

EDITORIALS



THE Ball Players' Fraternity in its brief and spirited existence up to date has served one purpose not designed by its promoters. This purpose is revealed by a casual examination of the public press. Is there any rumored misunderstanding between a player and a manager?—the Ball Players' Fraternity is at the bottom of it. Has a player an idea that he shall be paid for a training trip?—the Ball Players' Fraternity is behind the move. Is there a criticism of the National Commission, of the ten-day clause, of the drafting system or the price of baseballs?—the Players' Fraternity is the cause of all the disturbance.

Whatever be the project originating in the mind of some imaginative press writer, though it range all the way from the idiotic to the impossible, the hand of the Ball Players' Fraternity is traced in its workings. True, most of these projects ascribed to themselves are learned of by the directors of the Fraternity for the first time when they read them in the columns of the daily press. It is true that they are in no way responsible nor in the slightest way implicated in almost all the hairbrained things that have been laid to their charge. But that matters little to influences which seem too ready to ally themselves against a movement of whose whole scope and policy they appear profoundly ignorant. The wildest theories based upon mere guesswork of what the new organization might be expected to do have been accepted as part of its settled program. The Fraternity has not only been judged guilty without a hearing in its own defence but has been blamed in the most free and matter-of-fact way in the world for designs in which it has no interest and no knowledge, which it has never avowed or thought of avowing.

To us this indiscriminate charging of ills, real and fancied, to the Fraternity is less culpable than ludicrous. Some important members of the press, contrary to their usual fairminded policy, have apparently become obsessed with a strange frenzy to read into the wholly fair and praiseworthy policies of the new association the most dangerous tenets verging upon baseball anarchy. The interests who are responsible for this ill-advised campaign of misrepresentation seem incapable of learning that the world actually moves and that the baseball of 1890 is not the baseball of 1912. Because an organization formed of players twenty odd years ago temporarily wrecked the national game by persistence in a sweeping policy of selfishness and self-aggrandizement, they take it for granted that any organization of players in any age and clime must be bent upon the same highroad to destruction. Even if the player of to-day were the same type of athlete that he was in 1890, which is by no means the case, it would not follow that any organization he might care to become affiliated with would necessarily involve adherence to a policy which had proved a failure. But in addition to all this, when it is known or should be known that the newly organized

Ball Players' Fraternity has advocated no measure nor thought of advocating any measure whatsoever in the least tending to injure baseball as a pastime or as a business or to interfere in any way with the lawful, just and equitable rights of its present owners and directors, there is absolutely no excuse for a continuation of the undeserved criticism which has been heaped upon its head.

As THE BASEBALL MAGAZINE has pointed out before, the Fraternity will merit and receive the support of all enlightened elements among the press and of the general public as well, so long as it continues in the fair-minded course which at present characterizes its work. The magnates themselves, several of them at least, we have been pleased to learn, view the Fraternity not only with no disfavor but with an interest bordering at least on friendliness. While naturally suspicious of the organization at first because they recognized in it a force which might be used to the possible detriment of baseball, they have been only too willing to change their estimate of the new organization upon a proper understanding of its aim and projects. We would respectfully suggest to those members of the press who seem most hostile to the new organization that they give it a square deal. That is all the organization expects and all it asks for. But in the interests of fairminded sportsmanship that much at least is due the Ball Players' Fraternity.

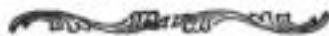


HIS number is dedicated to the magnates, the owners of the sixteen major league clubs of organized baseball who hold the National Game within the hollow of their hands. The players are numbered by the hundreds and their names are household words among ninety million people. The magnates number sixteen individuals, and only a limited few of that sixteen are even moderately well known.

It is probably true that the owners care little for publicity so far as it is directed toward themselves. Publicity has made their business and their fortunes, and they well recognize that fact, but as individuals they have been content to remain in the background.

This is all well enough, but in a larger sense the public have a right to know something about the men who control their favorite sport. They pay money aggregating millions of dollars annually for the privilege of witnessing a series of ball games, and they are entitled to at least some degree of long-distance acquaintanceship with the men who direct these games.

