# Honesty Makes National Game Huge Success

WHEN they say that virtue is its own reward they do not refer to baseball. Not necessarily. When bankers, merchants, physicians, ministers, lawyers, professors, chauffeurs, laborers, office boys and chorus girls to the aggregate number of perhaps forty million pay admission in the course of one season to the ball parks of the United States of America, those in charge of the sport find that honesty is remunerative, more than—nothing less. In fact, that a big paying proposition.

Baseball haters of the present day have become such because the public believes the notion of game is conducted on the principle of a fair field and no favor. They look on the players as being in true to the interest of their clubs as the needs to the pens.

Baseball did not always hold the cherished ite that it now seems to possess. A time there was when to be a professional base ball player was to be relegated to the rear in the public regard. Baseball then was an excuse for betting. Crooked play followed gambling as the night the day. Women did not flock to ball games then. Even the wives and daughters of the players preferred not to be seen at the ball grounds. When they did attend a game they applauded in whispers from behind the clubhouse door. The bar at a ball park used to be the center of interest. Bets were placed on the umpire's action, and there the odds, together with various degrees of illumination, were entered.

Pitchers, shortstops, even the captains of teams were not too overcome to patronize the betting facilities of the bar. On their way to the field before the game players used to dopeout with the bartender such wagers on the outcome as they felt they had a moral right to risk in view of their duty to their families. It is now history that sometimes these players would bet on the investigations of the opposite side. The opposite side often won. A classic illustration of the unlovely possibilities of such a system is the case of a pitcher who was seen to divide $700 with two of his able supporters. The money was counted out before the game on a hotel bed. If the players had been less able, perhaps, they could have been secured for a smaller amount, but $700 was their price for throwing a deciding game.

Along about 1875 ministers spent almost as much time preaching against baseball as against dancing and the liquor evil.

In 1875 a revolt, led by W. A. Hulbert, owner of the Chicago club, was organized. It had one object—to make the game a clean, honorable sport, free from gambling. The strong rule against gambling was disregarded by the New York and Philadelphia members of the National League of Professional Baseball Clubs. They went out of the organization and for seven years New York and Philadelphia were without league baseball.

The championship was Hulbert's grasp about this time. Four players were found to be taking bribes to throw a game. They were catapulted out of the league. They never came back. "Nix, forever" was the decision of the directors of the new anti-gambling outfit when those men made numerous appeals for reinstatement. One man sent his wife to Hulbert. She said that the league had reduced her and her children to hunger. "Here's a hundred dollars; take it and eat," said Hulbert. "Come to me again if your husband doesn't get work. I will never reinstate him."

It was strong medicine, but it saved the game. The lesson burned its message on the minds and hearts of the players everywhere. Gambling was taken by the hand and led to the entrance of the ball park and accorded less than fifteen seconds to get away. From that day the league has regarded gambling as the cancer of the game.

Undoubtedly the players as a class are today the cleanest lot of professional athletes in the world. In the '70's the fans used to say: "Aw, they threw the game. When does the host a serious charge of that kind now.

During the desperate pennant race in the American league in 1908 a single decision by Sheridan on a play at second base killed the hopes of St. Louis and a day later a decision in the first inning, a ball sailing into White Sox instituted was a strike, ended Chicago's hopes. In this season Frank Clarke was rolled out at third base and the fate of the National league season at Chicago, and Pittsburg lost the pennant by that decision. But there was not a whisper of criticism regarding the two decisions. Fans alone blasted the fondest hopes, perhaps, that baseball ever aroused.

If the honesty of the game were not so universally and absolutely recognized, the numerous situations always manifesting themselves where the old-fashioned baseball work could do the most harm and where it would lead to doubts in the minds of the fans, and the game would die. Except for the spirit that pervades the contestants and players of the game, that they must be constant as the northern star, the support of families for a week run to be temporarily withdrawn from the square deal made financially so advantageous that it would not be a cause for surprise if a cop slipped now and then.

An assault is played today it is practically impossible for questionable operations to escape into the memories of the diamond. Blow the great baseball game has survived the attacks during the heat of battle upon the honesty of purpose, never feel any deep doubt concerning its unpurchasable allegiance to the square deal. If umpires were late spotless objects the fact that they will find a reason on as nearly flawless from a moral point of view as it is possible to obtain in an imperfect world. The lemonade must have largely imagination, but the virility and honor of the gladiators in the arena below they know are above criticism. An umpire may not walk to suit them, but the fans, surrounding him, would hesitate to make assaults during the heat of battle upon the honesty of purpose, never feel any deep doubt concerning his