

Mr. Phelon Answers His Critics

A Typical Letter From Interested Fans and Mr. Phelon's Reply

Chicago, U. S. A., October 30, 1911.

Baseball Magazine Company,
No. 158 Summer Street,
Boston, Mass.

Gentlemen:—

We, the undersigned readers of your magazine, and enthusiastic supporters of the American League, having read in your November number the interesting, although inaccurate forecast of the result of the World's Series games, write to ask whether it may be expected that your able contributor, Mr. William A. Phelon, will be able in the December issue to interest your readers with a story of how it became possible for him to so misjudge the comparative merits of the two teams of the individuals composing them. Should Mr. Phelon feel warranted in gratifying our desire for an unbiased comparison of the teams, now that the results have gone down to history, we would be much interested in reading his article.

Very truly yours,

JAS. HERN,
J. H. BORDER,
E. F. FITCH.

IT'S all over now, and the defeated Giants, nursing their numerous bruises, have crept into the friendly batcaves of obscurity, there to remain till the slow march of time brings round the genial spring. Then, repatriated in the armor of the National League championship, they can emerge, take up anew the duties of the new campaign, and sweep to the front once more. Maybe. Maybe some other team will kick the eternal lining out of them, but that has nothing to do with the series recently finished. Not a thing.

As to the Athletics, they can bask in the golden gleam of popular approval till the call of arms shall again be heard in the land. They have delivered their goods, they have brought home the bacon, and they have flew the baseball coop, so to speak, with \$3,654 per champion. No wonder they mauled the ball for such remuneration. There are men in this wide continent

of ours who would kiss their mother-in-law for \$3,654.

Anyway, the series is over, the Athletics are the winners, and some of us stand forth conspicuously branded as the goats: the prophets whose predictions fell by the wayside with a plopp like the fall of a cheasty bullfrog into a dark morass. You can't always win. Sometimes you just have to lose, and why yell when you have picked, in advance, the flag-winners of each league, and named in correct order about twelve out of sixteen clubs?

The I-told-you-so brigade are out in force, loudly exulting, and declaring that they knew from the very inception of the series that the Athletics would outclass the Giants, and that all who differed with them at that time were heathens, two-horned rhinoceri, and bucktoothed monkeys. Be it so. Maybe they speak it truly now—and yet a close inspection of these very people's advance stuff will show that

97 per cent. of them left loopholes through which they could escape if the Giants broke through the barriers. They liberally packed their copy with "ifs" and "buts," and a Giant victory would have brought them out in just as strong array, all yelling that they had picked the winner.

* * *

The writer figured that New York would win, and New York got it in the anterior region of the thorax and the upper clavicle. A bad prediction? Yes—because it didn't take into account the scenery and the landscape conditions of the Polo Grounds and of Shibe Park. Hereafter, the man who forecasts baseball must give special heed to the size, shape, and nearness of the stands that overhang the playing field.

Analyze the recent series as you will; give the Athletics all the credit due; praise their pitchers, their batters, their fielders, as you will—and then with all these things admitted, answer this one question:

Which ball club would have won that series upon a full-sized field where the home runs of Baker would not have been home runs?

New York won the first game. The second was rescued for the Mackmen by Baker's home run—a smash which, on an open field, might not have been caught, but would have been held to a double or at most a triple. In the third game, Mathewson had the Athletics pinched in an iron grip, shut out, and beaten, till at the final gasp Baker sailed another home run into those nearby stands. That ball was not even a hit upon an open field—it would have been eaten up by any big league gardener.

The fourth game was badly handled by New York, and the Giants deserved to lose. They won the fifth by a splendid rally, and then, with the tab 3 games to 2, they blew up and it was all over. The Athletics played brilliantly. Bender was the star of the pitching staff. But the world's championship for 1911 was won by the home run drives from Baker's bat.

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