



SHORT LENGTHS

Baseball and Georgia

By Alex Lynn

A PROPHECY is not without honor save in his own country," is a saying that holds good in many walks of life, but not in baseball. Georgia is a state that has studded so many diamonds with stars that managers open their eyes when a player makes it known that he hails from within her confines.

And Georgia is pretty conservative. Like other commonwealths, she is particular about whom she kowtows to. In the midst of a Confederate Veterans' reunion in Atlanta last October, Ty Cobb, a native Georgian, was welcomed as cordially as were the survivors of that losing game the South put up in the sixties.

There was a time in the history of the pastime when in private life players were hardly given passing notice, no matter how startling their feats on the diamond. But surely this time has gone. Baseball players are recognized everywhere as good citizens in every sense. They take as much care of themselves as do college athletes in training, and that means they are clean livers.

Consequently, in private life the player is looked upon as are most professional and business men. And when he achieves greatness on the diamond, he is rewarded with as much respect as is a successful candidate for governor or any other high personage. There's no fiction in that statement.

Here is an instance in Georgia's reception of Cobb. It is the same everywhere.

When the great hitter reached Atlanta after the world's series, the hotels were crowded from basement to roof because of the large concourse of visitors. The leading hostelry in the city had turned away numerous applicants for accommodations, when Ty and his bride of a few months walked up to the clerk's

desk. "I'd like to get a room," said Cobb as he picked up the pen to register. "We are sorry," replied the polite clerk, "but every room is occupied." And Mr. and Mrs. Cobb were making their way out of the hotel, when the manager of the house happened on the scene.

"Good heavens, man!" he shouted to the clerk, "do you know who you've turned down? That's Ty Cobb! He'll stay here if I have to give him my own room and sleep in the police station."

And Mr. and Mrs. Cobb remained.

It's strange that such a citizen and player should come from a place where the baseball possibilities are so meagre—nothing in either the back lot or college line. But such is Royston, Ga., unheard of until the great hitter, Ty Cobb, put it on the map by leading the American League in hitting.

Cobb shares the Cracker State's baseball worship with others—Nap Rucker, the Brooklyn southpaw and All-America pitcher, being one of them. Rucker did for Alpharetta, Ga., what Cobb did for Royston.

And Rucker is held in high esteem in his native state. Recently he was the cause of a posse being formed in Atlanta to hunt miscreants, who had attacked him and a party of women in Nap's big touring car. The star slabman was motoring a few miles from Atlanta, when toughs in ambush hurled rocks and other missiles at the car. A flying stone struck one young woman, painfully injuring her. Rucker telephoned to Atlanta. A number of car owners organized a posse, and came to his aid with bloodhounds. The search for the assailants was futile, but it showed where Nap stood.

Speaking of what Georgia has done for the game, Cave Springs, another hamlet, sent Frank Sparks to the Philadelphia Nationals; Blue Ridge gave Weldon

Henly, another pitcher, to the Eastern League; and Atlanta, the metropolis of the state, a little late, but not to be outdone, contributed Tommy McMillan, the young infielder in whom there is great promise, to Brooklyn, and Ed LaFitte, pitcher, to the Detroit champions for next season. LaFitte went to the major in one season through the medium of the Jersey City Eastern League club. Paul Cobb, Ty's brother, is rising rapidly in the game.

All of these players are not afraid to come home during the off season, and Georgia welcomes them as she would any of her prominent citizens. And why not? In this day and time the baseball profession is on a level with any.

Georgia's case is just one of many. Players of the representative type—the gentlemanly clean livers—are recognized for what they are everywhere: good citizens. And they are judged by umpires who catch the plays in private life, as do the baseball arbiters on the diamond.

A First-Water Fan

By Paul H. Bruske

HEREIN is unfolded for the first time the story of how one "Bill" Stark, humble but able-bodied seaman on the ore carrier "Beattie," won an argument that had progressed with but slight intermission from April until along in October, 1908.

Bill, be it known, is, for a few months in the winter time, a resident of Detroit. The remainder of the year he "goes sailing," as we call it out in the cities that border on the big American inland seas. From the first day that the word is passed along that the St. Mary's River is free from ice till that eventful date when the last of the big lake freighters cuts her way down into Lake Huron, with the tidings that bring the close of navigation, Bill Stark but seldom sets foot on land, the only occasions when this is possible being at either end of the trip from the Superior ports to Lake Erie and back again. Nor are these furloughs of more than a few hours' duration.

