

BALL FIELD STORIES

ODD INCIDENT THAT ONCE WON A GAME IN CHICAGO.

A Bucket of Paint Helped the Orioles to Capture the National League Pennant—The Importance of a "Color Scheme" in Batting.

One of the oddest things that ever happened on a ball field took place on the west side grounds, in Chicago, in a game against New York. Anson's men were playing the Giants, and the victory hung in the balance until in the ninth inning, with the score even, Bill Lange faced Jout Meekin and ramsped a certain double to center. There were two out, and the crowd rose with a yell of delight when Lange smote the ball, which rolled past Van Haltren.

That ball rolled on and finally disappeared. Van Haltren was on top of it, but instead of picking it up he suddenly threw himself flat on the ground, rammed his right arm into the earth and commenced reaching. Lange meantime kept on. He turned second, raced on to third, gave a look outward and then sprinted for home, scoring the winning run.

The ball had rolled into a hole in the ground from which a post had been pulled that morning, and Van Haltren had been able only to reach it with the tips of his fingers. The next day the hole was filled in.

Upon what small things the results of baseball depend can be guessed when it is known that a forty-five cent bucket of paint won the National league pennant for Baltimore two years in succession. The men who composed the three times champion Orioles all admit the fact that the bucket of paint had more to do with their pennant winning than anything else.

The facts are these: The Orioles were not hitting. They could not find out why until one day Wille Keeler remarked that the ball when pitched from the pitcher's box was the same color as the center field fence and that the ball was lost to them against the dark background. The players set themselves down to figure it out, and in the end they figured that the reason they were not hitting was because there was a lack of relief in the color scheme of the grounds. The bat boy was sent in a hurry for a pot of white paint and a patch of the fence in center field exactly on a line with the pitcher's box, and the plate was daubed white. The paint made a difference of nearly forty points per man in their batting averages that season, and they won the pennant.

After that the space in center on most of the big league ball grounds was kept clear or painted in some color that would assist the team in its hitting.

The color scheme in baseball is more important than the casual observer would suppose. For instance, the Polo grounds are one of the hardest grounds in the world for an outfielder. Back of the grand stand rises a huge bluff—"Coogan's bluff"—and the stand is built partly on the side of the hill. Naturally the shadow of the stand and the bluff lies heavy over the field as far out as second base in the late afternoon, and the outfielders have great difficulty in seeing the ball until it rises out of the shadow and above the sky line. The players learn to judge balls by the way they sound against the bat, but visiting players at the Polo grounds have a hard time judging line drives.

For years the New York players have had the advantage because of the color scheme of their grounds. In center field is a panel of color to relieve the batter's eye and show the ball in relief against it, while to mitigate the effects of the shadow sections of the front of the stand and even the bowlers on the hillside have been painted.

Those mechanical aids for batting are great things. Almost every home team has its grounds arranged for relief in color, so that they can by looking at a certain spot be certain to see the ball. It is not necessary for the ball to rise against the relief background, but it is necessary for the player's eye to be filled with the color, so that when he looks at the ball it stands out in relief against the color which still is imprinted on the retina of his eye.

One of the best hitting pitchers that ever lived, Walter Thornton, who was driven out of baseball because of the personal dislike of an official of the National league to him, had a scheme which worked well and which he claimed aided him in batting. He simply sat and held his fingers tight against his eyes for several minutes before going to bat. Shutting out all light, he claimed, rested his eyes after pitching a hard inning, and he went in to bat with eyes fresh and steady.

And how he did hit them! How he did hit them!

Pietro Gladiator Browning tried every treatment possible for his eyes to keep them clear. Smoking a cigarette on the bench was one of his ideas, and he carried an eye wash with him which he poured into his eyes just before going to bat.

Most of the schemes of players to keep their "eyes in," as they say, are ridiculous, but there is no reason why a lot of players should not follow literally the advice of the bleacherites and "see an oculist." Any good oculist can devise a color scheme that will help the batter.—Hugh S. Fullerton in Washington Star.

Knew How.

Friend (making a call)—You are not looking very robust. Do you enjoy good health? Mrs. Stayatt-Holme (with a sigh)—Indeed I do! But I hardly ever have a chance to.

Don't express a positive opinion unless you perfectly understand what you are talking about.

Only London Humor Genuine.

All the best humor that exists in our language is cockney humor. Chaucer was a cockney. He had his house close to the abbey. Dickens was a cockney; he said he could not think without the London streets. The London taverns heard always the quaintest conversation, whether it was Ben Jonson's at the Mermaid or Sam Johnson's at the Cock. Even in our time it may be noted that the most vital and genuine humor is still written about London.—Illustrated London News.

Gentlemanly Kind.

First Burglar—How'd you happen to break into Smith's house last night? Second Burglar—I was going past there yesterday, and I heard Mrs. Smith tellin' some one that she waked up three times the night before listenin' for a burglar, but nobody come. You know, I never like to disappoint a woman!—Detroit Free Press.

They May Recover.

When a couple is engaged it doesn't necessarily follow that they will never have any sense.—New York Press.

