Becker Signs Contract---Walter Johnson in Fine Condition

Johnson Writes that He Is Big as a House

Nationals' Great Twirler Taking Things Easy Down on the Old Farm—Buck Becker Signs Contract.

By WILLIAM PEET.

Walter Johnson, the greatest pitcher in the world, from the viewpoint of the majority of Washington fans, writes a cheering letter from his home out in Coffyville, Kans. Walter is perfectly happy and contented on his big farm, and vouchsafes the information that he has taken on a lot of weight. In fact, he says he is heavier now than at any time in his life.

Walter Johnson.

According to Manager Clark Griffith, of the Nationals, a pitcher to be successful and enjoy a long life in the major leagues, should map out for himself just such a routine as has Walter Johnson.

"Bowling and basket-ball or hard manual labor during the off season will work a hardship on any pitcher," declares Griff, and the Old Fox ought to know, as he is a twirler himself.

Johnson, in his letter to the writer, does not say that he expects to smash any world's records next season in the pitching line, but he declares he never felt better in his life, which statement in itself would clearly indicate that the Nationals' speed merchant will be right on the job with the same old winning stuff when the 1912 curtain is hauled up.

Johnson's letter is as follows:

Coffyville, Kans., January 5, 1912.

William Peet, Sporting Editor The Washington Herald:

Dear Bill: I haven't written a letter for so long that I had to stop and figure whether this is 1911 or 1912. The last letter I scribbled was to Doc Reisling. I received one from him some time ago, and he says he is getting along famously with his practice of dentistry.

I have been here on my farm ever since the season closed last fall, and never felt better in my life. I am also heavier than ever before, which is due probably to my out-of-door life and regular habits.

I tumble out of bed every morning at sunrise, and there is just enough farm work to keep me busy.

They say 'Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.' I don't know about the wise part of it, but I can vouch for the other qualities.

I haven't any idea what our plans are for spring training; in fact, I don't even know where Griff has decided to take the bunch. The only newspapers I read are the local papers, and there is very little major league baseball in them.

I did hear of the deal with Rochester. Gray and Lelivelt will make good men for them. Wid Conroy is not "all in" by a long shot, and I hope he gets along all right and likes his new job. I don't believe "Connie" is worrying very much about the change.

I suppose Griff is working hard to get a good start. I never hear much about what he is doing. I did see in one paper out here that he was going to trade one for Hal Chase, but I imagine that is only winter dope, for I have heard nothing about it.

Looking forward to seeing you all spring training season, I remain your friend, as ever.

WALTER JOHNSON.

The story that Buck Becker, the Washington boy, was dissatisfied with his contract and might become a hold-out was denied at headquarters by Manager Griffith yesterday afternoon, as Becker dropped around to see the local boss and, after a brief chat, signed up.

"Becker is perfectly satisfied with the terms named in his contract," said Griff, "and states that he is in good shape. I certainly hope he turns out to be one of our winning pitchers."

SPORTING SIDELIGHTS

By BILL BAILEY.

Buck Becker is within the fold.

Walter Johnson's extra weight will not bother him much. The hot weather will soon take it off.

Doolin and Fogel may not turn out a winning ball club for the Phillies this season, but they have thus far demonstrated extraordinary ability in getting columns of free advertising.

J. A. Davis, of 2301 Fourteenth street, sends in the following "Dippy Dope:" "If gas is light, is Joe Leiter?"

It's slipping—the water wagon.

We never said what you said we said about Tony Sousa.

Jim Rose came around last night, so all is forgiven. Rose declares the Washington Cricket Club will be stronger than ever next season, as he expects to enlist the services of Frank Miller, a bowler of some note.

As is usually the case with a newly formed league, the one now in process of formation has "plenty of financial backing."

Watch Sunday's Bowling Page. There will be something of vital interest to Washington pin knights.

Says the Chicago Post: Hughie Jennings has just been elected a director of the Traders' National Bank of Detroit. There is something about the name "Traders" that would get any baseball manager.

