we are prepared with good evidence in favour of our statement. First, our affirmation is well attested by the paradox, that "whilst in war we are most in peace;" at least, we have a right to presume that the contest for victory in any honourable pastime presupposes the absence of all animosity. In further proof of this, we have only to consider how delightfully flows the game when it claims allegiance to the sovereignty of these temporizing attributes, viz. laudable ambition, where the want of all angry feeling secures moral approbation; cheerfulness, which pervades the contest, giving spirit and activity to the body; courage, boldly to face, or prudently to yield to the extremities of Fortune—who takes a lively interest in the sport notwithstanding all our assumed proficiency; judgment, to apply experience upon which physical knowledge is founded; justice, in dealing fairly one by another; "moderation in all things;" "order, Heaven's first law;" and the true value and modest acknowledgment of praise and reputation. Petty differences, in spite of the most watchful restraint, will occasionally offer themselves; but, with few exceptions, the struggle is not so much to enforce the strict letter of the law, where it would interfere with the comfort of the individual or the good feeling of the assembled armies, but who should be the first to yield. Some stern-thinking philosophers may exclaim, "What has science to do with sport?" As well may they ask what had the falling of an apple to do with the laws of gravitation. The reply to this would be, Let them try to explain (without having recourse to scientific investigation) the practice of any game which calls forth man's physical energies to compete with the theory of motion. No figure on earth so beautiful as a sphere, and no inquiry on the laws of motion so delightful as that which is connected with its movements and changes consequent upon certain impulses. Descending, if you please, to the motion of a cricket-ball: according as the axis of rotation during its flight from the bowler is horizontal or oblique, so will it have, upon reaching the ground, the bias, or "twist," as it is called: and it is a scientific inquiry, and a very satisfactory acquirement, to be able,

immediately a ball is delivered, to calculate and ascertain to a nicety what twist it will take, according to the delivery of the different bowlers.

In the old-fashioned underhand bowling, when the ball left the hand of a fast bowler, it had imparted to it a rotatory motion, the axis of rotation, like that of a carriage-wheel, being parallel to the horizon, and, upon reaching the ground (provided always, its axis was not altered by any unevenness of the turf) would retain this progressive action, perhaps even a little increased by its contact with the earth, and, although arrested in its progress towards the wicket by a well-faced bat, would, upon falling to the ground (provided, again, the axis of rotation was not altered) continue to advance, and hit the wicket, to the surprise and mortification of the batsman.

The knowledge of this principle of progressive motion, consequent upon certain impulse, would have made him suspicious of the threatening event; and being something prepared, he would have guarded against the possibility of what we have just stated, and not rail against bad luck. I need scarcely waste the time of many of my indulgent readers, by reminding them of another exemplification of this law of progressive motion, which is of such value in the game of Billiards, where one ball, after having imparted to another the greater share of its motion, still retains (after the contact) so much of this rotatory principle as to follow its companion almost to the end of its journey.

Superfluous as these observations may appear to some who may take the trouble to wade through this treatise, yet, I trust, I am not too elaborate in the exposition of these useful truths. To the beginner, as well as to the more advanced practitioner, this fact is evident, that, however dexterous and accomplished he may become by habitual practice, (minus the hints herein suggested), yet he shall become so much the more so by a right understanding of those laws upon which he is regulating his pleasurable exercise. That the science of batting deserves any consideration at all, is met by the fact, that it promises the probability of long and well-earned scores. I do not presume to reduce batting to a certainty; fortunately for the bowlers, and for the general interest of the game, this cannot be done. My attempt is

merely to prove that we may treat the subject with the same courtesy as any other scientific or skilful inquiry, and not ascribe to bad luck all that happens to the chance-surrounded batsman. Perfection is a qualification which, morally or physically considered, is a very dangerous topic of controversy; yet, with due deference to the "Bats" of bygone days, I think we may say "comparatively" that at no period of the cricketing age was ever perfection so great. Veteran Bats! observe well that I use the word "comparatively;" for, although the difficulties of the present style of batting are greatly increased by the increased height of the stumps, and by the extraordinary liberty given to some of the bowlers, who approach so near the limits of propriety as often to advance to the wicket, doubtful whether or not their bowling will be considered by the umpire to come under the denomination of really a fairly-delivered ball, yet we must not forget, taking the game as it stood in your days, to ascribe every proper honour to you for the splendid feats which you performed.

I must not detain you, my indulgent Readers, with any more introductory matter, lest I occasion a distaste for the intrinsic object of our debate; and, therefore, with sincere hope that the following remarks, suggestions, hints, or otherwise, may prove useful, if not amusing, I humbly subscribe myself your well-wisher to enjoy health, strength, courage, activity, patience, and perseverance, to secure the inexpressible delight of attaining the wished-for proficiency. It is to be accomplished equally by the Peer as the Peasant. And, last, and not least, to enjoy in either character the gratification of associating with your fellow-mortals in the manly sport, teaching one another the grand moral lesson of bearing alike with becoming grace the victory or defeat, as it may be variously distributed in this friendly warfare. Go forth, my book, and good speed go with thee! Secure but one approving smile, and that shall cheer thee onward in thy wayward flight.