

# SPORTING LIFE

A WEEKLY JOURNAL

Devoted to  
BASEBALL, BICYCLING, SHOOT-  
ING, BILLIARDS, Etc.

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## TO OUR CORRESPONDENTS.

All correspondents of the "Sporting Life" are requested to return their credentials for renewal for 1897. Prompt compliance with this request is necessary in order to facilitate the annual labor of reorganizing the correspondence corps, which is, by the way, quite a task, owing to the immense number of contributors the "Sporting Life" has upon its staff. Failure to return the old credentials will be considered a declination of further service as correspondent.

## NEWS AND COMMENT.

—From all indications the farming system is losing its prestige. For the past three years it had been growing steadily, and last season it reached its height. Since the close of the season two league clubs have disposed of their farms, having found them extremely expensive and entirely unsatisfactory. The minor leagues are making a pretense at least of refusing to accept any farmed players. This feeling gradually will be strengthened, and in a season or two the farms will be as scarce as they were four years ago.

—The Syracuse Club has turned down an offer from Rochester of Ollie Beard for Mason and Minnehan.

—The farming system never has done base ball any good. On the other hand, it has caused numerous disputes among major league and minor league clubs, so far as the switching of players is concerned. It has made championship races in some of the minor league farces, in that teams winning the championship were not representative organizations, being strengthened by borrowed talent from the big league. Indianapolis won such a championship in 1895. Providence, in the Eastern League, did it this year.

—It has been suggested that the farming system be extended farther and players who really are not needed at once be farmed out to the Cuban patriots.

—It is Manager Selee's intention to have his Boston team made up with an idea to get all the speed in fielding and base running he can. He believes Baltimore can be beaten in no other way. We daresay, Sir Francis has the right idea.

—Johnny Bannert, a Cincinnati boy, has been engaged to manage an independent team at Shreveport, La., next season.

—President Byrne, of Brooklyn, has closed a deal with Harry Stevens, the score card man, for all the privileges at Eastern Park next year. Those who visited the Polo Grounds last season were impressed with the hustling qualities of Stevens, and the move will probably be popular.

—Manager Dowd, of St. Louis, evidently believes in quantity as well as quality. He promises to have 20 players under contract by spring.

—Messrs. Hanlon, Hart and Reach, who constitute the Committee on Rules, have expressed the opinion that very few changes will be made in the playing rules for next season. They think that the rules are as nearly complete as they can possibly be made, and that the more they are tinkered with the more confusing they become to the public. They are quite right, and should be sustained by the League.

—The Brooklyn Club has formally released

outfielder Bonner and pitcher Harper to Scranton.

—Pete Browning's application for a position on the League staff of umpires didn't create much of a stir at League headquarters. Your Uncle Nick just filed it, and it is liable to remain on the file until the crack of doom.

—Pitcher Amos Rusie is keeping down his weight this winter by riding a wheel.

—No man in base ball is better able to teach a lot of young players the science of the game than Wm. McGunnigle, the Louisville manager. This is a strong statement, with men like Hanlon, Tebeau, Ewing and Joyce in view; but it goes, nevertheless.

—Houston, Tex., tried ten short stops last season and all were frosts. The Phillies' experience was pretty nearly as sorrowful.

—Most of the Senators will assemble at Washington in time to see the inauguration of President McKinley and will go in for light training immediately afterward.

—Pitcher Stein, of the Brooklyn, probably will go to Grand Rapids next season.

—Hugh Duffy has again been appointed captain of the Boston team, and the Triumvir and Manager Selee have full confidence that he is the right man in the right place. To sustain that good opinion, though, Hugh will have to do better than last season.

—Billy Urquhart, the Buffalos' catcher, is possibly the only member of the profession who is a clerk in a bakery.

—Father Chadwick is advocating the return to the old 4 by 6 pitcher's box. The old gentleman generally studies these matters closely before he expresses an opinion on them, and there must, therefore, be ground for the proposed change. It would certainly obviate much useless wrangling over the pitcher's position. But the same purpose would be as well served by putting the pitcher behind the slab.

—Jack Glascock holds up Ewing's hands by asserting that Daman, drafted from Cincinnati, is "the" coming southpaw pitcher of the country.

—Sandy Griffin has decided to give up playing regularly on the Scranton team and will manage from the bench, keeping in condition, however, by constant practice, so that he can go into the game in case of an emergency.

—The Detroit Club is now generally looked upon as a Philadelphia farm.

—Eddie Talcott, formerly president of the New York League Club, made a killing in Wall street last week. Mr. Talbot was a side partner with Louis V. Bell, the new Wall street plunger in his raid on Manhattan and Burlington. Bell, it is claimed, cleared a half million on the deal and Talcott \$250,000.

—Manager Comiskey, of St. Paul, is reported very ill with pneumonia.

—Pitcher Jimmie McJames will be one of the topnotchers of the League next season if he continues the work that last season's "form" would warrant one in expecting from him.

—The Louisville contention over Manager McGunnigle continues, and it is said that the majority of the club directors have decided upon securing a player-manager.