THE DYNAMITER.

He Must Be a Man of Many Parts, With Nerve and Coolness.

In an article on "Dynamite; the Power Untamable," Samuel Hopkins Adams thus describes the man who handles the explosive and his ways:

"The finished type of the dynamiter is the man who has had the ability to rise and the luck to survive long enough to graduate from the plant and become an agent. In his best embodiment the explosive agent is something of a chemist, something of a quarryman, something of an electrician, a good deal of a mineralogist and above all a man of resource and coolness. It is he who does the exploding. The factory gets notice from a railroad that a contract is open for the destruction of a ledge of rock which blocks their line of advance. Away goes the agent, with his gripsack full of ready made destruction, to look the thing over. First he draws upon his mineralogic lore to determine the nature of the rock. If it is very hard he uses a high grade of his explosive, which delivers a quick, shattering blow. In case of soft rock the lower grade supplies a blast which will produce a wider effect, although it will not break the dislodged rock into such small pieces. Next as a quarryman he considers the nature of the ledge and the indicated fissures or veins and plans his drilling accordingly. Then he must attend to the drilling of the holes, the tamping of the charge and—here his electrical knowledge is called for—the arrangement of the batteries. After a few blasts he gives the railroad company his estimate, and if it is accepted he may oversee the job himself.

"Often he meets his rivals on the ground. Then comes the tug of war: Tricks of the trade are many and not all of them scrupulous. Where many agents are gathered together it seems to be a point of honor with every man to handle his particular article with the utmost apparent carelessness, while he manifests a shrinking timidity toward the products of his competitors. This is to impress the outsider. So the agent will toss about a twenty-five pound package of dynamite like so much meal, kick it, drop it over fences or down ledges and generally maltreat it. If the dynamite is fresh this is all right, but occasionally something goes wrong, and theory, together with the theorist, is blown to atoms in practice. Theoretically a high explosive should detonate only when set off by means of a fulminate of mercury cap, and some of the safety explosives apparently live up to this. But anything with nitroglycerin in it is best treated with consideration, for nitro is a very uncertain quantity."

His Guess.

"What would you do if you had a million dollars handed you?"

"Well, of course I can't say precisely, but the probabilities are that I'd become mean and grouchy, break away from all my old friends and put in the rest of my life trying to skin mankind out of another million."—Philadelphia Bulletin.

Slandering a Saint.

"Fifteen years ago," said the aged brother, addressing the congregation, "I gladly gave my heart to the Lord." "And that's the only cheerful gift he ever made," whispered the deacon whose business it was to collect the annual subscriptions.

JUSTICE OF THE HEARTH.

A Standard That Might Well Be Adopted by All Society.

Over the dinner table a husband was telling his wife of the financial misdealings of one of their social acquaintances, a wealthy and popular man. He had contrived the ruin of a certain company and its subsequent reorganization, a process, which had put money into his pocket and taken money from innocent stockholders.

The husband touched the facts lightly, because he thought that a woman could not be interested in them or understand them in detail. This woman's understanding throughout her husband's narrative was occupied with one or two simple questions.

"Is he to be punished?" she asked.

"Punished? How? His conscience won't punish him—indeed, he probably thinks he has obeyed the rules of business. The law technically is broad enough to cover his case, but it is hard to get evidence. You see, the district attorney must—"

"Excuse me for interrupting, dear. Explain that to me later. I think we shall not dine there next Wednesday. I will write a note to Mrs. Berry."

"Not dine there? Why not?"

"Because he is not a fit man to receive in our house or for us to visit."

"But nonsense! He's just as good a fellow, just as respectable"—

"One minute. By your own words you prove that he is a wicked man, taking what is not his. I listened to your story until there could be no doubt that you yourself condemned him by the facts, which I do not understand. If what you say is true he and I meet no more as equals."

And her judgment stood. Of course her neighbors and friends pursued the usual course of accepting a man in social relations whom their husbands distrusted in business.

But the standard of the hearthstone—shall it not some day be the standard of all society?—Youth's Companion.

"Dead" Leaves Not Dead.

Leaves do not fall from the tree because they are "dead," which we may take as equivalent to saying because they are no longer receiving the constituents of their being from the sap and from the air, but as a consequence of a process of growth which develops just at the junction of the leaf stem with the more permanent portion of the tree, certain corklike cells which have very little adhesion, so that the leaf is very liable to be broken away by influences of wind and changes of temperature and of moisture.

A Lucky Escape.

During the Spanish war, while the battleships were on blockade at Santiago, it was customary to load the six pounder guns every evening to protect against possible torpedo boat attack. While the triggers were being eased down one of the guns on the Massachusetts was accidentally discharged, the shot passing over the quarter deck of the Texas, which was lying next in the blockading line. All the officers of the Texas were on deck smoking and talking when the shot passed a few feet above their heads. Almost before it struck the water a signal was started on the Texas from its commanding officer, Captain Jack Phillips, to the commanding officer of the Massachusetts. The signal was, "Good line, but a trifle high."—Harper's Weekly.