



A NEW HARDSHIP

MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH THE FARMING SYSTEM.

Detroit Sets an Example of How the National Agreement Can be Made an Instrument of Oppression and Spoliation.

The Springfield "Union," always a consistent opponent of the "farming" system, finds in the alleged grab of Ollie Beard by Detroit a most effective argument against a new phase of the system which can be made the medium of more abuses than the projectors of the farming system doubtless ever dreamed of. Says our esteemed contemporary:

A NEW HARDSHIP.
"One of the hardships to which minor leagues are compelled to submit under the present national agreement is pretty well typified by the result of the negotiations of several clubs to secure Shortstop Ollie Beard from Rochester. At least three clubs have been dickering with Beard. Louisville talked of him for manager and the Colonels could, of course, have secured him easily enough by drafting him, but did not consider him worth the necessary \$500.

"The Detroit Club wanted Beard to replace Manager Stallings, who has gone to Philadelphia, but being in the Western League could not draft him. Several trades were offered Rochester in exchange for Beard, but none of them met the approval of the Big Three, who, in turn, made an offer for a deal which Detroit thought altogether too high. Then Syracuse and Rochester opened negotiations. Kuntzsch offered Minahan and Delaney for Beard. Rochester offered Beard for Minahan and Mason. Kuntzsch said nit and there it ended.

STALLINGS' TRICK.
"But Detroit had something up her sleeve, as the denouement shows. It is contained in the following dispatch from Nashville, Tenn., where ex-Manager Stallings, of Detroit, is wintering, to the 'Sporting Life' week before last:

"The successor of George T. Stallings as manager of the Detroit Base Ball team, has been selected. Dr. Stallings himself yesterday completed the deal whereby this end was effected. As manager of the Philadelphia Stallings notified President Young, of the National League, that Ollie Beard, the well-known and popular player, was drafted by the Phillies. Beard will be at once turned over to Detroit, and will enter actively upon his duties as captain and manager of the Wolverines."

"Nothing could be simpler. Detroit, although in the same class with Rochester, easily drafts Beard, via Philadelphia, although it is expressly stipulated in the National Agreement that players can be drafted only from a lower class into a higher.

"The Agreement also excuses this draft business by stating that it 'provides a method for young players to rise in their profession,' or some twaddle to that effect. Possibly the framers of the National Agreement can explain how a player 'rises in his profession' by being drafted from Rochester over into Detroit. Both cities are in Class A leagues and play about the same speedy game. Where is the justice of it?"

HOW IT CAN WORK.
"Manager Kuntzsch might have done the same thing but for the Eastern League rule which prevents a drafted player from being released to any other club in the same league without the consent of the club originally owning him. That rule is all right so far as its power goes, but it cannot prevent the drafting of players and their release to other leagues, as in this Beard case. The National Leaguers should certainly frame some action that would prevent such an underhand deal as the one just perpetrated by Philadelphia's new manager. In the same way there is nothing to prevent a player's progressing backward. For instance, a New England League club could have secured Beard by getting Boston to draft him and then buying him from Boston for the draft price. But the New England League is in a class lower than the Eastern.

WOULD HAVE MADE NO DIFFERENCE.
"From Rochester's willingness to exchange Beard it may be presumed that Ollie was not anxious to stay in Rochester and that Rochester was not over anxious to retain him, principally because of his ambitions to fill Dan Shannon's shoes, this said. But that makes no difference at all in this agreement. If Beard had been the most valuable player in the world to Rochester this Philadelphia-Detroit deal would have gone through just the same. In view of that local fans will await developments to see what minor league club, if any, induced Philadelphia to draft Dick Harley from Springfield.

WHERE THE SHOE PINCHES.
"The real value of a base ball club is in

its players and the right to retain them. The loss of six players, or to be more accurate, half that number, of the best players, would put Cleveland, Baltimore and other clubs out of the National League race.

"Yet a minor league club is not only compelled to submit to this raiding, but the players taken from it can be transplanted to a rival team. In other words, a Class A minor league team can be wrecked for \$1500 by drafting three of its star players and another club in the same organization made a pennant winner with the addition of the drafted talent. Indianapolis won the Western League pennant in 1895 with the aid of players drafted from Toledo in 1894. How is base ball benefited by such a system?"