A Cincinnati paragrapher had the nerve to slip over the following on the unsuspecting public: "Connie Mack was a shoemaker until he was twenty years old. It's a good thing for the national game that Connie did not stick to the last."

They all talked about the Intercity League yesterday. Charlie Graf says that the new circuit will be a success. Let us hope so.

Has the famous bug, "Is it snowing out?" been around?

That basket-ball game to-night in Carroll Institute gymnasium should be some battle. The Y. M. C. A. Regulars are hot after the Tenth street aggregation, and the fur is bound to fly. Better drop around to see the fun.

Somebody asked us last night if the Catholic University has a basket-ball team. Not after Saturday. But there is still hope.

CATHOLICS VS. ST. MARY'S.

Brooklanders Visit Emmitsburg for Basket-ball Game Friday.

Special to The Washington Herald.

Emmitsburg, Md., Jan. 9.—The Catholic University basket-ball team will be the opponents of Mount St. Mary's here Friday. The locals started work Monday after the holidays and showed plenty of speed and experience from their games in New York.

The locals realize they are up against a strong proposition when the university boys come here Friday, but at the rate they are going at now, with every chance to improve, they should put up a strong argument. The teams will journey to Gettysburg Thursday.

EPIPHANY TRIMS MEMORIAL.

Club Quint Beaten by 54 to 6 Score.

In a one-sided game played last night in the Epiphany gym, the fast Epiphany five had no trouble in trouncing the quint representing the Memorial Athletic Club by the score of 54 to 6.

The features of the game was the goal throwing of Loehl and the all-around teamwork displayed by Plummer at guard.

In the preliminary contest the Y. M. C. A. Rebels took the measure of the Epiphany Reserves. Score, 25 to 20. Line-up and summaries:

EPIPHANY.	MEMORIAL.
Loehl, R. F.	Johnson, R. F.
Cooney, L. F.	Sullivan, L. F.
Scott, C.	Wade, C.
Plummer, L. G.	Dickson, L. G.
Cramer, R. G.	Donahue, R. G.

Substitutes—Wade for Sullivan, Sullivan for Wade, Goak—Loehl (10), Scott (9), Plummer (9), Cooney (3), Wade, Dickson. Free throws—Wade (2). Referee—Mr. Wood. Time of halves—20 minutes. Timer—Mr. Cramer.

EPIPHANY RES.	Y. M. C. A. REBELS.
Brewer, R. F.	Samuel, R. F.
Bernstein, L. F.	Klintz, L. F.
Neritt, C.	Schwegler, C.
Schultz, L. G.	Ford, L. G.
Reed, R. G.	Meaney, R. G.

Substitutes—Steed for Klintz, Calloway for Schwegler, Shaffer for Ford. Goals—Brewer (3), Bernstein, Neritt (4), Klintz (2), Samuel (4), Meany (2), Schwegler (2), Shaffer. Free throws—Bernstein (4), Samuel (2), Steed. Referee—Mr. Roberts. Time of halves—20 minutes. Timers—Messrs. Wood and Smith. Score, 25 to 20.

Wallace the Stern.

Because of his failure to drive his men as some managers are wont to do, Wallace, of the Browns, became known as an easy mark in some circles. But that's all over with. Henceforth it's going to be Wallace the Stern.

Bresnahan May Get Toledo.

Roger Bresnahan has been promised first chance at the Toledo club when it is put up for sale.

CARROLLS DEFEAT Y.M.C.A. STALWARTS

Martin and Croghan Star in Basket-ball Game.

Greatly strengthened by the addition of Jack Martin, the former star of the Georgetown University basket-ball team, the Carroll Institute quint handed the Y. M. C. A. Stalwarts a 30 to 22 defeat last night in Carroll gymnasium.

Martin and Croghan easily played the feature games of the evening, although Alman and Hanache did good work for the association lads.

Shalin, who is a newcomer in local basket-ball circles, put up a great game, although taking care of a guard position. This lad gives promise of making one of the best goal shooters in the District. Beauhe and Duncan, who worked in the second half, did creditable work.

