"BASEBALL YEAR OF PROSPERITY," SAYS FOSTER

Interesting Prospectus That Eastern *and* Western Fans Have Looked Forward to--What the Star Players Think *of* Prospects of the Approaching Season--Something About the Cracks

YEAR OF PROSPERITY.

(By Ban Johnson, President of the American League.)

Some of the wonders of the American league seem to be doubtful as to whether this season will be as prosperous as the two or three preceding. I am more optimistic than they are, as I believe that it will be more prosperous. I have come to the conclusion that baseball enthusiasts are attracted to the game as much for a relief from business cares as for other reasons, and unless there is an extreme business depression baseball will not suffer. In any event, the American league is better equipped for a fast race in 1908 than it has been in some other years, and that will attract spectators, no matter what the conditions may be. Our teams are well enough matched to keep everybody guessing as to the winner.

By John B. Foster.

WHAT need to say how everybody welcomes the first balmy breath of the south wind, that sure forerunner of the approach of spring which comes perforce, if it follows poetical precedent, tripping o'er the lea, with flocks of nice little sheep, skipping fawns, dancing nymphs and rusty brown ball players in its wake.

Nor is a sad confession to make, but one much to the credit of the sterling American people for their good natured participation in the incidents and the details of a fine national sport, that not least of their appreciations is that for the "rusty brown ball player," who has been tanned and baked by the southern sun while his friends and his future clientele have been fighting away pneumonia and influenza in the last rally of the forces of nature against the all conquering and tireless sun, whose march to the north is unchecked by gale or tempest.

It is almost needless to say that the baseball season of 1907 was in every way the best in the history of the pastime, not only from the standpoint of the professional, but from that of the amateurs.

Yet it would hardly be fair to the year that has gone to omit mention of the fact of its greatness in a forecast of the year that is to come. It is by the past that we are able to judge the future in baseball, as well as in other affairs of our busy world.

Quality of Games.

In attendance, in the quality of the games, in the deportment of the players, in the interest taken by the public and in the incidents of the baseball races there has been no year the equal of that of 1907. It is true that here and there were the bitter disappointments of the cities which failed to see a championship team, but it is also true that disappointment in one city is not without its corresponding elation in another, and in a measure there is always an established balance which is to the good of everybody.

The failure of yesterday in baseball is always the hope for tomorrow. There are cities in the major leagues which have yet to see their championship nine, and there are cities in the minor leagues which have struggled for years with the faith that is born of gift to win, and seemingly are no nearer the goal of success than they were years ago. Yet the wheel of fortune may stop this season on the slip that corresponds to that place, which they bear in the league with which they are connected, and all the regrets of years gone will be forgotten in the joy of the present.

It has come to a pass in baseball where attendance is no longer reckoned by thousands, but by millions. The wisest computer of statistics has yet to establish a satisfactory basis upon which the total attendance of baseball games in 1907 can be estimated. It is possible here and there to ascertain from a league secretary how many persons patronized his games during the season if he is inclined to give the information, and it is also possible to make estimates—reasonably accurate, perhaps—where the information is refused, but even when all this is done, who is going to give the accurate figures for the patronage of amateur games, or one third? One might as well attempt to take the census of the United States in half a year with a single regiment of soldiers.

It is known that more persons attended the games of the major and minor leagues than ever before. It is known that the world's championship series at its beginning attracted crowds fully up to the records of other years. It is known that more spectators were present at college games than saw those contests in 1906, and so it follows throughout all the baseball world. It never will be known how many persons witnessed amateur games, and it is safe to say that for every spectator at a professional game there were three at amateur games, which were scattered through every state from the far off pine trees in the hills of Maine to the mammoth sequoias of the Pacific slope.

Under the existing rules the quality of the national sport must have commended itself to these millions of American citizens or they simply would not have taken the trouble to seek for them.

Many Arguments.

There have been arguments pro and con as to whether baseball of the present is up to the standard of that of the past. Some there are, with a loyalty which is praiseworthy and a zeal which is commendable, who, in recalling the deeds of the past and the pleasure which they derived from the games of the veterans, assert stanchly that the sport is no whit improved over what it was. Others, less impressed with the story of the history of that which is gone, set the players of the present on a higher pinnacle than those of a decade or so ago.

