

Baseball Impressions. Literal and Otherwise.

« What are you doing this afternoon », said my American friend.

« Oh, nothing much in particular », I responded.

« Well, come along and have a game of Baseball. Two local teams are playing this afternoon. You can play in William's place. I'll fix it up. Let's see what you can do. Oh! yes I know you have never yet played the game, but you can learn. You will find it to be the only game, « pep » all the way, my Boy. »

My excuses were in vain, so to satisfy my imperative friend I accompanied him to the field.

Already the Pitchers were « warming up » (I am told this is the correct Baseball expression). Others were throwing the ball around. All of them wore a padded glove on the left hand, in the palm of which, by continual punches there had been manufactured a cup (if I might so term it) sufficiently large enough for the ball to fit snugly into it.

Our Team was batting first. The first man up, carefully selected a bat, and swinging it round his head several times, finally seemed to be satisfied with it. Taking particular pains to moisten his hands, and then rubbing them on the ground so that they became covered with a neat coating of dirt, he took his position at the plate. He commenced to swing his bat, probably to get up sufficient momentum for an « almighty swat » (the usual Baseball expression).

The Pitcher now attracted me. Covering with his gloved hand the hand in which he held the ball, he at first lifted his right leg off the ground and gracefully balancing himself on the one leg, made a series of swings with his right arm, and then let the ball go.

It came to the Batter at a terrific speed, and looked as if it was going away from the plate, when it swerved in and I heard the Umpire cry « Strike one ». I was informed that such a ball was called an « in-curve ». The next ball was hit far into the outfield for two Bases.

So far the game looked easy. I felt sure I could stand there and swing my bat as well as the others. There seemed to be no art in doing that. All I had to do was to keep my eye on the ball.

Our side had made one run the first innings, and I had not yet been up to bat. It would be my turn next innings.

My position in the right-field was a tame one. Our Pitcher was too good for the « enemy », not one hit being allowed. He performed the