Line-up and summary:

Y. M. C. A. STAL.	CARROLL INSTITUTE.
Gorman, L. F.	Croghan, L. F.
Alman, R. F.	Martin, R. F.
Hanache, C.	Portner, C.
Helmuth, R. G.	Shalin, R. G.
Eliason, L. G.	O'Dwyer, L. G.

One point awarded Stalwarts by referee for rough playing by Carroll. Substitutes—Duncan for Dwyer, Beauhe for O'Dwyer. Goals—Gorman (2), Alman (2), Helmuth, Eliason, Martin (2), Croghan (6), Dowyer (2), Duncan (2), Shalin (2). Free throws—Hanache (7). Referee—Mr. Hughes. Time of halves—20 minutes.

CARROLL RESERVES WIN.

Take Extra-period Game from Memorial Reserve Quint.

The Carroll Institute Reserve basket-ball team won an exciting battle from the Memorial Reserves last night in Carroll gymnasium, the game going into an extra period. Deagnan, of the winners, put up the best article of basket-ball. Line-up and summary:

MEMORIAL RES.	CARROLL RES.
Nicholson, L. F.	McKenna, L. F.
Fowler, R. F.	Sullivan, R. F.
Kellogg, C.	Deagnan, C.
McDowell, R. G.	Shipley, R. G.
Warren, L. G.	Daly, L. G.

Goals—Nicholson (2), Fowler, Kellogg (2), Sullivan (2), Deagnan (3), Shipley. Free throws—Nicholson (2), Deagnan (4). Referee—Mr. Hughes. Time of halves—20 minutes.

EASTERN BEATEN BY QUAKER TEAM

Friends School Easily Wins Basket-ball Game.

The Friends School basket-ball team defeated Eastern High's fast quint by the one-sided score of 44 to 24 in a game at Eastern's gym yesterday afternoon.

Owing to the fact that Capt. Varela, of Eastern, was unable to play, Friends agreed to call the game a practice match, although it had originally been scheduled as a regular contest. This is the second time this year Friends has walloped the Eastern boys, the former score being 27 to 11.

The fast and excellent work of Low was the feature of Friends' play and Baldwin played a fine game for Eastern.

Line-up and summary:

FRIENDS.	EASTERN.
Miller, R. F.	Hughes, R. F.
Gates, L. F.	Roberts, L. F.
Low, C.	H. Eakle, C.
Osgood, R. G.	Baldwin, R. G.
Hartung, L. G.	Weaver, L. G.

Substitutes—Harris for Hughes, M. Eakle for Baldwin, Wells for H. Eakle. Field goals—Miller (8), Gates (2), Low (9), Osgood (3), Harris (2), Baldwin (6), Eakle, Wells (3). Referee—Mr. Shinn. Timekeeper—Mr. Smith. Scorer—Mr. Robertson.

HILLTOP GOSSIP.

Vincent Dailey, the newly appointed graduate manager and head coach of next year's football eleven, returned to college yesterday. Dailey feels confident that Virginia and Georgetown will meet on the gridiron next fall.

It is hoped and expected that Pennsylvania will be on the Blue and Gray football schedule next fall for a game in Washington. Pennsylvania would doubtless prove a big attraction, and every effort is being made to bring this big university here.

Jimmie Fury, the sterling half back and baseball catcher, reported for the basket-ball team last evening.

Capt. Billy Martin, of the Prep basket-ball team, stated that the game with Loyola prep school of Baltimore had been postponed until later in the season. He also stated that the youngsters had a game scheduled for next Saturday evening at Annapolis with the St. John's College.

Bill Hurley, a dental student, reported to Capt. Carrigan yesterday. Hurley prepped at the Mercersburg Academy, and should be of valuable assistance in the sprints.

Capt. Carrigan reports that the men are in good condition after the holidays, and that from now on the strictest training rules will be in order.

Williams and Souter Win.