After all, what difference does it make? Certainly baseball has not deteriorated and has not lost in popularity, and may it not be true that under prevailing conditions those of both generations witnessed equally exciting games? In the eighties we had not the gloves for the fielders that are a part of the sport of the newer century. In the eighties the pitching distance was shorter than it is now, and the pitching style wholly different, and in those years there was an absence of the newer generation of batters, who accomplish feats with the bat that were not even considered a part of the game. The bunt and the "chop" and the quick, speedy wrist action were the great exception rather than the half constant rule.

The organization of baseball never has been so perfect nor on such a logical basis as it is at present, and woe betide the man or men who endeavor to upset it. He who would lay a charge of dynamite beneath his own home to destroy that which it had taken him years of his best life to erect would be considered verging upon insanity; and the man who attempts to pull down the house of baseball, that has been built upon the foundation of experience, is neither a friend to the pastime nor a friend to the public which gives it such unstinted and loyal support.

If there are ways to improve the present baseball fabric, the proper manner to bring them into effect is by sane and logical action, which shall have the unanimous support of all who are concerned, and not by ruthless measures which shall precipitate strife into a sport that even now has received and weathered too many body thrusts from its own alleged supporters.

The strength of the present baseball situation is demonstrated most strongly in the minor leagues. More and more are they better able to support themselves than they have been. It is true that they receive assistance to the extent that they are paid large sums by the major leagues for the players whom they develop, but it is also true that under the present admirable system they are well recompensed for developing those players; whereas, if there were freebooting and unlicensed liberty in baseball, the minor league owner would be plucked regularly at the end of every season, with naught to reward him for his patience and his loyalty to his public.

Life of Minor Leagues.

More minor leagues lived through the season of 1907 than did through that of 1906. More lived through 1906 than were able to withstand the adversities of 1905, and more are likely to live and prosper through 1908 than did through 1907, all because the minor leagues are on a substantial footing. They know their position, they know their possibilities, so far as their relations to the large leagues are concerned, and their greatest risk is in their ability to put together such clubs as shall command the support of their patrons.

For these reasons it is fair to assume that the season to come shall benefit the promoters of baseball, and it is certain that if the promoters are benefited the players will be benefited correspondingly, for the days are rapidly passing

Glade

away where a league fades out in the middle of the year, and leaves the players without recompense for the past and with no surety for the future.

Business reverses may play their part in reducing the gross incomes of all leagues. That is a contingency from which no club or organization of clubs is exempt. Nevertheless with the perfect understanding which exists between leagues, as is the case at the present time, there is no owner, who is likely to be deprived of his rights so long as he faithfully lives up to the requirements of the baseball regulations to which he has bound himself to agree.

The maintenance of this stability in the control of baseball means its existence. The radical, who would demand that the organization be shattered, because the rights of the player are trammeled, as is asserted by some who have not delved beyond the surface of the motive underlying the control of the game, positively cannot conceive the condition of anarchy which would quickly follow that state of affairs which would permit the strong to rob the weak regardless of consequences. Such is exactly the logical conclusion of any upheaval in baseball that would permit clubs to employ players in a free market regardless of consequences.

Owners in cities like New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Pittsburg, Cincinnati, Cleveland, and so on, could jump into the market, overbid all others, loot teams right and left, subscribe to no conditions of fair dealing among themselves, and finally place the sport in that attitude where the owner of today would not know whether he would have a team tomorrow.

Thus the integrity of the pastime would be shattered, for players would jump hither and thither as offers for their services were increased, and would hold their allegiance to one city no longer than the next could make a proposition to pay them a few dollars more per game.

The necessities of baseball demand that, as near as possible, all of its details be kept on an equitable basis. Few players are ready to jump into the major leagues at the first call, and the enormous salary rolls that are carried by the larger organizations at the present time are contingent upon the fact that the players obtain their first grounding in the game in such ways and through such leagues as the sturdy organizations which are now scattered from one ocean to the other.