—The Louisville director said to be most bitterly opposed to McGunnigle and who is doing most of the "knocking" against McGunnigle, has the decidedly appropriate name of Hammer, with a prefix of Casper. He is dead set against McGunnigle and is willing to accept anybody for a change.

—Rochester is reported having corralled a Pacific coast catcher named Franz.

—An umpire is very liable to have his troubles at Columbus, O., next season. Arlie Latham, George Tebeau and Jack Crooks, "al in a bunch," and pulling for the best of it, can make it interesting for the coolest man that ever handled an indicator.

—Elton Chamberlain is looking for one more League trial, and thinks New York will give him the desired chance.

—Business Manager Bancroft, of Cincinnati, will establish himself at Hawley's after Jan. 1. Any matters pertaining to the Cincinnati Club will be attended to by him there. Mr. Bancroft also will establish a sort of newspaper bureau, to supply all the local critics with anything in the news line that is of interest to the public.

—The veteran George Wright, the incomparable short stop of the '60s and '70s, will celebrate his 50th birthday in January.

—The organizing of a number of new minor leagues for next season will give many an ambitious amateur an opportunity to become a professional for a time at least, and perhaps bring them to the notice of some other club of a higher standing. No matter how short a time these leagues may last, their existence will be the first stepping stone to future greatness of many amateur players.

—The veteran Joe Battin, has left St. Louis for Buffalo, where he will winter. He wants to umpire next season.

—Jimmy Canavan, of the Providence Club, and Manager Doe, of New Bedford, both expert roller polo players, contemplate taking two crack polo teams to England next winter.

—Gil Hatfield and Jack Glascock have larger bank accounts than any players in the Western League. Gil inherited most of his money, and "Pebble Jack" saved his tidy fortune, which is invested in real estate at Wheeling, W. Va.

—"Scrappy" Joyce has, it is reported, invented a brass plate to fit over the shoes

of a baseman as a preventive for "spiking."

—Tom Brown thinks that "Silver" King's statement that he will not play ball next season is a "bluff."

—Treasurer J. Earl Wagner has already begun to book exhibition games for the Senators for the early spring. Teams of the Virginia League will be seen in these preliminary games in Washington, early in the season.

—Kid Gleason can't get over it. He is picking winners and losers at the Singery race track.

—Jimmy Ryan denies the report that he is anxious to break away from Uncle Anson's string of Colts. Jimmy's relatives are all located in Chicago, and his wife owns considerable property there.

—In Stivetts and Klobedanz Boston has, sure enough, a pair of hard-hitting pitchers.

—Arlie Latham is a roller polo fan and a constant patron of that stimulating sport at his home in Lynn, Mass. He was formerly a crack polo player, that is in the days when he was less careful of his hide and bones than now.

—Breitelstein and Perry Werden will begin another hunting cruise down the Mississippi after the holidays.

—Ned Hanlon is of opinion that the League magnates waste too much time and effort over their personal quarrels, and that as they are in business for profit they should mend their ways and attend strictly to business hereafter. Ned not only believes this, but states it publicly through the columns of a Western paper. Hanlon has of late acquired a habit of telling homely truths in homely fashion, which will get him disliked in certain quarters.

—"Count" Campan and Nyce are being negotiated for by Grand Rapids. Both belong to Kansas City at present.

—Tom Loftus says the minor leagues are handicapped by too much legislation, and that players should only be drafted every two years. Under such a system Loftus thinks the League clubs would get better results from the players they drafted, and it would also keep the salaries of the minor organizations on a paying basis.

—Jim Hart has gone on record with a prediction for 1897. He doesn't know which club will win the League pennant, but he does know that Baltimore will not.

—The report that Bug Holliday may be traded to St. Louis for Roger Connor has been confirmed by advices from Cincinnati. Bug is an old St. Louis boy, and his friends would like to see him back in that city.

—According to the New York papers, Richard Croker and Andrew Freedman are regular chums. But what does that signify?

—Manager Patsy Donovan says that under no circumstances will he trade "Pink" Hawley. He considers Hawley the best pitcher in the League. Now, whom does Donovan want for Hawley?

—The League's drafting period expired Thursday night. From now until Feb. 1 the minor leagues have a chance at each other according to classification.

—If Anson's suggestion to remove the pitcher's slab to fit the pitcher's toe instead of his heel is adopted, south-sided "Pat" Killen, of the Pirates, would be more seriously handicapped than any twirler in the League. Killen can steal more ground with his pivotal foot than any other major League twirler.

—Frank Selee believes that Boston and Washington, year in and year out, are the best patrons of the national game. He overlooks Philadelphia.

—Billy Hallman is quite an authority on boxing. Billy, Capt. Tom Brown and Senator Johnnie O'Brien are the best posted players in the major League on fistiana. Tom and Johnnie are handier with their mitts than any other player on the diamond.

—Jack Chapman thinks short stop Ritehey will prove a valuable man for Brooklyn.

—Anson insists that the abolition of the trapped ball put a penalty on skill, and would like to see the play restored. We presume that the fact that that expert "trapper," Fred Pfeffer, once more wears a Chicago uniform has nothing to do with Anson's change of heart.