New York, Jan. 8.—Charles S. Williams, world's champion racquet player, paired with Jack Souter, of the Philadelphia Racquet Club, this afternoon, defeated George Standing and Edward Rogers, of this city, three sets to one. The score: 15—12, 14—17, 15—16, 15—4.

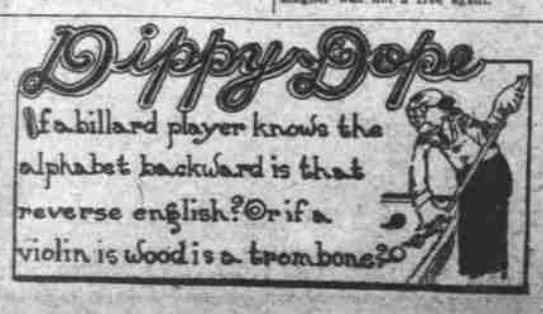
Williams and Souter also won the fifth game, defeating Standing and Rogers by a score of 15—4. This gives Souter and Williams the match, they having won four out of seven games.

Janvrin May Come Back.

Dopiste seem to think that Harold Janvrin, the schoolboy prodigy, who was looked upon as a wonder when he joined the Boston Red Sox, may come back after a season in the International League.

More Philly Hold-outs.

The mink war between Fogel and Doolin, may cost the club a lot of money after all. In addition to Paskert, others will hold out for a larger monthly hand-out since their manager called the club officials "cheap."



HILLTOP QUINTET IN GAME TO-NIGHT

Georgetown and Loyola Fives to Clash.

The Georgetown varsity basket-ball quint will face the strongest team which has appeared on the Arcade court this season, when they meet the Loyola College five to-night at 9 o'clock.

Loyola has played two games to date, both resulting in victories, Gallaudet being their victim in one game, and the University of Maryland in the other.

The Hilltoppers will present their regular line-up this evening, with the exception of George Colliflower, whose place will be taken care of by Hetzkell. Foley will play the other guard. It is expected that Capt. Gilmon will also get in the game to-night. The line-up:

GEORGETOWN.	LOYOLA.
Hollander, R. F.	Bowman, R. F.
Barrinette, L. F.	Peters, L. F.
Gilmon, C.	Cost, C.
Hetzkell, R. G.	Ard, R. G.
Foley, L. G.	Pigott, L. G.

Substitute—Gibson for Hollander. Referee—Mr. Hughes.

PLAN BIG BENEFIT FOR OLD ATHLETE

Basket-ball Game Booked Between Crack Teams.

On January 22 the Georgetown University basket-ball team will line up against an all-star team, composed of the best basket-ball players obtainable. Between the halves of the basket-ball game Joe Grant will wrestle Frank Lockhead. The National Guard has generously given the use of the National Guard gym free for the occasion, and the entire proceeds will go to "Stokey" Thompson, one of the best basket-ball players ever developed in the District.

This popular boy met with an accident five years ago, and has been in the hospital ever since. He has not been forgotten by his old team mates, however, and the boy who helped make basket-ball history for Carroll Institute, the Ordways, Y. M. C. A., and other clubs is to be remembered by a monster benefit, and it is hoped that every person in the city who is a lover of good, clean sportsmanship will lend a helping hand to this most worthy enterprise.

Croghan, Rice, Walsh, and Beauhac have already been approached and have signified their willingness to play on this occasion, and with this nucleus the promoters will have little trouble in getting a team that will make Georgetown go the limit. Remember the date, January 22.

TURF MAGNATES MEET.

Lexington Track May Come Back Into Fold.

New York, Jan. 9.—With hopes of bringing back into the fold the Lexington (Ky.) track, which has been an "outlaw" for thirteen years, the Grand Circuit stewards, the arbiters of harness racing in the Eastern States, went into session to-day at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel.