These are facts which are worth the attention of all who are interested in baseball. They need not necessarily be confined to the players and to the owners, but they are good precepts to be instilled in the minds of the patrons who certainly cannot be averse to partaking of the knowledge which has to do with their pet pastime.

Wise the man who is able to look so far ahead as to name the winner of a championship in a baseball race. Form in the national pastime is an elusive quantity. In its truest sense it can only be determined by combining the achievements of the past with the age of the player, a correct understanding as to whether he has reached the zenith of his fame, or has passed it, a knowledge of his possibilities, in cooperation with other players, and sometimes, most difficult of all, whether he will assimilate with the group of men who have been chosen from hundreds to be his companions for a baseball year.

During the winter the owners of the clubs in the American league have been twirling the baseball kaleidoscope. They have spun it around and around, peering at its attractive combinations, first one, then the other, until they have confronted the American league cities with so many radical changes that one must almost grope blindly toward the light after looking at the new formations which have been developed by the managers.

These changes must not be taken lightly as those of men who are trusting to luck, but as plays which have been made on the winter diamond to produce results on the summer field.

Less Conservative.

Less conservative, in some respects, than the National league owners, the American league owners jump daringly at conclusions which heretofore have mostly turned out for the best, but which, with an unfortunate run of luck, might result in discomfiture.

Possibly the very daring of their undertaking has been a factor in their success. Assuredly they are not afraid to shift the panorama of their playing season that new pictures may be developed with each succeeding year.

Not many years ago the Boston American league club won the championship of its organization. Then followed the fate that seems to be inevitable to a championship organization. It disintegrated of itself. No players were taken away from it by reason of a baseball war; nor were any of consequence sold, but the team shriveled up and went the way of all baseball championship nines.

Of its players today there were none who were champions except among the pitchers and catchers. That wonderful pair, Ferris and Parent, are torn apart and playing in widely separated teams. Collins, too, is gone, yet Boston enters upon the race for the coming year with a team which is the beginning of what its owner calls the regeneration of baseball in his city, so far as his nine is concerned.

A new infield, to a large extent, will face Boston enthusiasts. Unglaub at first, Laporte at second, Wagner at shortstop and Lord at third are to take the place of men who once held the favor of Boston baseball enthusiasts in a vise.

Thoney, Sullivan, Gessler and Barrett will compete for outfield honors. Fast men, all of them, but not one with the reputation for hard hitting of Freeman, or Stahl, who is dead.

Behind the bat one of the greatest catchers in the United States, Criger. In company with him another who is good when he devotes himself to the game as he should, "Eddie" McFarland, formerly of the White Sox.

For pitchers the veteran Young, still a power in the box, and Winter and Tannehill, with experience to aid them, while Harris, Burchell, Morgan and others are considered possibilities of great importance. It would hardly be possible to call this combination a championship winning team, yet here lies the difficulty to effect a comparison of its form. May it not do much better than scores deem possible by reason of the fact that other teams of the league are almost as greatly changed and must perfect their team work from the beginning with every bit as much difficulty as will fall to Boston.

Sweeping changes have been made in the New York nine. Clarke Griffith was told in 1907 that his team was weak in the box and that he could not hope to succeed in 1908 unless he had pitchers who could be of more assistance to the nine than those who played in 1907.