—The harrowing news comes from St. Louis that Captain William Jennings Joyce is growing a beard under his chin and along the ridge poles of his face.

—If those base ball writers who indorse Tom Lynch for the umpire inspectorship were familiar with the League's object in creating an inspectorship they would not be so ready with suggestions. They will be informed at the spring meeting of the National League and not before that time.

—Jack Crooks talks of retiring from the diamond and embarking in the railroad business. Jack's father is a prominent railroad man in St. Paul, Minn.

—After all, Ad. Gumbert isn't going to retire from the diamond as was stated. He merely wants to give up pitching and to shift to some infield position, first or second base preferred. He thinks he could play either place well enough, combined with his batting, to make his services valuable to any team.

—Charley Snyder will again umpire in the Eastern League next season.

—President Power, of the Interstate League, thinks Tom Lynch too valuable as an umpire to be practically shelved in the inspector's position. He furthermore believes that no umpire could satisfactorily fill

the position, owing to his old associations and sympathies.

—Nothing has been heard about new cities for the New England League next season.

—Some of the star pitchers are disposed to think that the Hinton pitching gun is crowding over into their territory too closely. But they need not worry, as the gun is of little real use, even for practice. It isn't the curves or speed of a pitcher alone that make him effective, but the head work he puts into them. An average batter would soon learn to knock one of those automatically curved balls out of sight after a very little practice. Of a necessity an out-curve fired by Hinton's gun would be always the same and an in-shoot always the same. Knowing the extent of a curve a batter could always tell just where it was going to pass him. The same motion that makes curves of great or small extent is what fools.

—By the way, that Hinton pitching gun after all is not guaranteed to go on the field sober. On the contrary it has to get well loaded before it can pitch a ball.

—With the Atlantic League having gathered in two cities in Pennsylvania the outlook for a State League next year is not very bright. Instead of an eight-club organization, as has always been the aim of the magnates in the past, it is likely that four and six-club leagues will be formed in different sections. Already plans are being prepared in certain localities for the formation of such leagues, and others will be heard from before the outdoor season begins.

—The Pittsburg Club still has Joe Wright and Harry Davis as extra players.

—Baltimore, Cleveland, Boston and New York are the pennant fighters for next season, according to Mr. O. P. Caylor. As he did not mention Cincinnati the Reds are certain to have a chance, for Mr. Caylor's dreams go by contraries.

—The hint has been thrown out that Payne will give all the Brooklyn twirlers a brush for the title of premier.

—Here is one more item about President Von der Ahe. The St. Louis boss is quoted as having decided never again to give any St. Louis newspaper an item of news, because they insist upon roasting him, right or wrong. Mr. Von der Ahe doubtless has Mr. Freedman's sympathy for his misfortunes, and complete approval of his course.

—It takes a pretty active man to spike all the wild and wooly stories that have been handed out to Fandom this winter.

—There is said to be a lot of quiet but not less strenuous kicking among the players of the Eastern and Western Leagues over the salary reductions ordered by the two leagues. What avails it, however, and what reason is there in it, considering that the step was only taken to save the two leading minor leagues from distress and perhaps disruption? Players should be men, not mice.

—Eddie Burke is of opinion that "even a temperance preacher would take a drop or two when on a slippery pavement."

—It is authoritatively stated that Hastings and Hughey will alternate regularly next season in the box for the Pirates. Manager Donovan has considerable faith in the two ex-Western Leaguers. Both men proved themselves top-notchers as twirlers for the Western League clubs with which they were connected. If Pittsburg can't find them useful either man can secure a good berth in the Western League.

—Despite Von der Ahe's alleged unpopularity with players, he has already re-signed nine of his men.

—Nick Young is getting a lot of free advice from base ball writers in regard to next season's schedule. He has the matter in his own hands, however, and all that is said about the schedule nowadays is mere guesswork.

—Pitcher Brunskill, who last season twirled for Jackson, has been signed by Grand Rapids.

—"If we were to follow all the advice given us by our well-meaning friends," said John T. Brush the other day, "the Reds would be like the leaves blown by an autumn wind." Good simile.

—Manager Bill Joyce expects to see the New Yorks finish first or second next season.

—It is settled that St. Joseph will lose her Western Association franchise, as all efforts to raise sufficient funds to start a local club have failed. President Hickey, of the Western Association, has notified the other members of the association, and the franchise will doubtless be awarded to Ottumwa.

—The latest possible deal talked of is the purchase of Joe Quinn by Louisville from Baltimore.

—In view of the many alleged big base ball deal stories that have come from Von der Ahe's burg recently, it is only due St. Louis that its name be changed to "Fakeville," a distinction long held by Pittsburg.

—Buck Ewing last week celebrated his thirty-sixth birthday.

—The veteran Tom Brown, of the Washington team, seems to be in demand as a college coach. He has received several offers, but has accepted none as yet.

—We have letters for Frank Lafferty, Bob Quinn, Ted Sullivan, first baseman Slater, George Reed, Tom Turner, Alex Brodie, catcher Clements, George Harper, Will Goodenough (2), George Stallings, Eddie Leach and D. Dextra.