



CREAHAN'S CHAT.

A CONCERTED WAR UPON THE LOCAL POOL DIVES

By the Christian League and the Billiard Associations—McLaughlin's Benefit—Death of Noted Amateurs—A Tip to Hewins, Etc.

The Christian League, of this city, aided by the American and National Billiard Associations, have opened war on the cheap pool dives of this city, which are so numerous and where pool can be played for as low as half a cent a cue, that they can probably be counted by the hundreds. Just why the authorities permit such resorts to exist it is difficult to state. That they are gambling dens of vice in its worst form there seems to be but little doubt; dangerous alike to men and boys, but more especially the latter, who are probably the greatest patrons of such places. At a recent meeting of the billiard associations the following was made public in the "Inquirer," of this city:

"In discussing the question President H. J. Bergman, of the National Association, said: 'We have decided to push this question ourselves, without regard to the Christian League or any other organization. It is a question which concerns us. While 'cheap pool' is not interfering with our business, it is degrading it, and the public will soon be placing the legitimate rooms on a par with the cheap dives, and then we will suffer.'

"The American Association met at the Continental Hotel in the afternoon, and the following was adopted without discussion:

"Believing that the scores, if not hundreds, of cheap pool rooms, or pool dives, which infest the city, where pool can be played for from 2 1/2 cents a cue down to 1/2 cent a cue, are not only dangerous and demoralizing to men, but ruinous if not fatal to young boys who are largely the patrons of such resorts.

"Resolved, That the American Billiard Association shall aid to its utmost the Christian League in calling the attention of the authorities to such resorts with a view to the suppression of such places."

The proposed testimonial benefit to Edward McLaughlin, which is to take place in this city during the present month. If we have not been wrongly informed, promises to be one of the most elaborate affairs of its kind in the history of billiards. Frank Ives, Jacob Schaefer, George F. Slosson, William Sexton, Maurice Daly, Dudley Kavanagh and others have already volunteered their services for the occasion. This benefit, as already stated, will take place in this city, and will be handled and managed presumably by McLaughlin's professional friends, that is, local professionals, including his numerous friends connected with the press of this city. As it seems to be the intention of all to make this benefit more than a financial success it appears to us that room keepers and professionals throughout the country generally should "chip" in and contribute according to their means. This is scarcely the time to expect or look for financial aid from outsiders, as the past four or five years have been so severe a struggle on all that most people have had their hands full in keeping the wolf from their own door. McLaughlin, however, deserves generous consideration. But few men have done more for the game than he, and now that it is proposed to give him a testimonial benefit it should be made worthy of the man or not given at all. Manufacturers should also not forget this fact.

District Attorney John R. Fellows, of New York, who died in that city on Dec. 7, was an amateur billiard player, probably more than able to hold his own with any amateur in this country of his age. Colonel Fellows was in a measure a sort of terror to the average billiard room, where nothing but the clicking of the ivories is courted. And yet, in a way, his presence was always welcome. In person he was an odd, chubby-looking little man, decidedly inclined to be corpulent, but never too much so. His very short stature, bald head, laughing eyes and happy-looking face always made him friends even among strangers. His advanced age of course won him sympathy while playing, but this was not at all necessary, as it would soon be found that he was no novice at the cue. He greatly resembled Dickens' "Pickwick" of immortal memory and creation. His terror to the average public room, where quiet is almost as essential as the very billiard table itself, was in the stentorian tones of his voice. He never intended to be rude, boisterous or disorderly—the latter he probably never was—but his chubby face, happy laugh and general air of happiness, together with his voice, made it almost impossible for him to play without a sort of jolly contagion all around. His happy presence was always greatly enjoyed

by the spectators, but not always by the room keeper. Peace to his gentle memory.

Young Salvini, who died a few days ago at his father's home in Italy, not only resembled his distinguished father in dramatic art, but also as an amateur billiard player. Billiards have lost nothing by the death of Salvini, Jr., but the stage, if indeed, not art, has probably lost much. For art and the stage of to-day can scarcely be considered together. Yet it is difficult to divorce one from the other, not only on account of the past association of the stage with art, while the modern fragment of what art that has clung to the stage of to-day has been largely the result of such students as the younger Salvini, who has just passed away and who was probably the foremost actor on the American stage at the time of his death, all of which he might have easily been without having very great talent as an actor. Young Salvini, however, not only possessed dramatic art of a very marked degree, which we do not propose to discuss here, but his genial and ever welcome presence in the billiard room will be greatly missed. His opponent was frequently that fine old actor, Milnes Leveck, and it was worth the price of an admission to the theatre any time to see the two men play billiards. Leveck as a billiard player is a born diplomat. He has the most profound contempt (?) for his own game, but I greatly question if I have ever yet known him to lose! Poor Salvini! I felt like crying on learning of his death.

