



CREAHAN'S CHAT.

THE BENEFIT TO M'LAUGHLIN FALLS THROUGH.

Local Journalists and Management—
The Goat and the Elephant—Centennial Reminiscences—A Generous(?) Pawnbroker, Etc.

Thursday, 28th inst., is the date set for the testimonial benefit to Edward McLaughlin at the Winter Circus, this city. The building, it is said, is capable of seating about 5000 people. According to the arrangements of the committee in charge of the programme the attraction will be probably the greatest ever witnessed at any similar affair given in this country. Among those announced to appear are Frank Ives, Jacob Schaefer, George F. Slosson, William F. Sexton, Maurice Daly, Dudley Kavanagh, Edward McLaughlin, Alfred D'Oro, the champion pool player; W. A. Spinks, Yank Adams, the finger expert; W. P. Foss, Professor Kaalus and the Hoppe children, who are said to be prodigies at billiards.

This vast array of experts in one night must of necessity make the programme very long, even if the games are short between the players. There are to be two tables in the hall, a carom and pool or pocket table. Playing on each table will be simultaneously. Those who do not admire pool can watch billiards, while those who prefer pool are not obliged to look at billiards. It is not exactly the sort of programme that we should make out, but it is at least novel and promises to give the public plenty for their money. As Edward McLaughlin is entitled to the present testimonial it is to be hoped that the result will be a financial success.

Since the foregoing was written the committee in charge of the testimonial has decided "to postpone it indefinitely," which probably means that it will not take place either now or in the near future. This decision was the result of a meeting which took place in this city on Sunday last, the details of which we shall refer to later on.

Local journalists are somewhat disposed to be cautious and cannot relish the idea of being "turned down," as they call it, whenever they lend their aid to billiard tournaments, exhibitions or contests in this city. The mistake which these gentlemen make, which no doubt is of the head and not the heart—for where is the journalist who is not more heart than head, even if he has more than an abundance of the latter—is in not clinging to their mission or sphere pure and simple as journalists, and not dabbling in the ever vexed and always unsatisfactory managerial arena. The writer has handled and managed billiard tournaments, matches and contests in this city for fully a quarter of a century, and never to our recollection did we receive so much as "thanks" but on one occasion, when the late John Randolph Heiser thanked us for managing a contest which we believe he won. He played so frequently and lost so often that he could afford to be magnanimous on that occasion. Indeed, away off in the 70's, when we had to be both stakeholder and manager, a match did not result to the satisfaction of all parties and, having made up our mind to hold onto the money until the players should decide who it belonged to, our brains might have been blown out had we not requested them to "blaze away," conscious as we were that they could not hit what did not exist. No mentally well balanced journalist should ever be guilty of the error of attempting to handle or manage a billiard tournament. The untangling of a bundle of rattlesnakes is child's play compared with it. The only professional that we can now recall who ever made any pretense at success in this line was Michael Grady, and he was never known to approach them without a club. But even Mr. Geary has become disgusted and for years past has been living in Coney Island, and whenever a professional expert comes near him he throws (?) him into the ocean.

A new and unexpected industry has started up in this city. It is the utilization of goat shanks for Zanzibar ivory. The history of the goat is essentially entwined with romance. After living on old boots, tomato cans, cast-off billiard table slabs and other such palatable morsels the goat finally goes to the "neck" and dies. Zanzibar ivory is generally conceded to be rather an expensive article, especially to put on the points of cues for \$1 per dozen. The goat has solved the mystery, which now accounts for the fact that all clubs are not only to have "fast cushions" but Simon pure goat-shanked tips at the pries quoted.

It is rumored that Mr. Sol Allinger, manager and proprietor of the Loraine Hotel

room, intends to retire from that place at the expiration of his present lease in consequence of his inability to make the room pay. This room has all the advantages of a hotel, and is probably one of the finest rooms in the city. Mr. Allinger is not only a man of very considerable experience, but he is probably one of the most polished room keepers to be met anywhere. By nature and instinct he seems to be a gentleman, a compliment which cannot be often paid to public men, or not justly. The location of his room is unfortunate. It is so situated that it is not up or downtown. Like most of the uptown rooms it has no day trade, while at night it is "betwixt and between," and loses both. Mr. Allinger, it is said, intends to go into business in the West. Just where he proposes to go has not yet been decided. It is certain, however, that wherever this man goes he will have the best wishes of Philadelphians, while as a young room keeper he is not likely to be improved upon.

James Tate, the nephew of Edward McLaughlin, one of the most promising of our young professional billiard experts, has practically retired from billiards. For more than a year past he has been a special detective and will in all probability make this the business of his life, as his father is one of the best-known detectives of this city.

John Cline, it is said, will be the next tenant of the billiard room at the Loraine Hotel. Mr. Cline is at present in charge of Baumblatt's room, on Broad street above Columbia avenue. Our information that Mr. Cline had purchased this room was an error, or a misunderstanding, as that information came to us from Mr. Cline himself.

Edward McLaughlin recently paid this city a very brief visit, while Harry J. Bergman paid an equally flying trip to New York a few days ago.