A CASE IN POINT.
"The right of the National League clubs to recruit their ranks from the minor leagues at a fair price is not disputed, but it should be exercised equitably. Its abuse works an injustice. A provision made by a minor league that a drafted player should be returned to the club from which he was called should be lived up to.

"The Springfield champion team of 1895 was wrecked by the drafting of Donnelly, Jones, Callahan and Shannon. In return the club received \$2000, but it cost three times that amount trying to replace them last season, and their places are not yet filled at that."

LANCASTER LINES.
Getting a Team That Will Make a Strong Front Next Season.

Lancaster, Pa., Jan. 5.—Editor "Sporting Life":—Things are progressing slowly but surely in the formation of the ball team for next season. Manager Rinn is anxious to get his infield completed, and then he will give more attention to other details. He is not making bluffs about having a pennant winning team, as he is accustomed to see the claims of clubs that play all of their ball through the newspaper in the winter, but find themselves outclassed when the playing season opens.

THE COMING RACE.
Your correspondent in Paterson has been placing the clubs as he would like to see them close, with Paterson first and the Athletics second. What he has to substantiate these claims Lancaster people cannot see. One thing is certain, and that is if the Athletics are second in the coming race Lancaster will be first, as the people here are especially anxious to defeat them. Last season the Athletics were classed as the strongest team in the State League, yet they were only able to win three games from Lancaster in the season. It is a well-known fact this year that Manager Sharsig expects to get some of the crumbs that fall from the Philadelphia League Club's table in the way of released players, and there is no telling what Sharsig will get. The players he has on his reserve list are not pennant winners by any means.

JUST W-A-I-T!
It is rather funny to read the Paterson and Newark letter in the "Sporting Life" when the correspondents speak of their teams as though they had won the Atlantic League pennant. The truth is that Hartford is the only team entitled to even a claim on the pennant. At the September meeting of the League every club was agreed to award the pennant to Hartford, without a kick. After that Newark and Paterson both tried to make their people believe they had won. The unscheduled and exhibition games played last season were sufficient to break up the League, and how President Barrowes is going to separate the wheat from the chaff and make up correct averages no one can tell.

TEAM NEWS.
It looks as though short stop McQuaid, of last year's Lancaster team, had worked himself out of a job. When he had a misunderstanding here last season he hastily signed a paper with Paterson, which it is said, holds him for next season. He does not want to go there, and Manager McKee does not include him in the make-up of his team, as he gives it out himself. Lancaster will not make any play for him, and it seems to be that he is out all around.

First baseman Charles Hamburg was released by the Lancaster Club two weeks ago, and Billy Sharsig is after him to sign with the Athletics, while he may go to Columbus, Ga., which city is his home, to manage a team. "Ham" had a misunderstanding with the management here, and each claim that they were not treated right by the other.

"Kid" Jordan has been toying with the Lancaster Base Ball Club for some time, but he is likely to sign with the Athletics, as he is out for big advance money and makes no attempt to conceal it.

Ed Rothermel, at one time a cracking short stop in the State League, was in Lancaster this week, trying to come to terms with the manager for a job here. Things are undecided in regard to a short stop here, and there is no telling yet who will play it. Jimmy Graham will cover third.

GENERAL MENTION.
The Rochester people say they intend to play Ed Henry on third, on account of Mulvey's sickness, but people who know say that Mulvey is all right. It is said that there is a scheme to sell Henry, and it is dollars to nickels that Joe will be back on third next year.

Umpire Tom Phelan was in town this week to see the Lancaster Club officials, who would like to see him get the fourth appointment as Atlantic League umpire.

Young Hepting, of this city, who is a promising young pitcher, will go South on an early spring trip with the Franklin and Marshall College Club. He will be given a trial on the Atlantic League team of this city the coming year.

NOT THE REAL ISSUE.

The Sunday Question Only a Cloak in the League Fight.

From Cleveland "Plaindealer."
The continued efforts of the members of the "big five" to make it appear that the split which, however, was only a temporary one—was on the Sunday ball question is growing tiresome, and it no longer conceals the real trouble, all of which has been told in these columns. The absurdity of the statement that Sunday ball was the cause of the rupture is shown by the way the teams divided: In the "little seven" there are four cities, Brooklyn, Washington, Baltimore and Cleveland, where Sunday ball has not been played, while in the "big five" there is Chicago, a red-hot Sunday ball town. It requires no further argument to prove that the "big five" and "little seven" were never divided on Sunday base ball lines.