There has been a spirit abroad recently which has tended to discredit the owners of baseball. This spirit has been unquestionably exaggerated by the sensational press. It does have some existence in fact, and that existence is seriously to be regretted. Without an attempt at criticizing a line of conduct which can be but too imperfectly understood at best, it is not out of place to remind certain personages well known in baseball that the public conception of its favorite game is molded to a certain extent upon its conception of the men at the head of affairs. The owner can, if he be so disposed, cast a greater measure of reproach upon the national game than any other person. It is obvious that in doing so he injures not only the game but his own selfish interests as well, for, in the last analysis it is the public who pay the price. And the man who holds the money-bags is the man who in the long run controls the game.





HE revised records of the American League tell some particularly interesting stories. In all departments of the game, pitching, batting and base-running, 1912 produced stars whose performances were truly record-breaking. But amid all the scintillating deeds of her greatest players baseball has most cause to glory in the remarkable feat of her champion batter, Ty Cobb.

Last year the sporting world was startled by the re-appearance of the .400 hitter. This phenomenal average had long since been relegated to the discards, and old-time fans thought of the batting averages of Pop Anson and Ed Delahanty as deeds of revered memory whose like would never be seen again. Batters as great as any of the old champions would come, no doubt, but the development of pitching science and, above all, the introduction of the foul strike rule were too heavy handicaps to be overcome. So it was with no little degree of amazement that the authorities noted the wonderful burst of speed which carried Ty Cobb and his closest rival, Joe Jackson, across the seemingly impossible .400 mark.

At the beginning of this season Joe Jackson told me in a long conversation that he felt certain no player this year would attain that phenomenal record .360 was, according to Joe, about the limit of human endurance, all things considered. But the Cleveland star was wrong. He himself by a wonderful spurt came within five points of the fabulous mark, scoring the truly gigantic average of .395. But Ty Cobb, still wholly unrivalled, passed again well beyond the margin, and at the close of the season has piled up to his favor the phenomenal average of .410.

Ty Cobb has been heaped with honors. He has won substantial prizes as the batting champion and as the greatest of all-around players. He needs no prizes to-day to make his renown secure. It is only necessary to say that for the last four years his average has ranged from .420 to .377, and that his average for the four years is .398. In other words, for four continuous years of the hardest kind of service in which his energies have been taxed as have those of no other player in the game (for more is expected of Cobb than of anyone else and he must always live up to this high reputation), his grand average has fallen but two points below the .400 mark. There is only one man who could possibly improve such a record or even equal it. His name is Ty Cobb.



HE remarkable changes in the managerial staff this season are without a precedent in baseball history. Last year witnessed perhaps as striking a series of changes so far as the numbers involved were concerned, but last season differed from the present in the fact that the managers whose contracts were terminated were generally of the losing class. This season, however, some of the highest heads in the baseball world have been among those to fall, and the causes are all but inexplicable to the general public.

Foremost of these deposed leaders is the grand commander of the order, The Peerless Frank Chance himself. Of the disagreement between Chance and Murphy which led to the separation, the public knows nothing. To be sure, a considerable amount of alleged statements by both parties was printed in the press, much of which might better have been left unsaid. But such alleged statements are always greatly exaggerated and generally misleading. What actually occurred, as we have stated, no one knows, but undoubtedly it necessitated a separation between Murphy and Chance. As Murphy was the owner and could not be moved it was the manager who had to give way, and Chance with all his honors on his head was unceremoniously shown the door.

In this difficulty the once invincible commander leaves the club whose name he has made famous with reputation untarnished and undiminished. No personal quarrel with a club owner is of any significance to the public in their appreciation of a man who more than any other in baseball has been a success. In his seven years of service as a manager Chance has won four pennants, two world's series banners, twice finished a close second and last year was nosed out of second only on a technicality after he had made one of the greatest fights with the pennant winners in the history of the game. And this in the face of the most discouraging possible circumstance, with the heavy handicap of acute bodily illness which made necessary a painful operation.

It is to be hoped that Chance may be induced to devote his great talents to the game he has served so long in some other city. Such men as he can ill be spared. But if his retirement is final the man whose remarkable abilities constructed the greatest fighting machine in the history of baseball can retire to his well-earned rest secure in the possession of a reputation as yet unparalleled to the enjoyment of the comfortable fortune he has so fully earned.

If the public knows little of the causes which led to the deposition of the peerless leader, it knows still less of those causes which led to the retirement of Roger Bresnahan. As we go to press the tangle of conflicting interests which has made St. Louis the centre of baseball mystery is still unsolved. By the time this magazine reaches our readers it is to be hoped that the situation will have cleared materially and baseball interests established once more on a harmonious basis at St. Louis.

