

OF BASEBALL LAW.

W. J. Harris Elucidates an Important Matter.

GIST OF THE DIAMOND WAR.

Explanation of the Famous "Agreement" About Which so Much Has Been Said of Late.

Ben Mulford, Jr., of the Cincinnati Times-Star, who is one of the brightest writers on baseball topics in America, and one of the best also to be told a story in a plain, everyday manner, easily understood and right to the point, every time, has applied to the baseball war—in this sentence, "It is a campaign for the preservation of baseball law on one side and its destruction on the other."

It is frequently asked what is the difference between baseball law and common law. The answer is that baseball law is a law unto itself. It is a collection of arbitrary customs, adopted by the baseball men, that are not in accord with common law.

These arbitrary customs are at variance with common law, and there is no doubt whatever that the courts would decide, if appealed to, that the customs referred to are not legal; but the courts have never been invoked, on the principle that you can bring a horse to water, but you cannot make him drink. The courts might declare that it was illegal to suspend a player or say that he should not be hired by any one else, but the courts possess no power to compel a person to hire another, unless that person desires to do so willingly, and hence the magistrates have been able to enforce baseball regulations, and have built up a set of regulations, with precedents to govern them, which have become known as baseball law.

The National League and American association, together with the minor associations combined under the national agreement, have for years been an organized trust which controlled all baseball interests, and when one considers the enormous power they have wielded one is amazed that they have not used it more arbitrarily and despotically than they have.

The basis of all baseball law is the national agreement and the customs which have obtained in interpreting its provisions. This famous document is an agreement by and between associations binding themselves in certain forfeitures and penalties to keep the compact inviolate. The parties to it are the National League and the American association. There are some supplemental articles known as articles of qualified admission to the national agreement, under which minor baseball organizations are admitted to the protection of the national agreement.

The celebrated agreement which has been the corner stone of the success of baseball contains ten articles. The first one provides for its name. The second explains the contracts between clubs and players, and provides that such contracts shall not be made prior to Oct. 30 of each year, and prescribes for the suspension of the player and \$500 fine to the club for a violation. Article 3 provides for the treatment of suspended players by other clubs and prohibits them from playing with or against teams of which a disqualified player is a member.

Article 4 is the reserve rule. It grants each club the power to select the names of fourteen players under contract with them on the 10th day of October in each year and protects them in the continued service of such players by making the players ineligible to contract with any other club a party to the agreement except as may be provided in its terms, and clubs are permitted to add to their list of reserved men the names of any players who may have been reserved by them in prior years who have refused to contract with the club reserving them, thus instituting a perpetual ban from baseball for those players who decline to remain with the clubs which had reserved them without obtaining a proper release.

Article 5 governs the releases of players. When a man is released his services are subject to the acceptance of the other clubs of his association for a period of ten days. After that the player is free to go where he pleases. Article 6 gives the clubs territorial rights in the cities where they are located, and prohibits any other club from being located there without permission, and the article also provides for the resignation of clubs during the month of November. Article 7 provides for the expulsion of clubs from the benefits of the agreement on its terms and conservatively any club presenting on its name an ineligible player. Article 8 gives each association power to make rules for the central discipline and compensation of its players. Articles 9 and 10 provide for a board of arbitrators, consisting of three each from the two major organizations, to whom shall fall the duty of interpreting the agreement and deciding all disputes arising under it.

The qualified articles are thirteen in number, and provide for the protection of minor leagues, and prescribe the amount to be paid for such protection, which is \$1,000 for four clubs, \$1,500 for six, and \$2,000 for eight clubs. These articles are very complete and cover about every point that could possibly arise between the parties thereto.

This, in brief, is the national agreement. It is the law and the board of arbitration is the court of last resort. Many of its provisions and the usages which have grown up under it are obvious to any fair minded people on a first acquaintance and objectionable always, but experience has shown that these regulations are absolutely necessary. Ball players need to be governed with a strong hand. The stability of baseball demands that clubs shall keep well along with the process, but they cannot do so if their players can desert them at any moment.

There must be something more than a common law punishment for violators of contracts on either side than a suit for damages. In the past it has been quite as difficult to keep the magistrates in line as the players; indeed, more so in some respects, and nothing short of the iron rule of national agreement would have done it or will do it in the future. We have a specimen of what would happen without it when the clubs hustle to obtain the services of a new player who has made a mark, and the existing disputes coming before the board of arbitration to show what most of the clubs would do if they had a chance. As for the players, the events of the last few months in the signing of double contracts and the bargaining and "sneaking" indulged in are good indications of the kind of practices that would become general were there not some iron bound rule to hold both magistrates and players to a given line.