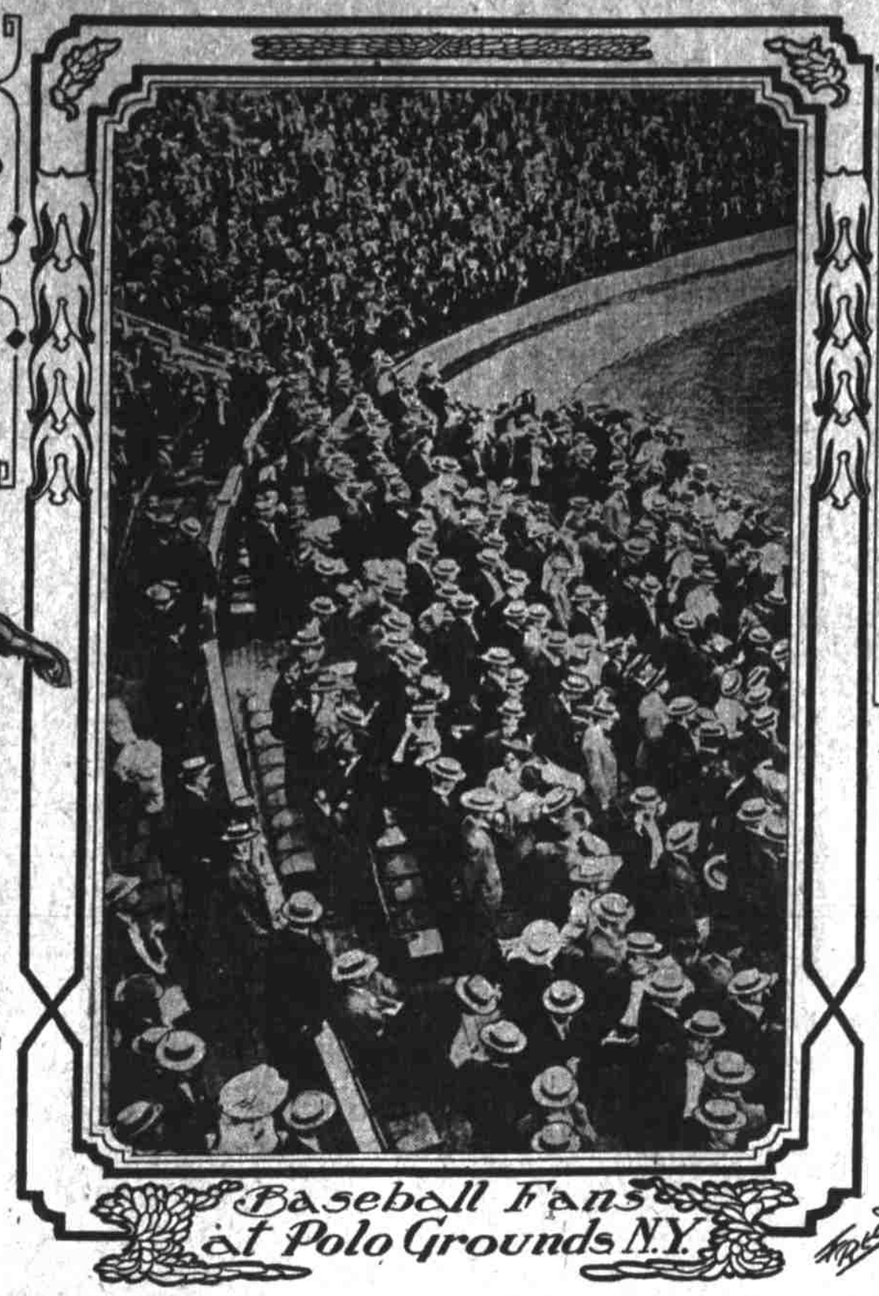
This opinion was appreciated and Griffith has made radical moves to bring pitchers to his team who will aid it. Williams and Hoffman were lifted from the team of last year and swung to St. Louis with a cash bonus in exchange for Glade, Niles and Hemphill. Williams had been with the Highlanders from the day that a New York American league team had been a possibility. The man who had been the keystone of the infield was sacrificed to secure a pitcher who seems to be seasoned and who may be at the height of his game. Griffith takes the chance because he believes that it is the one salvation for his club's weakness. Some think he gave too much for the return that will come to him, yet the trade is in keeping with the slashing moves for which American league managers are famous.

To assist Glade, if he should be as good as is hoped, the manager of the Highlanders has Doyle, good when he is good and not able to stop a rush when he is not at his best; Chesbro, a problem, like any other pitcher who has seen the tide go out and leave him on the shore; Newton, now and then impossible to hit and never wholly certain; Orth, steady and good for his average number of victories; Hogg, a winner if used infrequently; Neuer, conjectural; Lake, a splendid minor league pitcher, who may develop into a steady winner. Taken as a whole, it is a stronger pitching staff than last year. Hence Griffith seems to have made a move which is of benefit to him. But the problem of having these men on the field is still to come.