The present meeting of the turf magnates was expected to be one of the most important in years. Applications for dates were made by two newcomers, Salem, N. H., and Pittsburg, Pa., and a movement had been launched to bring the Columbus (Ohio) track under the Grand Circuit management. Andy Welsh, a well-known horseman of Hartford, Conn., was here with a proposition to hold a three-day meet in New York City. Welsh's plan was to fill out the week here which is allotted to Buffalo. Only three days' racing are allowed at Buffalo, which would leave two vacant days, allowing time for transportation of horses to this city.

Burns for Cravath.

The release of Pitcher Burns to Minneapolis is part payment for Outfielder Cravath, secured by the Phillies last season.

ENTRY BLANKS ARE OUT

For Fifth Annual George Washington Indoor Meet.

Entry blanks for the fifth annual indoor games, to be given by the George Washington University, are out and may be obtained from the manager.

Tickets will be placed on sale on the 15th of this month.

From the early entries received the meet will be even larger than that of last year.

Assurance has been received that Virginia will enter fifteen men, including a one-mile relay, and it will very probably be matched with the team of their old rivals, the University of North Carolina.

Washington and Lee will also enter a relay, while Swarthmore has agreed to come again and may enter two relays.

Johns Hopkins and Maryland Agricultural will be represented as usual.

The local high schools have asked for many entrance blanks, and the local clubs and those in Baltimore are being heard from.

Yankees Fined $50.

Cincinnati, Ohio, Jan. 9.—The New York American League baseball club today was fined $50 by the national baseball commission for failing to comply with the rule requiring that contracts with players shall be filed with the president of the league. The complaint of E. B. Magner, a player of the New York Americans, against his team management was dismissed on the ground that Magner was not a free agent.

Always the Same
Tharp's
Berkeley Rye
Special Private Delivery.
613 F Street N. W. Phone Main 1661.

THE DIAMOND CIPHER

A BASEBALL ROMANCE

By W. A. PHELON.

(Copyright, 1911, by W. G. CHAPMAN.)
(Copyright in Canada and Great Britain.)

[SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.]

The secrets of the United States are being surreptitiously stolen by other countries, and every message of any importance is being seen and the contents disclosed to foreign interests. Chief Wilkins has called Mr. Pinkerton, head of the famous detective agency of that name, into his office, and the two sleuths are working on the case. Several different ciphers had been arranged by experts, but agents of foreign countries always managed to find out their contents.

Harry Brockett, a clerk in Chief Wilkins' office, is summoned by the chief on a trivial matter, and as he is about to leave the office several papers drop out of his pocket. Mr. Pinkerton picks them up, and in looking them over finds that they contain a cipher. Chief Wilkins asked Harry to take down a short message in the cipher, and he does so. As Harry is leaving the office, Mr. Pinkerton asks him the name of the cipher, and Harry tells him it is the Diamond Cipher.

Young Brockett has his suspicions aroused by a chance meeting with Miss Lawson, the chief's stenographer, who is seen passing a mysterious paper to a Japanese.

Brockett's cipher flurry has a chance to render a service to his country, and he has been assigned to an important diplomatic errand.

CHAPTER III.

Brockett returned at 1 o'clock, accompanied by Ramon Solano. He lifted the sheets on which he had been last working from the desk drawer and quickly looked them over. All five of the sheets were in proper place, but the third carbon from the top had been removed, and a fresh carbon substituted.

Gen. Cole, kindly and affable, had the boys feeling thoroughly at home before they had been in his office for five minutes. The old soldier was in cheery spirits, and his genial mood communicated itself to his young visitors, who—long counted among the most ardent admirers of the general—were at first inclined to bashfulness when actually in the presence of their idol fighter. Solano, whose father had often spoken of Gen. Cole and his prowess, as shown in the rush up San Juan Hill, was almost in raptures over the unexpected interview, while Brockett, wondering much over the events of the past four hours, was trying to figure out what on earth would happen next. He was not long left in suspense, for the old warrior plunged into his reason for requiring their attendance in his office.

"Brockett, my boy," said the general, pleasantly enough, but with something governing the tone of the calm, even voice—something that seemed to electrify both young men like the current of a mighty battery—"I believe that I can make you—and your young friend—quite useful in the immediate future."