Talking of actors who play billiards recalls the fact that I met Francis Wilson on Chestnut street a few days ago. Had I not known him since he was but little more than a boy, and were I to meet him on the Pocono Mountains to-day for the first time I should be strongly inclined to take him for one of the original Pennsylvania Dutchmen who still vote for Andrew Jackson and speak in the original Dutch to their oxen. Mr. Wilson has aged very considerably, in appearance at least, during the past few years. This man in his way is worthy of emulation certainly by many of the alleged actors of to-day. In 1876 he was a member of the Chestnut Street Theatre Stock Company, working for about \$12 a week. For years past he has commanded probably not less than three or four hundred dollars a week, if indeed, not more. He is said to be quite wealthy, if not very rich, and owns one of the finest homes in New Rochelle, N. Y. Mr. Wilson is not only a student, but loves his art, if comic opera can be an art, and no doubt it is. This man is never to be seen in public resorts, but is a close student of literature. If he lives ten years longer he will be one of the richest actors in the world.

Lewis Shaw writes us from Chicago that his wife and himself are still giving exhibitions in the clubs of that city, and meeting with very flattering success. Mr. Shaw and wife intend in the near future to start "for the Middle States and the East." This very happy couple have never been on the salary list, and are not identified with the present "war" on the room keepers and manufacturers of this county.

All attempts so far on the part of Matt Hewins, of Hartford, to get W. A. Spinks to play a series of matches in his city with Edward McLaughlin for \$250 have failed, notwithstanding the fact that McLaughlin did not defeat Spinks in New York, while Spinks did defeat McLaughlin. It is evident that there is a method in Spinks' madness. Having defeated a really fine player, a man whose record is more than national, and who ranks as an expert but little below Ives, Schaefer and Slosson, Mr. Spinks is probably prudent in not making a second attempt in the same direction, as the result might be dangerous to Spinks. Mr. Hewins, however, for the veteran expert, room keeper and professional he is, is singularly lacking in the diplomacy of salary list experts. Had he made a guarantee that Spinks could not lose, or that Spinks would receive \$250 for having not won, then it's dollars to cents that Spinks would play. Why! oh! why! Matt Hewins, will you persist in not studying them oden or Spinksonian theory of match playing?

A. F. Troescher, of New York, spent Christmas with his numerous friends in Chicago.

The billiard business in New York, even in the leading rooms there, is said to be almost unprecedentedly dull. A few more years of the salary list business, and there would be no such report to be made, as there would probably be no men in the business there.

In the recent death of his mother, although she must have been well advanced in years, Maurice Daly will have the sympathy of his numerous professional friends all over the country.

At the recent opening of Jacob Schaefer's room in New York the "Wizard" was defeated by Edward McLaughlin, who in the same place subsequently defeated Mr. Spinks. Mr. Schaefer would no doubt have been even more happy had he played Mr. Spinks, and met with defeat. There is but one Schaefer in this country, and were it possible there is no professional worthy of the name who would not be present to wish him good luck, a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year in his new Eastern enterprise.

There is some danger that the proposed testimonial to Edward McLaughlin may develop into the grotesque or burlesque element which is so characteristic of the "show business" of to-day. Billiards, it should not be forgotten, loses all of its charm the very moment that sensationalism or jumboism shall take the place of the expert's art. The tendency nowadays is to have the newspaper paragraph—a huge humbug, if not a fraud—take the place of all others in public performances. The craze to see one's name in the public

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prints, thanks to the newspaper paragrapher, has resulted in practically making a huge show house out of all sorts of amusements, sports and pastimes. Billiards is no exception to the rule. This testimonial, however, should be. It is already announced that practically all of the professionals in New York are to appear, including a brace of young pool players who should probably be at school instead of appearing before the public as precocious youngsters at a game which has done as much to injure billiards as the salary list experts. McLaughlin's benefit to make it a success should be of but one night's character. It should take place in a large hall in this city, and have for the attraction Ives, Schaefer and Slosson.

Instead of introducing to the public a vast lot of experts that no one cares to see, let their expenses, or the money for the same be donated to the fund. No one can come on here from New York to play for less than \$10 each. It is much better to contribute this money towards the benefit, and have a fine series of two or three games between the experts already named, than to give a variety performance at billiards which could only result in keeping the public away from such an entertainment. JOHN CREAHAN.

BASE BALL NEWS.

STAR SCINTILLATIONS.

The Deal For Lezotte and Smith Was a Bona Fide Affair.

Syracuse, N. Y., Dec. 28.—Editor "Sporting Life":—The signing of Abe Lezotte and Jud Smith appears to have caused a commotion in the ranks of the Eastern League. The press throughout the circuit is inclined to look upon the deal with suspicion and with a single exception are winking the other eye and saying things about President Kuntzsch and Manager Buckenberger that are not at all complimentary. Syracuse is put down as having assumed Toronto's place as a Pittsburg farm, and all because Smith, Lezotte, Grove and Kelly were secured from the Pittsburg Club. Have any of the writers that are aiming sneers at Syracuse stopped long enough to think that it would be a good idea to await President Young's regular bulletin relative to releases, etc.? Mr. Young must of necessity be advised officially by the owner of the Pittsburg Club regarding the sale of these players, and from an interview with President Kerr printed last week in this paper it would seem that the aforesaid writers throughout the circuit have not called the turn correctly.