There should be some handshaking in Philadelphia during the McLaughlin testimonial. Not, indeed, since the Centennial tournament of '76, will there be such an array of professional experts here; and it is to be hoped that some of the old-timers who are professionals, but not experts, will grace the occasion with their presence. Schaefer is the one great expert of to-day who was practically great in '76 who did not play in that tournament. Sexton at that time was what Frank Ives is to-day, while Slosson and Daly ranked next, or practically so. Dudley Kavanagh's laurels were green nearly a generation before the Centennial was thought of, while that "old offender," Yank Adams, was scarcely known at that time. James Byrnes was treasurer of the Centennial tournament, or at least was placed in the box office, which was practically the same. Christian Bird, now in the Old Men's Home, was then a very prominent figure identified with the tournament. A. F. Troeschler, who has played so prominent and honorable a figure in Eastern billiards for nearly twenty years past, was then in the West, while L. F. Silva was, if we are not in error, a member of the firm of Kavanagh & Decker. Matthew Delaney, who by the way, we have lost sight of, was then a very prominent and formidable figure in American billiards. All of these distinguished men should be present at the McLaughlin testimonial, if only to recall old reminiscences. Our house, hand and heart are open and ready to receive one and all with true Quaker hospitality.

A local pawnbroker informs us that he has eighteen sets of new ivory pool balls which he is anxious to sell at five dollars per set! When this "child of sin" called on us, and gave us this information, we very naturally thought that he was either crazy or inebriated, in view of the fact that ivory pool balls are worth about \$110 per set at the present day. A slight conversation with him, however, soon changed our mind, as he was neither the one nor the other. Upon this discovery we ventured to assure him that the balls must be composition, and even at that price, if "as good as new," as represented, they would be cheap. We have not seen the balls, as we declined the honor of paying a visit to "Your Uncle." It is more than probable that the balls are composition, as there are probably not eighteen sets of ivory pool balls in this city. Indeed, the only room we know of in this city which uses ivory pool balls is that at the Continental Hotel. And yet, pawnbrokers are such consummate masters of their craft that they are not often "taken into camp." It is evident, however, that on this occasion the one referred to was, as one good ivory pool ball is worth at least five dollars.

JOHN CREAHAN.

CHICAGO NEWS.

What is Going on in Windy City Billiard Circles.

Chicago, Jan. 16.—Editor "Sporting Life:"—the majority of the short stops who took part in the recent Bensinger Hall tournament are now located at Rock Island as star attractions in Catton's new Academy. Gallagher, Harrison, Sutton and Maggiori are playing all kinds of games there, and judging from reports received in this city the venture will prove a success, providing the authorities do not interfere as was the case here when a similar plan was inaugurated at Schaefer's old room now controlled by Charley Parker.

Speaking of Schaefer, we expect that he and Spinks will reach this city next week, and I anticipate they will give exhibitions here as they have been doing in Cincinnati, Indianapolis and other places.

A CURIOUS EPISODE

occurred a few days ago. Some enthusiastic admirers of Byron Gillette, of Cincinnati sent out a broad challenge that they would back their man to play anyone in the country at three cushion carroms for almost any amount. The local press, voicing the views of many lovers of billiards in Chicago, at once settled upon Jake Schaefer as their champion. When Jake gets into town next

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week I expect that this will be the first move in the billiard world. If he is agreeable to play Mr. Gillette, Jake will find all the money he requires ready to back him at a moment's notice.

THE MOST BENEFICIAL.

I think I referred some time ago to the dearth of individual matches which has been characteristic of billiards during the past few years, and expressed the belief that when games of that kind were the rule and not the exception billiards were in a far healthier condition than they have been since the players have contented themselves with sitting down and waiting, Micawber like, for something to turn up in the shape of a tournament with a big fat purse to be spread out among the three or four who finish in front. The interest which even this talk of a match between Gillette and Schaefer has aroused has satisfied me I am right. While tournaments are unquestionably of great benefit to the game, and ergo, the business generally, still there ought to be more individual contests than there have been in late years. The wholesome rivalry which will naturally arise, and the friends and admirers which each contestant will surely obtain, no matter whether he loses or wins, will give added zest to contests when all players meet in a tournament. Instead of these encounters being losing ventures, as they have been for years, they would then pay and pay well, as the public would flock to see their favorites play.

NOT WITHOUT MERIT.

There is no doubt that the Bensinger Hall tournament just closed paid its projectors, George Siler and Louis Bensinger, but they were under no expense. There was no hall rent charged, no printing to pay for, and as Siler was his own manager there was another saving effected. The entrance fee, which was an ad valorem rate of 25 cents, was thus practically clear profit. This tournament, therefore, is no criterion by which contests, held in public assembly rooms, where the managers are under enormous expense, can be judged. The environment is entirely different.