With such conditions, it may occasion a bit of surprise when it is known that Bill Stark is a terribly earnest devotee

of baseball. A baseball-player of no small local fame himself before he settled away into what is proving his life work, the member of a baseball family, one brother now a well-known professional player, Bill grew up in a baseball atmosphere. He knew every bit of the current gossip about the players of the big leagues; he read his *Sporting Life* from cover to cover every week; the sporting pages of the daily papers passed up to the "Beattie's" deck at the Soo, Port Huron and Detroit, and taken on at each end of the run, were memorized by Bill on everything pertaining to baseball before the next batch of information came aboard.

And the Detroit Tigers were Bill's particular deities. To his mind there was never a club like the one over which Hughie Jennings held sway. Ty Cobb and Sam Crawford were the kings of swat, and Bill Donovan towered above his rival heavens like the Ford Building, looking down on a peripatetic peanut emporium.

Like all other good fans, Bill loved an argument. It so happened that both Chicago and Cleveland were represented by good debaters in the membership of the "Seattle's" crew. In fact there were enough players in the employ of the "Beattie" to make up a full baseball team, of which Bill was the captain, catcher, manager and first batter, and which team won the championship of the lakes by default—but that is another story.

It was a bright, pleasant afternoon in April when the "Beattie!" put out of Cleveland, loaded with coal, bound up the lakes for Allouez. Just outside the breakwater, Bill finished coiling up a cable and rose to remark to one Harrington, his pal—who came from Chicago—that the Tigers would win the pennant again.

"Not while the Sox are on earth," responded Harrington. One Lindsay from Cleveland heard the resulting battle of wits and joined in.

"You fellows are both wrong," quoth he. "The Naps will win in a walk."

From then on, the battle raged. The resources of each team were gone over in detail. The matter was handled in the crew's leisure hours with a thoroughness that seemed to have left nothing

unsaid. But the next lapse in the routine of toil found always a new point of view. Through April and May, Bill was suffering terrible losses, but the Tigers finally began to win. When at last they perched on the top of the ladder, he gave vent to loud cock-a-doodle-doo.

But Cleveland and Chicago were always close. So was St. Louis, and all hands aboard the "Beattie" heaved a sigh of relief when the Browns fell by the wayside, as the other three squared away for the run home.

The last two weeks of the race found the "Beattie's" whole crew on edge for the final verdict. All three contingents—for everybody had taken sides by this time—had their turns to gloat. Around came the closing week of the race. The "Beattie" arrived at Duluth one evening and the crew dispersed to a point where the day's returns had been chalked up. Cleveland was down and out. The pennant was dependent on the result of the next day's game in Chicago between the Tigers and the White Sox. The "Beattie" discharged her load of coal, took on her cargo of ore, cleared for Lorain, Ohio, early that morning, and was shortly out of sight of land. The first news of the game would have to be secured from the agent of the Lake Seamen's Union on the bank of the Soo canal, and that was thirty-six hours away.

The crew of the "Beattie" that afternoon was torn with emotions.

Who had won the argument? What team was making good on Comiskey's field? Would the champion be Hughie Jennings' men's aggregation, championed by Stark, or would Fielder Jones, with Doc White on the firing line, bring another flag to add to Chicago's collection, thus justifying the contention which Harrington had been making all season?

Later on, as the shades of evening drew near, the question resolved itself into the past tense. Which team had won, and whose was the contention which had been borne out in the result?

The crew of the "Beattie" turned in at night, every man struggling with his emotions.

In the meantime, up on the bridge, the

"Beattie's" captain, a Chicago man, stood watch, far into the night. More than he had dared to confess, he had been himself interested perforce in the answer to the question that had been going the rounds of the crew. The mate appeared to relieve him. The mate was a Detroit man.

"Guess Bill Donovan made monkeys of them Sox today," spoke the mate, as he mounted the bridge.

"Bet you twenty-five he didn't," responded the captain, stung to the quick.

"You're on," was the mate's reply.

Both stood for a few moments peering into the blackness of the crisp Lake Superior night. Then the captain gave a low-spoken order to the man at the wheel. Almost imperceptibly the "Beattie" swung about on her course. The mate glanced up in astonishment.

"Got orders to take on a passenger at Allouez," replied the captain to the unspoken question.

The mate grinned. Also there was a slight quiver in his left eye-lid.

At 2:30 the next morning the "Beattie's" boatswain piped all hands on deck. The astonished seamen, as they piled out, beheld before their astonished eyes the lights on the ore docks at Allouez. The order came to make ready for a landing. The "Beattie" slowed down till the little ripples that came from her bow were the only sign that she was moving. A moving light, very obviously a lantern, appeared on the ore dock.