In his infield he is more at home, except that he has to find that Niles will fill the place which Williams has left. Of Moriarity, Elberfeld and Chase there is no question. Their merits are known. Chase has no superior, and perhaps but two in the world can approach him. Moriarity is a good fielding third baseman and Elberfeld a brilliant shortstop with an uncertain arm, which is not the detriment that it might seem, owing to the phenomenal ability of the first baseman.

In the outfield are Conroy, Stahl, Keeler and Hemphill. It is a good outfield. It can run, bat and field, and these are the qualities that all outfields should possess.

Behind the bat are Kleinow, Rickey and Blair. Here lies the greatest problem of the team. Kleinow is experienced and knows how to handle some of his pitchers. Blair is inexperienced, but very promising. Rickey is reliable and nervous.



Baseball Fans at Polo Grounds N.Y.

In one other respect, that of base running, the team shows to advantage, and if the pitching staff works with that success which is anticipated, the New York nine will be dangerous and a winning factor in close games, by reason of its ability to get runs over the plate through the speed of its individual players. Hence the New York team must be conceded elements of strength which shall have to be reckoned with from the start of the season.

No manager in the American league is less disturbed by the necessity of making changes than "Connie" Mack of the Athletics. The fortune of baseball war time and again has used him harshly, but never has disturbed his equanimity. When he lost Lajoie he set about the reconstruction of his infield as if he had forgotten that Lajoie existed. He numbered among his players one whom many have considered the greatest left-hand pitcher in the world—eccentric, almost uncontrollable, it is true—a pitcher whose good work had brought championships to Philadelphia, yet, when he left it for the good of his team he did not hesitate to sell the release of Waddell to St. Louis. Some managers would have hung to Waddell until the pitcher was aged, not for the reason that he might win for them, but that they would be afraid to permit him to go for fear that he would win for some other manager.

Mack as Manager.

Mack is one of the very few American league managers who is so well satisfied with the strength of his team that he enters upon the campaign of 1908 with practically the same nine which he had last year. His infield is Davis, Murphy, Nichols and Collins. It is true that he let Monte Cross go, but the splendid work of Nichols in 1907 warranted the release of the veteran Cross, if the manager felt that he could spare him.

His outfield is the same as last year. Nothing very wonderful about it, but good. It has been tried and has passed through the fire without being scorched. His catchers are the same, barring the extra man whom he will keep to assist Schreck and Powers. His pitchers are the same, except those of the younger element, whom he may deem worth retaining. Satisfied with Plank, Coombs, Dygert and Bender, he dropped Waddell, and will make the fight with the remaining veterans and the young blood.

It is just possible, in view of the fact that he has retained his old players, and that his system of team work will not be affected by radical changes, that he will push the Athletics to a commanding position from the start, for while the other managers are feeling their way Mack will be moving along with his customary stride, picking up games here and there by the finish and the resourcefulness of his men, with other managers still within the stage of experimenting.

Cobb

Washington.

Washington is a team almost wholly of guesswork. There is a mixture of old blood and young and not quite enough highclass calibre of either to dare to venture much in the way of positive assertion.

Behind the bat are Warner, long in service and still very capable; Street and Kahoe. Nothing phenomenal, but likely to do good work when the game is going their way.

For pitchers there is a long string of possibilities and a few old men. Hughes, Patten, Smith and Falkenberg are known quantities. None of them is a world beater. Patten, under adventitious circumstances, might shine like a star. The opportunity has not come his way. In the younger pitchers it is possible that Cantillon, the manager, has one, two or three who may develop major league strength. But there's a question which is not to be answered until they have been given their warming under the fire of the major league guns.

The infield is loose jointed and given to covering a great deal of ground, but not always with accuracy. It is not a stone wall infield. There will be days when it will hold its own against the best and others when it will be shattered by a fierce fire of hot shot from the bats of its opponents.

Cleveland.

And now comes the Cleveland club. What shall be said for that? Is it at the start to be a shipping light as of old, flickering at the finish with the inconstancy of a tallow dip?