Tournaments in billiard rooms do good, however, and without them billiards would be dead in Chicago. There are contests of this description in progress all over the city. They are small affairs to be sure, and some of the players might find it hard to average two, but they keep billiards moving in the right direction and therefore they are beneficial. The room keepers are likewise steadily at work issuing challenges for the Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company's trophy, given during the late tournament. The last battle was between Joe Capron, who played 260 points, and A. M. Clarke, who is graded at 130, and who won first honors in the tourney. There are two series to each of these contests. One game is played according to the handicap at one room, and another game on the same terms at the other room. Clarke won the first half at Capron's place, beating the short stop champion by a score of 130 to 218. When they met the following night Capron had 302 to make before Clarke corraled 130, and he did it in good style, averaging over six. Lloyd Jevne has challenged Capron, and these two will try conclusions on Thursday and Friday, the 21st and 22d. Lloyd, who took Ed Helm's place, is in at 200 points.

A COMING MATCH.

In a few days I expect to hear of a match being arranged between Jevne and Will Michaels, who has been in the employ of Harry Rhines since the latter opened his room on Adams street. These are two promising youngsters, and have good billiards in them. They were schoolmates together and each took to billiards like a duck to water. If Michaels would keep a galvanic battery in his pants pocket to infuse a little more life and ambition into him he would, in the opinion of good judges, become quite a factor in the world of billiards. But he is too much like the fat boy in "Pickwick," bubbling over with good nature, kind and generous to a fault, but slow to appreciate the chances before him. Michaels is liable to drift along, enjoying the good things as they float by, entirely oblivious of the fact that some day the stream will run dry and there will be no more drifting.

WEST SIDER.

BRUNELL'S GOOD THING.

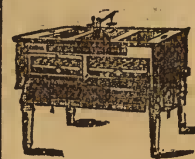
He Has a Daily Racing Paper and Will Publish a Record Book.

Our former Cleveland and Chicago correspondent, Frank Brunell, ex-secretary of the Players' League, now has a fine thing in his Chicago racing paper "Daily Racing Forum," which has become a feature and fixture in the Western racing world. Frank's paper is published at 126 Dearborn street, Chicago. About Jan. 25 Brunell will issue a year book of records. It will be of 100 pages in both paper and leather covers, and sell at popular prices, 35 cents in paper and 50 cents in leather. Racing records are most prominent in the book. Two handicap tables are published, with an average speed table of all tracks, and keys to handicap tables over races to which the figures of the first were applied. The racing records of all track and records to date of the turf and complete summary of the pugilism of 1896 (with an index) are within the book. It also covers horse and jockey outlaw lists, base ball, athletics, sculling, and is a general compendium of American sporting records.



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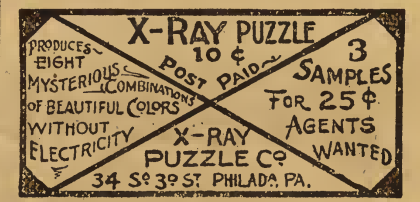
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BASE BALL NEWS.

IRWIN IN IT.

This Astute Manager Will Run the Toronto Club.

Toronto, Ont., Jan. 18.—Editor "Sporting Life:"—Arthur Irwin, ex-manager of the New York Base Ball Club, has completed his deal for the purchase of the Toronto franchise in the Eastern League. He has leased the grounds at Hanlon's Point. His outfield will be Casey, Freeman and Wright. The players who go along with the franchise are Luterberg, Wagner, Diene, Staley, Dean and Sanford. The Ferry company, from whom Irwin has leased the ground, has promised to run boats every fifteen minutes in the afternoon between 3 and 4 o'clock. His opening games will be arranged for with the Washington (D. C.) Club, the first one being on Easter Monday, April 12. The club plays also in Washington on the two succeeding days.

IRWIN'S PLANS.

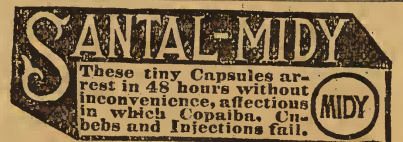
Mr. Irwin considers he has a good bargain. The sale of Jud Smith does not worry him at all, as it is one of his fortes to develop young players. He will sign two Canadian League men, and hopes to make fast players therefrom. In fact, Mr. Irwin says he thinks he can turn out a couple of good Canadians every year he remains in Toronto. Hearing that Varsity wanted a coach, Mr. Irwin thought he would recommend several good ones, and if in the city himself in April he would be glad to go up to the lawn and give them a few lessons in batting and the hit and run game.

PROMISING PLAYERS.

Frank McDermott, of Providence, R. I., at present studying at St. Michael's College, this city, has been mentioned to Irwin as being rather good goods, and he may give him a trial to the spring. "Give me a pitcher," he says, "who has speed and strength and I will make something of him."

Catcher William Baker, of last season's Hamiltons, of the Canadian League, whom Manager Irwin, of the Torontos, has his eye on, stood second in the batting averages of that organization last season, with the magnificent average of .424. At present writing he is still holding off. Minor league managers should not overlook this coming catcher. He is wintering at Hamilton, Can.

Chub Collins, the well-known second baseman, of the Hamilton, Rochester, Buffalo and other clubs, is wintering at Dundas, Ont. He will likely manage a Canadian League Club the coming season.



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