Solano gasped, astounded, and fixed his big black eyes upon the general's face. Brockett nodded, and leaned forward, expectantly.

"I have had considerable experience with government and military ciphers," the soldier continued. "And I must say that yours is the most extraordinary jumble and most weirdly mangled collection of hieroglyphics I ever looked upon. For that very reason, my boy, I am forced to believe that you have stumbled upon something of real value to the army, the nation—and your own personal future. I can't figure where any expert in the world could read that cipher without a key, and an untranslatable cipher, right now, is imperatively needed. If, during the next thirty days, the War Department—yes, and the navy, too—can transmit certain important messages, without danger of their being transcribed by hostile influences, a service of the most notable kind will have been performed for the country. Do you follow me?"

Brockett nodded eagerly, but Solano could not shift his great black eyes from the general's visage. The old warrior resumed his speech.

"Mr. Brockett, a key of your cipher, and a message written in that cipher must be carried by a messenger on whom we can unhesitatingly rely, to a person—a person whose name can be revealed only to the messenger and one companion—in the City of Mexico. You are the inventor of the cipher, and can instruct in the use of its key more rapidly, more successfully than any other man. You are also, I believe, honest, loyal, and fairly resourceful. Furthermore, you say that you have learned to speak a little Spanish. How would you like to carry a message of importance, and a cipher, your cipher, as far as the capital of Mexico?"

Brockett choked up, flushed, and stammered a vague sentence which he in all probability meant to signify acceptance of the proffered honor. The general smiled, reassuringly.

"I AM DEEPLY SORRY THAT YOU SHOULD LOSE THE OPPORTUNITY OF ENLARGEMENT OF FORTUNE."

"You don't say it very clearly, son, but your meaning is easily understood. Now, then, something along the same lines. If you had a companion on this journey, a man who spoke Spanish by right of birth and blood, and who could be trusted as absolutely as yourself, the chances of success would be more than doubled. Ramon Solano, I knew your father. I have heard good reports of you. If you are half the man your father was a dozen years ago, you are already selected for this commission."

The Cuban gazed straight into the eyes of the fighting man, and the general understood.

"Now, boys," the veteran continued, "let's get busy without delay. You will please make arrangements with the folks at home for a somewhat prolonged absence. While you are gone, Mr. Brockett, your mother will receive your salary—and perhaps a little more. Mr. Solano, you are not in government employ——"

The Cuban waved a supple hand.

"I have ample resources of my own, general, and shall consider it a pleasure to expend them on such a mission."

"Nevertheless," answered Gen. Cole, "the government will take the liberty of supplying you both with the funds needed in the completion of the enterprise. Enough money to cover all probable expenses will be advanced you, and when you reach the frontier arms, horses, general equipments, and trustworthy guides will be found. To-night, Mr. Brockett, you will receive full instructions at your home. Read them over carefully—you also, Mr. Solano. Be ready to start tomorrow afternoon. I need hardly remark that you are not supposed to speak of the commission with which you are intrusted—not even to your most intimate friends. As to your parents—that, of course, is a different question. I think that is all, boys—go home and bid your good-bye. You will know all further details in the evening."

Brockett hurried home to break the strange news to his mother, while Solano agreed to notify his father that he had decided to preface his vacation by a few extra weeks of travel, and made all possible speed to the nearest Western Union office. The Cuban picked up a pad of cable blanks, and reached for a pen. It was broken. Another pen proved equally useless, and Solano fumbled in his pocket for a pencil. A little man seated on the next stool turned quickly and proffered him an ink-pencil, one of those annoying contrivances which were invented a few years ago to displace both lead pencils and fountain pens, and which are now a memory and nothing more.

"Very annoying, the unpleasant delay," said the little man, amiably. "Permit me that I am of a little assistance?"