It is in many respects the most wonderful theatre in the world. The Grand Opera house at Paris, although it was completed in 1874 by the republic, stands a monument to the second empire. In 1860 it was decided to build a memorial of this period of peace and prosperity which should stand for all time. One hundred and seventy-one plans were received from the most celebrated architects of the day, Charles Garnier being the successful candidate. The building is the largest of its kind in the world, covering an area of 13,596 square yards, or nearly three acres, the great St. Peter's

burg theatre, next in size, covering one and one-seventh. Its cubic mass is 4,387,000 feet, Munich, the next in point of bulk, being 1,295,000. It is heated by fifteen furnaces and lighted by 9,000 gas jets supplied by ten miles of pipe, and the reservoirs in basement and on roof providing against fire casualties hold over 1,000,000 gallons of water. The ground site cost \$3,000,000, the building over \$9,000,000.

The spacious steps are of St. Giles sand stone, the ground floor of Larrys free stone, adorned by numerous statues, while higher still is the balcony or loggia. Sixteen Bavarian stone monoliths stand out against a background of red Jura stone. This glaring color contrast at first met criticism, but was evidently left to be toned by time. These columns are connected by balconies of polished stone with balusters of green Swedish marble, and with them eighteen columns of heavy iron sustain a rielou or curtain of Jura stone, sheltering the loggia, ornamented with gilt bronze busts and brackets. In order to increase the altitude of the building, the attic above, rich in sculpture, has its background incrustated with a golden mosaic, which gives wonderful animation to the figures and arabesques by its changing reflection.

Higher up a row of gilt bronze musus runs along the frontage, and higher still, above bands of violet breccelle marble, are gilt bronze groups in the angles. From a more distant point the effect of the frontage is completed by the cupola of the auditorium, topped with a cap of bronze, lightly adorned with gilding. On the gable end of the stage roof is Lequenne's "Pegasus," and at either end of the main roof structure Millet's noble bronzes, "Apollo Lifting His Golden Lyre." The lateral frontage of the house is less ornate, and both marble and bronze are less used.

The bewildering effect of this maze in form and power in color makes it difficult to determine the value of the harmony in its elaborately wrought design. The flight of steps leading up to the pillared portico to the principal entrance that is half hidden from the front has been pronounced a flaw by critics.

The splendid feature of the house, one unexcelled in beauty and magnificence, is the grand staircase of white marble leading from the entrance to the main floor. It is thirty-two feet in width up to the entrance of the amphitheatre; here it divides into two flights to right and left, giving a splendid view from the five galleries above or the capacious landing and court below. The balustrades are of "rose antico," with hand rail of Algerian onyx. The beautiful bronze newels, striking candelabra and magnificent chandeliers never fail to impress by their wonderful beauty as a rare artistic combination. Another fine feature is the ceiling formed by the central landing.

Between the pillars is the Venetian mosaic ceiling of the avant foyer, higher up a myriad of panels striking in elaborate carving, and further above the rich restful painting of the ceiling. From the first landing a monumental door gives admission to the rear boxes, amphitheatre and orchestra chairs. Two large caricatures, Tragedy and Comedy, with backing of yellow and green marble, guard the entrance and uphold the pediment, with two marble cupids leaning upon the coat of arms of the city.

The Salle front of the house is elaborate in the artistic treatment of its walls and ceiling, with paintings by Violet and Carpeaux. The grand foyer is 175 feet long, 42 wide and 59 high. In the design of the ceiling, by Baudouin, Comedy is the figure, in heroic size, on one side, Tragedy on the other, with Melody and Harmony soaring aloft between them. The auditorium, almost equal to La Scala, is circular, with four tiers of boxes above its parquet, and a gallery, its seating capacity being 2,154. The prevailing colors of the decoration are red and gold. The width of the auditorium between the boxes is 65 feet, the depth 93.

The arrangements of the various departments of this immense establishment, from its library (with scores of 250 operas, 5,000 pamphlets and 40,000 prints) and conservatory to the opera house proper are complete in all requirements, and up to the time in which it was constructed it stood without a rival. The stage is 178 feet wide, 84 feet deep and 190 feet high, with a proscenium opening of 59 feet. To indicate the extent of the building, it is stated that there are 2,531 doors, and the stage has 80 dressing rooms for artists, each including a small ante-chamber. There are dressing room facilities for 538. Ordinarily the stage necessitates the service of 70 carpenters; with "L'Africaine," it requires 110 for the working of the ship. There are 30 musicians, 100 choristers and 1,000 supernumeraries.

A Novelty. First Manager—I tell you I'm getting up a piece that cost a help being a grand success from the first night. Second Manager—Tank of real water on the stage! First Manager—No, sir. Something more novel than that. I'm going to have real actors on the stage.—The Stage.

There are various degrees of tiredness, but perhaps Georgia Cayvan, of the Lyceum company, reached the furthest point in Boston. She came back to the hotel after a matinee and wearily wandered into the dining room. The waiter came. She raised a pair of languid eyes. I suppose she had just been sobbing out "The Wife" for the —th time, and said: "I am too tired to eat. Waiter, bring me something soft."—San Francisco Chronicle.

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