"Watchman ahoy," pealed forth the captain's voice from the bridge, through the great megaphone, carried for use in such emergencies.

"Aboard the ship," replied the watchman.

"Who won the ball game in Chicago yesterday?"

On board the big, black, silent ship the members of the crew held their breath, awaiting the reply.

"Detroit, seven to nothing," bawled the watchman, after recovering from his momentary confusion.

Ten sleepy men simultaneously slapped Bill Stark on the back, and admitted that he had won the argument.

"I think I said something to you about Bill Donovan," quietly remarked the mate to the captain, as the latter dug up

a roll of greenbacks and started counting out the sum of twenty-five dollars.

Down in the engine-room a bell jangled. The man at the wheel threw the "Beattie's" helm hard over. Steadily she gathered way, her prow once more seeking the course to the Soo. On the ore docks a lantern remained stationary. It didn't move as long as the "Beattie" kept it in sight.

"Clean bug-house," remarked the aged watchman as he gazed at the "Beattie's" disappearing lights. "Crazy, I tell you! I've been watchman on these docks for twenty years, but never before did I ever see anything like that."

War in the West

By Al H. Martin

THE greatest war between organized and outlaw baseball, in the history of the West, is now being waged in California between the Pacific Coast League and the California State League. The latter is an outlaw organization and the strongest combination outside the ranks of the regular organized and protected leagues. A determined attempt was made by the National Commission at the commencement of the year to induce the California League teams to enter organized baseball, but, with the exception of Sacramento, all efforts were futile. The acquisition of Sacramento by the Pacific Coast League was however a heavy blow to the outlaws, as it deprives them of one of their best towns. With the purchase of the Sacramento franchise by the Coast leaguers, the war broke out in reality, with every manager straining every effort for victory. Behind the Coast League stands the colossal power of the organized leagues of America, while the California League stands practically alone, with only its own resources to depend upon. But despite this handicap, the State League has succeeded in placing several of the best players in the country on its pay-roll, a feat accomplished by offering exceptionally large salaries.

The Pacific Coast League is composed of Portland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Oakland, Sacramento and Vernon. Their

class is evidenced by the series of games recently played with the Chicago White Sox in which the Easterners had the worst of the argument. These games were fiercely contested, victory in many cases being determined by 1 to 0, 2 to 1 and 3 to 2 scores. Among the famous players in the Coast Leaguers may be mentioned such favorites as Joe Corbett, formerly of the famous Baltimore Orioles, Stovall, Mott, La Longue, Berry, Dillon, Tennant, Mohler, Graham and others who have won fame on the diamonds of the East and Middle West.

The State Leaguers carried with them Joe Nealon, the famous Sacramento first baseman, and one of the greatest players on the Coast, but lost Hal Chase and many other less famous lights. Notwithstanding this they have gathered first-class material and will likely show many flashes of brilliancy before the season is over. They will go into the battle with a large majority of their old players—men who during the past three or four seasons have conclusively demonstrated their ability. Besides this, they plan to gather in many stars from the other leagues before the season has progressed very far. They have placed teams in San Francisco, Oakland, San Jose, Stockton, Santa Cruz and Fresno—all good baseball towns. The center of the war will, of course, be at San Francisco and Oakland, where each league is represented, and where each has a large following of devoted fans.

Conditions apparently favor the Coast Leaguers, as the latter has tremendous financial backing, but the State League managers are old hands at the business, thoroughly understand the situation, and are not a bit backward when it comes to raiding another league for players. The light has attracted intense interest throughout the state, and that the coming season will be the greatest California fans have ever seen goes without saying. The Coasters have won a good vantage at the onset by acquiring Sacramento, but the Vernon team may prove to be sufficient to offset this. Vernon is a seaside resort near Los Angeles, and a team was stationed there primarily to give the Los Angeles fans continuous baseball. Whether this experiment will prove

successful remains to be seen. The other towns are excellent baseball centers, and little doubt is expressed but that the coming season will be a prosperous one for the Coasters.

Many Eastern fans will be interested to know that the old favorite, Joe Corbett, will be seen in a San Francisco uniform this season. There are many who thought that the baseball days of the old Baltimore warhorse were over,

but judging from the way that Joe has been performing, he will be one of the leading pitchers when the season's averages are summed up. He is there with the batting eye, too, and Danny Long, the San Francisco manager, is congratulating himself on securing the services of the veteran. Joe's initial bow this season was against the White Sox and he kept them guessing the whole time he occupied the box.