And Solano, as he scribbled his brief cablegram, gave thanks, with true Latin politeness, to the stocky, scar-cheeked Japanese who had walked past Brockett and himself the previous evening. When the Cuban left the telegraph office, the little brown man caught up the pad of cable blanks, scrutinized the impressions left by his message, and, despite the fact that the cablegram had been written in Spanish, seemed to have no trouble in deciphering its meaning. Whatever information he gained, however, seemed to afford him small satisfaction. He smiled mirthlessly, tossed the pad back upon the counter, and walked out into the busy thoroughfare.

Brockett's mother, a sweet-faced, thoroughly feminine but thoroughly sensible woman, did not offer any serious objections to her son's acceptance of the strange commission so shortly to be intrusted to his care. Mrs. Brockett, in fact, cherished an abiding belief in the foresight and the cleverness of her boy—a belief that he could take care of himself under almost any circumstances. Bertha Brockett, Harry's only sister, was much more worried over the possible dangers of the journey than either her mother or the young athlete himself. She forecasted terrors of the road and bugaboos of the passes. In her sixteen-year-old imagination, Mexico teemed with bandits, Yaqui savages, and ferocious insurrectos. As Miss Brockett was not only eloquent, but extremely pretty, her arguments might have dissuaded almost any young adventurer—unless the adventurer happened to be her brother. Sisterly counsels and entreaties have been wasted on the wandering winds for many centuries, and, presumably, always will be.

Young Brockett had dined, had received some excellent advice from his mother, and had rebuffed the imploring sister with much humor. He was glancing over the evening paper and waiting the arrival of Ramon Solano or of the messenger who should bring him his instructions, when the doorbell tinkled lightly. Bertha, answering the bell, admitted a stocky, well-dressed man of middle age—a swarthy little fellow, with one cheek crossed by a broad, indented scar. The boy at once remembered the Japanese whom he had seen stop Miss Lawson on the previous night, but gave no sign of recognition as he looked inquiringly at his Oriental visitor.

There was Old World politeness in the courtly bow with which the stranger prefaced his self-introduction.

"I speak to Mr. Harry Brockett—Yes?"

"At your service, sir. You are Mr.——?"

"I am Mr. Yasimoto. Of Tokyo. Importer of Oriental goods."

"Won't you sit down, Mr. Yasimoto?"

"I thank you, yes. May I speak of the business that brings me to you, Mr. Brockett?"

Brockett, wondering, nodded his assent, and the Japanese spoke suavely.

"Mr. Brockett, I am a man who has much, very much, of business trouble. There are many who are competitors with me in the honorable occupation of importing Oriental wares. You doubtless can comprehend it so?"

"Perfectly, Mr. Yasimoto."

"There are, of these who are competitors against me, some whom I do not know by name definitely, who resort to means not wholly honest. I am sorry, much, that I say this of my own countrymen, but it is truth s.tell you. I have reason to believe that my correspondence, both in Japanese and in English, is as you say it, held up, read by these not so honorable competitors. So I have come to you, Mr. Brockett."

"To me? Why, what can I do for you?"

"That shall now be told you, Mr. Brockett. I could now make use of some new, some very difficult correspondence cipher. If in English, that would be very good—my firm has at home most admirable English educated clerks. Friends of mine tell me that you, Mr. Brockett, have devised such cipher. A cipher of most honorable excellence. If this cipher were to be adaptive to the use of commerce, I would pay well. I say, in fact, Mr. Brockett, I pay modestly high moneys. Suppose that you demonstrate for me the idea of your cipher. If it shall prove satisfactory for the commerical purpose, I pay you $2,000. And, that I show I am a man of business, and that I do not waste the valuable time, I pay you, if satisfactory or no, $500 that you only demonstrate for me the ideas of the cipher."

The smiling Japanese had drawn forth a thick, prosperous-looking wallet, and was fumbling with it, when Brockett slowly, but emphatically, shook his head.

"Mr. Yasimoto, you have been misinformed. I cannot imagine where you gained your information, but it is wrong, completely wrong. I have no cipher for sale, and am sorry that I cannot oblige you."

Mr. Yasimoto sighed as he replaced the portly pocketbook.