What is there to depend upon that is different from last year, or the year before? It is true that Cleveland has had more or less trouble in vital moments by injuries to players, and there is nothing which takes the fight out of a team quicker, but with all that it is also true that Cleveland has been weak at first base for some time, and that position has given the owners of the club not a little worry.

It is asserted by Mr. Somers that he believes Cleveland to have a better pitching force this year than last. The addition of Berger is thought to have strengthened the team, for Berger, according to the Cleveland owner, is just at his best, and the nine will be greatly aided by his services. With Joss, Rhoades, Hess, Liebhart, Clarkson and some young blood it is hoped that Cleveland will make a better showing in the box.

First base is not settled, nor will it be until almost the last moment, if the determination of the owners of the club holds good. Lajoie, of course, will play second, Turner shortstop, and Bradley third, and the infield therefore will vary but little from what it has been in the past, except the possibility of a change at first.

Behind the bat Cleveland seems to be well provided for. Clarke is an energetic fellow, with a magnetic manner of getting at his work, which is a help to the team. Bemis has had much experience in the American league, and while at times he may seem a bit slow he is always steady and reliable. Davidson is a new player, found in Cleveland, concerning whom there are many favorable expressions of opinion.

The outfield will very likely be much the same as last year. The one desideratum at Cleveland is to keep the nine intact throughout the year, and in addition to that to develop a little finer system of team work than has always been in evidence on the part of the players. There has never been that close application to making runs which counts in these days, when so many baseball victories hinge on a single tally.

Detroit.

Detroit is practically unchanged. It is hardly worth while running over the roster of the players. Granted that it may be a harder task for the Detroits to win the championship this year than it was last, it must also be taken into consideration that the Detroits will have the benefit of the system of teamwork which was taught last year and which should surely be as much in evidence all through this season.

It would not be surprising to see the Detroits play some better ball. Cobb has delayed signing his contract, calling for extraordinary terms to play another year. It would come with better grace from Cobb if he had shown in the world's series that he is fully the equal of the ball player to which he pretends. The task will be much harder for him this season than it was last. Pitchers in the American league, having discovered that he has a weakness, will see to it that he is never permitted to forget it.

Detroit has fully as much chance to win the championship this year as it had last, and there the argument ends. It has no better.

Chicago.

Chicago seems to have been strengthened, not so much by a wholesale addition of new players as by a rearrangement of the infield. Much depends upon the work of Parent. If he plays ball at short as he was wont to play with Boston, the Chicago infield will perhaps be the fastest conjointly in the American league. Donahue, Davis, Parent and Tannehill are a remarkably fast quartet. Davis is as likely to become a star second baseman as he has been a star at third and shortstop. He is a natural infielder and takes to the various positions of the diamond as if he had been accustomed to play all of them.

The outfield will be much the same as it was last year. There is little probability that a new man will take the place of either Hahn or Dougherty. There are some young pitchers on the team, but they have yet to win their spurs. McFarland has been released to Boston, but Chicago will suffer little, for Sullivan has done the bulk of the catching when in condition to do so.

Chicago is a dangerous factor in the race and always will be so long as Comiskey is in control of the team to make it play ball after his ideas.

St. Louis.

At St. Louis there is another wholesale shakeup, due to the fact that McAleer has been urged to get new talent, and a great deal of it. His team is wholly problematical. There is a great mixture of men from many teams, and it will be a task to get them to play ball under one system. The infield will be quite new. With Jones at first it is probable that Williams will play second, Wallace shortstop and Ferris third base. Here is talent, but the question is whether it is talent which has seen its best and may never repeat the work of the past.

The outfield is composed of men who are fast, one of them very strong with the bat, and two of them merely clever. Hoffman, who was taken from New York, is a fine outfielder, but he never will be a wonderful batter again, unless he is cured of his timidity.

Behind the bat there are some good catchers but not all of them are men who are easy to handle, and McAleer will be at his wits' end to keep them up to the mark. All the pitchers, with little exception, verge upon the class of older men. If all of them fail to come up to expectations St. Louis will have a hard fight on its hands from the moment that the race begins.