PRESIDENT KUNTZSCH has been interviewed by the writer, and perhaps it will be well to say right here that since Mr. Kuntzsch embarked in the base ball business he has never as yet given an item to the "Sporting Life" that was not absolutely true to the letter. Mr. Kuntzsch proclaims that his transactions with the Pittsburg Club are that he has bought outright the releases of the players mentioned and that with the single exception of catcher Shaw every man on the team goes with the Syracuse franchise in case of a sale. Shaw was secured from the Pittsburg Club weeks before the adoption by the Eastern League of the resolution against the farming system. Therefore, be it known that should you wish to buy the franchise of the Syracuse Club, which is not for sale by a large majority, you would secure as chattels the players named as having been farmed to Syracuse.

ANOTHER PITCHER has been secured. Lampe is his name, and a good twirler, too, from all accounts. The box men of the local club are feeling pretty good over the signing of Smith, Lezotte, Grove and Kelly, as they know that these willow wielders will help them to many a victory. If the pitchers of the team do the effective work of last season and the men who come here with reputations as hitters sustain that reputation there will be a large hustle to outstrip the Syracuse Stars in the fight for that "peanut" next year. The rumors of deals still continue, the latest being a proposition from President Leimgruber, of the Rochester Club, who wires that he will trade Ollie Beard for pitcher Nace Mason and Dan Minnehan. Mr. Kuntzsch comes out with the proclamation that a deal for Mason is not to be considered even for a moment. The Southern gent is a fixture here, and Mr. Leimgruber knew a thing or two when he selected Mr. Nace Mason, as a better pitcher will not throw a ball across the plate in the Eastern League next year. Ollie Beard would be a welcome addition to the local club, but the Rochester folks must guess again. The idea of the transfer of Mason to the Rochester Club raised a considerable commotion for a day or so, and the fans about Homer Ostrander's, and at the Empire House, were in confusion and rushed down to see Mr. Kuntzsch about the matter. They were quickly reassured and regained their composure. The two victories in one day put to Mr. Mason's credit as against the strong Toronto Club last season will never be erased from the memory of any base ball follower hereabouts. Much interest is being manifested here as to the make up of the Rochester Club and the press of that city is keeping the question before the public. Here in Syracuse the papers from Rochester are closely watched, as we all know that a strong team at Rochester means crowds of people at Star Park when Manager Dan Shannon comes here with his club. The rivalry between the two towns is intense and will continue if the teams are well matched. But, then, Manager Dan will take care of his end of the deal with his usual effectiveness.

THE OTHER PITCHERS. Much inquiry is made concerning the condition of pitcher Victor Willis. President Kuntzsch gives out the cheering news that Willis will come to Syracuse next spring primed for bears.

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It is said that Alex. Whitebill is supplying the town of Brookville, Pa., with deer, bear and rabbit meat from Minnesota and is as hard as nails as a result of his rambles o'er the prairies. Pitcher Delaney has not been heard from since leaving last fall. There is nothing new in the matter of Mr. Boyer's claim to the services of George Kelly, other than that Mr. Kelly insists that there is nothing in Mr. Boyer's claim whatever to cause the Syracuse magnate a moment's worry. Mr. Kuntzsch maintains that a league cannot exist and hold protection with but two club members, and that is said to be the position that Mr. Boyer's league found itself in at the close of play last year.

MINOR MENTION. Star Park has been transformed into a skating rink.

The writer is receiving letters from young players throughout the country and the same will be placed in the hands of the proper person and without any cost to the players should a New York State League be organized.

Dave Dishler and Philip Helfert, of Utica, who are now and always have been the backbone of base ball in that city, were here last week. Accompanying them was Mr. Helfert's son, "Wallie," who is celebrated as a very speedy youngster on the bicycle. Mr. Helfert and his son are inseparable companions and are more frequently thought to be brothers than father and son.

Mr. Gorman, of Boston, is out with the proclamation that the Lyons (N. Y.) Club will be as strong next season as either the Rochester or Syracuse teams. Here, then, is a candidate for Toronto's place, should Toronto drop from the circuit. Mr. Gorman appears to be all right.

For the benefit of the projector (?)—Peters, of Amsterdam—the writer will say that "G. Whiz" is not seeking the management of any team in the New York State League or any other league that Peters, of Amsterdam, is connected with. It is also perfectly safe to assert that the promoters of base ball in the several towns named by the projector, including first of all the city of Amsterdam, will echo this sentiment unanimously.

A Western N. E. State League is now being talked about and quite extensively of late. Lyons, Auburn, Seneca Falls, Wolcott, Waterloo, Phelps, Clyde, Weedsport, Cortland and Norwich are the towns mentioned for the circuit.

Will Hoagland, of Auburn, famous as a heel and toe walker, and a man of experience with the indicator has applied for a place on the Eastern League umpire staff. Mr. Hoagland is competent and should be appointed. G. WHIZ.

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