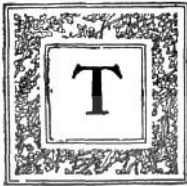


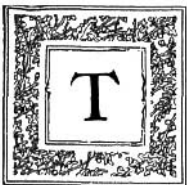
EDITORIALS



THE BASEBALL MAGAZINE has been engaged for some time in an effort to establish a national commission to select an annual All-America team. We know there is no subject in which the baseball public as a whole is more keenly interested. There is at present no centralized authority to whose judgement such a work is delegated by common consent. The BASEBALL MAGAZINE, perhaps, approaches more nearly to such a commission than any other agency, and its decisions in the past have been followed by papers all over the United States and Canada. It is in a position to do this more accurately than any one of the numberless sporting sheets which also make selections, since it is a purely national publication and its choice is always impartial. The local press, however important, can never be considered strictly non-partisan, for it logically favors the home player or, if not in a big league city, the players of the nearest big league club. This is natural and unavoidable. In the numberless cases where differences of opinion are bound to occur, where a comparison is being drawn between two stars of perhaps nearly equal merit, the deciding vote always rests with the home player.

The BASEBALL MAGAZINE has no preferences in such matters. It has very strong friendships for certain players, and hopes to have many more, but it never allows these friendships to alter its decisions. It habitually gives the preference to players who are not its closest friends, by any means, and strives in every way to be entirely unbiased in its decisions.

Of late it has considered the advisability of conferring with leading members of the press, in an effort to establish a national and recognized authority for deciding such matters and for the establishment of substantial prizes for the duly appointed candidates. Several powerful business interests have been approached in this connection and have displayed a willingness to co-operate with us in such a campaign. With this co-operation we believe in the near future we shall be in a position to definitely select an All-America nine which may claim to be regarded as authoritative, and provide a series of prizes well worth the consideration of the fortunate players who are thus chosen.



THE proposed major league legislation designed to prohibit ball players from furnishing the press with signed articles on the National Game is one which cannot be lightly passed by. Like many another apparently well-meaning act of legislation, it thinly veils a deep-seated wrong to a large class of individuals. In all the discussion we have seen upon the subject we have noted that but one side of the question has been properly dealt with, and inasmuch as all controversies involve two sides, and the present instance is no exception to the rule, we propose, in the interests of common justice, to consider that other side as well.

We are prepared to concede at the outset that the publication of articles signed by ball players has grown out of all normal bounds. But the practice

is at worst, not an unmixed evil, and a determined effort to legislate it completely out of existence, merely because it has been overdone, or involves certain evils, real or imaginary, is a mere giving way to mental hysteria.

It is perfectly true, as the foremost enemies of signed statements from ball players assert, that most of these articles are not in entirety, at least, written by the players themselves. The newspaper man has always been a powerful ally of the player, and never more so than in the masterpieces of famous stars. But assuming all this, wherein is the need for such sweeping and puritanical reform, here and here alone? The speech of many a public man, delivered with great effect to an admiring audience and widely circulated in the press, was written for him by a private secretary. No commission, report, or public document of any nature, is ever written in more than the barest fraction by the men who purport to be its authors. Why is it worse for ball players to do these things than it is for other people? And in the main the player is the author of the statement he professes to write. He gives his views in his own words, and these views are written down with as slight alterations as may be necessary, by the newspaper man who is acting in the capacity of private secretary. Any busy editor dictates his editorials, and these are carefully revised by his secretary. But that does not mean that the editor does not write them. And in the main the players do write what they purport to write, in effect, if not in fact.

But if this legislation does do away with the practice of newspaper men collaborating with ball players, what is it going to do with those players who actually do write their stories? It has been claimed that no ball players ever do this, but such claims are erroneous. We have in the office of this magazine manuscript copy from a number of famous players, written in their own hand, which we have printed in the pages of this magazine; and we personally know that there are players who are very fair, if not able, writers, and that these players actually do write the articles which appear under their signatures.

But the main thing to be considered is not whether players write their articles word for word, just as they appear in print, or whether they give their opinions and impressions to some newspaper man and these opinions and impressions are subscribed by him. This is mere hair-splitting, and unimportant in any case. The main thing to be considered is a factor of the case which seems to have been entirely overlooked, and that is in how far anyone has the right to dictate to a player what he may and what he may not do. This is the main point at issue, however that point may be obscured by references to incidentals, which are at best but a side issue. The personal liberty of the player is the thing at present assailed, and such liberty is not lightly to be swept aside as of no consequence.



IN the last issue of the BASEBALL MAGAZINE we published an article on the work of the A. A. U., and its recent decision in the celebrated Thorpe case. This article has called forth a great amount of discussion, and it seems certain that some of the despotic power of this association will be largely diminished in the near future. There is no doubt that its absurd rulings on amateur standing work real hardship to a large number of college athletes who constitute a valuable recruiting ground for the major league scouts. It is in its special attitude toward the coming baseball player, and the manner in which it circumscribes the rights and privileges of these players, that we condemn the A. A. U., rather than in its broader relations to sport

in general. We are personally convinced that all its hair-splitting over amateur standing is unwise and uncalled for, and that in the end it will completely disappear. But it is never necessary to be too radical in dealing with a broad subject that offers many perplexing details, and in the present instance, as we previously pointed out, it is not necessary for the A. A. U. to pass completely out of existence, or to remove all distinction between amateur and professional. But it is necessary that it greatly modify its present attitude toward amateur standing in our colleges, for it is there that the working of its rules in some of their most pernicious aspects are so apparent.

More than ever before, modern professional baseball is becoming dependent on the college athlete, and this athlete during all his undergraduate course is under the thumb of the A. A. U. According to the laws of this association, he cannot engage in any semi-pro ball games without sacrificing all right to participate in college athletics thereafter. This is a hardship all the more unfortunate that it is so unnecessary. The college man has every right to look forward to a future career on the diamond, but he can have no certainty of making good in that difficult field. He is placed in the embarrassing position of renouncing all his ambitions to star on his college track or gridiron, or else give up the very useful training that experience in semi-pro games would give him. In his case it is his irksome task to choose between renouncing all possible glory in the amateur contests, which naturally hold a high place in his college life, or of postponing indefinitely the prospects he may have in professional baseball. In other words, it is give up a certainty for an uncertainty, and whichever way he decides he is robbed of a privilege which is valuable and his by right. It is under such conditions that the college athlete commonly pursues a double course, playing semi-pro ball under an assumed name and engaging in college athletics as usual. It is to avoid this, at present necessary hypocrisy, and to do away with the injustice of the present system that the A. A. U. is being so strongly urged to modify its now obsolete and oppressive rulings.