Many of his pitchers are seasoned and know the batters of the American league thoroughly. Waddell may take a notion into his cranium to behave and pitch up to his best. If he does, St. Louis will not be easy to beat when he is in the box.

There is not a club in all the American league where a manager is confronted with a harder task to shape a successful nine than in St. Louis. Not that there are no ball players there, but the problem is to make them play ball from a winning standpoint.

What *The* Players Say

By "Willie" Keeler.
(Who Never Talks.)

I am not much on picking championship winners, but I think that the race for the pennant this year is between the New York and Chicago clubs. Some of the others will probably be playing fast ball, but when it comes to the last fight it will be the Highlanders and the Sox.

By George Edward Waddell.
(Always Willing to Talk.)

There will be nothing to the championship in the American league except the St. Louis club. I am going to pitch it to first place merely to spite the Athletics.

By George Davis.
(The Coming Second Baseman.)

Detroit will make a game fight for the championship this year, because Hugh Jennings' personality is sufficient to make any team work tooth and nail to win; but I believe we will do better than we did last season, and I should not be surprised to see a three-cornered race between New York, Chicago, and Detroit. The Athletics may be up in the race part of the year, but the Sox look good enough to me to beat any team.

By Harry Davis.
(Who Wintered in Philadelphia.)

The Athletics will do better with Waddell off the team than when he was here. Some of the players could get along with him and some of them could not. Our team work will help us against the nines which have been made over this year, and we can play better ball than some of them when they are going at their best. We have as good a chance to win the championship as any nine in the American league and better than some.

By James McGuire.
(The Good Deacon of Boston.)

A manager who talks of the championship when he has a nine on his hands which is just getting over a case of championship enlargement of the head is wasting his time. We are going to play ball the best that we know how, to win every game that we can, but as we are able to beat somebody else we shall feel so much the better. I don't say that Boston will win the championship or is likely to do so, but if I felt like talking I should say that there are other clubs in the American league that think they are going to win which will still be thinking when October is past and gone.

By Clarke Griffith.
(Discreet.)

I have run so close to the championship for so many seasons that all I have to say is that we will run closer to it than we have in the past. I don't want to annoy fate by trying to get any nearer the solution of winning the pennant before we are actually on the field, "hooked up" to win it. It isn't out of place to observe, however, that anybody who beats us will have to travel some and then continue.

By Napoleon Lajoie.
(Victim of Disappointment.)

Barring accidents, barring unruly players, barring about 40 other things which at various times have hampered the Clevelands, we have the pitching and batting strength to make a better showing than ever. If the fight narrows down to four clubs and Cleveland is one of them I don't think that Detroit will win the championship.

OREGON'S KNIGHT OF THE LIONS

How History Repeats Itself

By Mike D. Cervantes and Randall White.

HISTORY relates that when Don Quixote called out to Sancho Panza, his servant, he was buying curds of the shepherds. Summoned in such haste, Sancho knew not what to do with them, so he poured them into the helmet and hurried to his master.

"Sancho, boy," said the knight, "give me my helmet, for either I know little of adventures or that which I descry yonder is one which will oblige me to have recourse to arms."

Sancho could see nothing but a cart coming toward them, with two or three flags, by which he thought it probable it was conveying public treasure. He mentioned his conjecture to Don Quixote, whose only reply was: "Forewarned, forearmed; to be prepared is half the victory. I know by experience that I have enemies both visible and invisible, and I know not when, nor from what quarter, nor at what time, nor in what shape they may attack me."

Don Quixote then took his helmet from Sancho, and without perceiving the contents clapped it hastily upon his head. The curds, being squeezed and pressed, the whey began to run down the face of the knight, to his great consternation.

"Holy smoke! What can this mean, Sancho?" said he. "Methinks me skull is softening, or me brains melting, or I sweat from head to foot! It is surely not through fear, though I verily believe this will prove a terrible adventure."

Sancho grinned and gave him a cloth. Don Quixote took off his helmet. "By the horns of me soul!" he exclaimed, "these are curds which thou hast put there, thou unmannerly squire!"

Sancho replied with much coolness and cunning: "If they are curds, sir, I would sooner have put them into my stomach than into your worship's helmet."