HARWOOD'S LEAGUE BALLS

(Established 1858)

NATICK, MASS.

ARE THE BEST

CHADWICK'S CHAT

THIS WEEK IS ABOUT THE PLAYING RULES.

A Gentle Reminder to the Rules Committee as to Its Duties and Responsibilities and Some Timely Suggestions as to Changes.

Brooklyn, New Year's Day.—Editor "Sporting Life":—I am spending my sixtieth New Year's day in Brooklyn to-day, having missed but two such days during the whole of that time. I have been worried in mind of late by several occurrences of a serious character, but physically I am in the enjoyment of excellent health, by two years' sojourn at Sag Harbor having greatly invigorated me. With this personal allusion I now proceed to "biz," and talk about the rules.

It is very important that in the work of amending the playing rules for 1897 the committee take into due consideration the fact that, while they are a committee of the National Professional League of the country, appointed to conserve the interests of their class in their work, they are at the same time a committee who will frame the playing rules of the game for the entire base ball fraternity at large, amateur and professional alike. While the professional class can be counted by the hundreds, the amateurs are numbered by the thousands, and therefore a certain amount of consideration should be given the majority class in the matter of revising the code. It goes without saying that our national game could not possibly have reached the high plane of excellence in its playing rules which it now possesses but for the great work done by the rules committees of the National League during the past 20 years of its professional existence, and especially has effective work been done within the past ten years. But it is equally true that the field of revision in question is still open for improvement, and each season's experience results in bringing to light either some new point of play which needs recognition in the code or some needed change in the wording of existing rules calculated to make the law clearer in its interpretation.

While it is advisable to avoid as much as possible any radical change in the playing rules of the game, it is equally important that every opening for improved amendments should be taken advantage of. A perfect code of playing rules has yet to be attained. Each year we are approaching nearer to the goal, but it has yet to be reached, and it will be some years before anything like a permanent code of rules can be arrived at.

One feature of the revision of the code of playing rules done each season by the Committee on Rules of the League should be that of endeavoring to equalize the powers of attack and defense in the game as much as possible; that is, the prevention of any undue advantage being obtained by pitching over the batting, or by the batting over the pitching. An illustration of this is to be seen in the fact that, while the pitcher is allowed at present to deliver four unfair balls to the bat, the batsman is obliged to strike at the first three fair balls sent to him by the pitcher. This gives the attacking force one point the advantage over the defensive force. Of course an equalization would be the calling of four balls and four strikes. Experience, therefore, has shown, however, that the one point advantage possessed by the pitching has resulted in some very attractive contests in a majority of instances, and it may be said that the time has not yet arrived to make any change in favor of the defensive force, at least as far as increasing the number of called strikes is concerned. "Three strikes and out" is a time-honored rule of the game, and it would be better to lessen the number of called balls than to increase that of called strikes if the pitching should possess too great an advantage.

But there is one attractive feature of the game which needs a more extended field of operations to give it full play than it now commands, and that is base running, which is, next to beautiful fielding, the most exciting and interesting phase of play. For several years past the balk rule has been so worded as to be a serious obstacle to successful base running, the pitching rules in this respect giving the attacking force altogether too great an advantage over that of the defense. Base stealing is part and parcel of the work of the batting side in the game, and beyond question its greatest attraction in a scientific point of view, and experience has shown that the existing balk rule needs rewording badly in order to give the base runner an equally fair chance to get in his good work with that of the batsman or fielder.

I beg once more to call attention to the absolute necessity of amending the rule governing the pitcher's position. It is surprising to me that the existing rule has been allowed to remain in force so long. The idea when it was introduced was to

BASE BALL

Supplies, Spalding League Ball, Mits, Masks, Score Books, etc. Managers should send for samples and special rates. Every requisite for the National Game. Complete Catalogue of Spring and Summer Sports free A. G. SPALDING & BROS., New York, Chicago, Phila.

prevent the pitcher from having too great a width of ground for his preliminary movements by reducing the width of the box from 4 feet to 24 inches, but in doing this they left here a freedom of movement open to far more serious objection than the old box had, as it enabled him, for one thing, to violate the balk rule with impunity, and for another to lessen the distance between his position and the home plate. To improve the box I suggest the amendment giving the pitcher six feet of space within which to make his forward step, making the standpoint of his pivot foot on the back line of his box, and lessening the width of the position to three feet, or even less if desired; but I think three feet will suffice. I do not advocate four feet, as I see stated.