"I am deeply sorry, Mr. Brockett, that you should lose the opportunity for enlargement of fortunes. Perhaps you will reconsider. Maybe I call upon you another time. I will bid you the honorable good evening."

The Japanese had hardly departed when Ramon Solano put in an appearance, much to the delight of the Brockett family, with whom the Cuban was a prime favorite. Greetings exchanged, the boys plunged promptly into the subject of mutual interest, Solano firing the first gun.

"No message yet from Gen. Cole?"

"Not yet. Just had an odd caller, though."

"The Jap we saw talking with that stenographer last night? I passed him as I came in. Curious thing; when I cabled to Havana this afternoon, he was beside me at the Western Union office, and loaned me an ink-pencil."

"He did? Was there anything specially important in the message?"

"Nothing at all aside from informing my father that I would take an extra month for my vacation, beginning now. Even if he could have read it—it was in Spanish, too—that wouldn't be of much value to him."

"Hardly. I am beginning to do some extensive thinking about that Jap, though. Listen to the proposition he made me ten minutes ago." And Brockett rapidly outlined the tempting offer made by Mr. Yasimoto.

"Something doing, sure," commented Solano. "I can see one thing clearly. He fancied that you would sell him a duplicate of your diamond cipher—though I cannot figure out how he could get in touch with that idea so quickly. Yes, I can too. The stenographer! By the way, Harry, I forgot to tell you—I have seen that girl chatting with this same Japanese two or three times. You remember that when we saw them together I was trying to recall some place, some occasion, when I had noticed one or both of them?"

"Looks as if we would have to watch out for Mr. Yasimoto. He may try some jiu jitsu tricks if he really wants to get that cipher."

"Quite likely, Harry. Do you know anything about jiu jitsu?"

"Only what I have read. I have always believed that a good American swing to the jaw would discount all the jiu jitsu in the world, and, if that would not be enough, I learned a few wrestling tricks from an old grappler some months ago. Nevertheless, I will watch out for the Yasimoto man. He must mean trouble."

The bell rang, and Harry, eagerly responding, welcomed a sturdy, red-headed cherub of fifteen—Mike McKane, a well-liked, much-trusted department messenger, and an especial favorite with Gen. Cole. The boy held, in a boa-constrictor clutch, a thick envelope, which he surrendered to Brockett with a grunt of satisfaction.

"The old man," explained the messenger, "told me to give this to you yerself, and nobody else. You didn't tell no Japanese guy to relay the letter to youse, did you?"

"Why, no—not in a hundred years. What do you mean, Mickey?"

"Tell youse just how it was, Harry. I'm just comin' up yer steps, when a Japanese guy stops me. 'Ah, hey' says he, 'have you a message for Mr. Brockett? He has asked me to receive it for him.'

"'He gits it himself, an' no one else can horn in,' says I, an' hurried on quick. I thought he was going to make a jump fer me, but mebbe I was mistakened. Anyhow, here's yer letter."

Brockett and Solano exchanged glances.

"This Japanese gentleman is certainly in search of trouble," exclaimed Harry. "I'll look out of the front door and see if he is lingering around."

Brockett opened the door and stepped out into the darkness. As he left the threshold, he noted, with surprise, that the city lamp, which was supposed to burn directly in front of the building, was unlighted. His eyes had not yet accustomed themselves to the unexpected gloom, when something seemed to snap and whirr in the wide of his head, his feet were struck from under him, and he sank in a helpless heap upon his own doorstill.

"AH, BOY, HAVE YOU A MESSAGE FOR MR. BROCKETT?"

Connie Mack Likes Melanie.

Any one who thinks that Manager Mack is worried about his first base position don't know what a high opinion Connie entertains of Melanie.

Three Trips Around Circuit.

Three trips around the circuit is all that will be made by the teams of the American Association during the coming season.

SUITS Sponged and Pressed, 25c
STEAM CLEANING, REPAIRING.
821 G St. N.W. Phone M. 4879
BEST PRESSING CLUB IN TOWN.
Washington Tailoring and Pressing Co.