"Well," said Don Quixote, "there may be something in that," and, after having wiped his head, face, beard and helmet, again put it on, and, fixing himself firm in his stirrups, adjusting his sword and grasping his lance, exclaimed: "Now come what may, I am prepared to encounter the enemy!"

They were soon overtaken by the cart with the flags, for it was moving at a rapid pace, attended only by a driver, who rode upon one of the mules, and a quiet little man sitting serenely upon the part.

Don Quixote planted himself just before them and said: "Whither go ye, brethren? What carriage is this? What does it contain, and what are those banners?"

"The cart is mine," replied the carter, "and in it are two fierce lions, which the general of O'Ran is taking as a present to the people. The flags belong to the people, to show that what is in the cart belongs to them."

"And are the lions large?" demanded Don Quixote.

"Larger never came from Africa or Spain," said the little man on the front of the cart. "I am their keeper, and in my time have had charge of many lions, but never of any so large as these. Not having eaten lately, they are now hungry; therefore, sir, stand aside, for we must make haste to the place where they are to be fed to prepare them for the grand fete on April 19."

"What!" yelled Don Quixote, with a scornful smile, "lion whelps against me! Against me, the puny monsters! And at this time of day! By yon blessed sun, by the peak of yon holy mount, those that sent them hither shall see whether I am a man to be scared by lions! Alight, my bravo; and, since you are their keeper, open the cage and turn out your savages of the desert, for in the midst of this field I will make them know who Don Quixote is, in spite of the enchanters who sent them hither to me! I vow, Don Rascal, if thou dost not instantly open that cage, with this lance I will pin thee to the cart!"

Whilst the keeper was unbarring the first gate, Don Quixote deliberated whether it would be better to engage on horseback or not; and finally determined it should be on foot, as Roxinante, his steed, might be terrified at sight of the lions. He therefore leaped from his horse, flung aside his lance, braced on his shield and drew his sword; then, slowly advancing, with marvelous courage and an undaunted heart, he planted himself before the lion's cage.

The keeper, seeing he could not avoid letting loose the lions without incurring the resentment of the angry and daring knight, set wide open the door of the cage, where lay a monster (Statement No. 1) of extraordinary size and hideous and frightful aspect.

The first thing the creature did was to turn himself round in the cage, growl in contempt, reach out a great paw and stretch himself at full length. Then he opened his cavernous mouth and yawned very leisurely, after which he threw out some half yard of red tongue, wherewith he licked and washed his face. This done he stuck his head out of the cage and stared round on all sides with eyes like redhot coals; a sight to have struck temerity itself with terror!

Don Quixote observed him with fixed attention, impatient for him to leap out of his den, that he might grapple with him and hew him to pieces.

But the generous lion, after having stared about, turned his back contemptuously upon Don Quixote, and calmly and quietly laid himself down in his cage.

Upon which Don Quixote ordered the keeper to give him some blows and provoke him to come forth. "Not on your tintype," replied the keeper; "for, should I provoke him I shall be the first whom he will tear to pieces. The lion has the door open to him and the liberty to come forth; and since he has not done so, he will not come out until the day of the great fete."

"Very good, then," said Don Quixote, "give me a certificate now, in the best form you can, of what you have seen me perform."

This done, Don Quixote said to the driver: "Now, friend, hitch up your mules again and proceed on your journey; and Sancho Panza, we shall in some way make amends for this delay."

"With all my heart," replied Sancho, "but what is to become of the lions? Are they dead or alive?"

The driver thanked Don Quixote, promising to relate this valorous exploit to the people at the fete.

"If, perchance," said Don Quixote, "they should inquire who performed it, tell them the Knight of the Lions; for I have resolved that the title I have hitherto borne, of the Knight of the Sorrowful Figure, shall be thus changed, and herein I follow, as I ever do, the ancient practice of knights errant, who changed their names and causes at pleasure."

Breaking It Gently.

From Harper's Weekly.

"Pardon me, sir," began the portly person in the railroad train to the man who sat next to him, "but what would you say if I sat on your hat?"

"Suppose you sit on it and then ask me," suggested the other.

"I did," admitted the portly person calmly.