This will give him a box which will yield him space for due freedom of movement in making his preliminary forward step, while by confining that step within the three feet in width space he will be prevented from violating the balk rule as was done in 1896. With this six feet by three feet box he will have all the chance to make his "feint" to throw to a base without stepping beyond it, while a better opportunity will be given the base runner for his skill in stealing a base, something that is needed at present, unless it is desired to check base stealing, which is so attractive a feature of the game. But this will do for the present. A Happy New Year to all.
HENRY CHADWICK.

SAVANNAH'S SIGHT

Of the Promised Land in Southern Base Ball.

Savannah, Ga., Jan. 3.—Editor "Sporting Life": Manager Al McFarland, of the new Savannah Club, believes there is a bright outlook for the new Southeastern League. He writes: "The problem of a permanent base ball organization for the South has been solved. For years the largest cities of the South have tried to establish a base ball league that would be a success, but the long jumps necessary in the old Southern Association have been the stumbling blocks. The railroads ate up all the profits, and finally put the struggler in the grave. Now to overcome this great drawback the gentlemen back of the newly organized Southern League have hit on the right point. The cities are all capable of supporting first-class teams, and as the circuit is compact the railroad jumps are comparatively short. Thorough, experienced base ball, as well as business, men are at the head of this League. I have every reason to believe that the Southeastern League will be a decided success.

THE BANNER YEAR.
"I look for 1897 to be a banner season in base ball circles, and with good management, short railroad jumps and good umpires there is sure to be money in base ball, and in this League in particular. I believe it is the intention of the gentlemen connected with our League to furnish the patrons with first-class, clean, snappy ball playing. These gentlemen are experienced and know just what the people want in the way of base ball, and they will endeavor to cater accordingly. Mr. Dick Bousche, president of the Southeastern League, is one of the shrewdest men connected with the game, and with such an able man at the head to pilot the affairs of the Association and, having the interests of the League at heart, he will bring the infant up to a healthy body.

ROOM FOR TWO LEAGUES.
"I have always contended that there was room for two leagues in the South, the eastern section and western section. The Southeastern fills the bill in the eastern section. Now let Evansville and Terre Haute and one or more other cities organize a Southwestern or central circuit, and the permanency of base ball in the South is established. The Southeastern will be a success, and has come to stay. I wish to lay special stress on the umpire. A bad staff of incompetent umpires will do the game a great deal of harm. I hope we will be fortunate enough to have a staff of umpires with good reputation, who are honest and sober.

THE LOCAL TEAM.
"I have not as yet completed my team, and cannot give out many names. I have several deals on for some 18-karat men, and I expect to have a team equal to any in the South. I have five men already signed who have had several years of experience, and have never hit below the .300 mark. Their averages last season ranged from .316 to .393. With three A1 pitchers and a team of evenly balanced men in hitting, fielding and base running I hope to be right in the hunt for the pennant."

SIGNED BY SMITH.

The Norfolk Manager Gives His Correct List of Players to Date.

Knoxville, Tenn., Jan. 2.—Editor "Sporting Life":—I saw in this week's "Life," dated January 2, in your "Condensed Dispatches," that I had signed some men that I never had any correspondence with. I have not signed Birmingham, Armour, Hargrove, Lampe, Stockdale and Reiman, and I have not sold Gilroy or Snyder, but I did let Cleve go. As to Jenkins, I never heard of him or outfielder McCann.

The men I have signed are pitchers George Pfannmiller, Fred Clausen, Guy Wilson, T. O. Sechrist, John Gilroy and E. J. Newton; first base, C. A. Shaffer; second base, Jack Wentz; short stop, D. C. Leahy; third base, Al Weddige; catchers: M. E. Heydon, B. F. Snyder, George R. Nie; outfielders, J. Welth, W. A. Smith, and I expect to land another outfielder.

Yours, truly,
W. A. SMITH,
Manager Norfolk B. B. C., '97.