

openly commended. Victory at any cost, by any means, however unscrupulous, is the fundamental principle, and, when the passions of the crowd are raised to the highest pitch by a close score, and given a turbulent outlet without shame and without restraint, the spectacle is one of the most degrading that can be imagined. The madness of the whole thing reaches its culmination when weak playing on the part of the "home team" at first annoys and then enrages its supporters, and a poisonous fury of abuse is poured out upon the very players that perhaps on the previous day were belauded with a praise equally blatant and equally undeserved.

It is not difficult to understand how evil must be the results of a game thus played and thus supported. Manly amateur sport is one of the best influences in our civilization. The present day is beginning to recognize it as an essential part of a liberal education. Sport teaches lessons that are not to be learned in colleges, and stands for some of the noblest ideals to which our natures respond. Apart altogether, too, from the training it gives to body and mind, regarded as sheer recreation, as a hearty reaction from bustling practical lives, as a source of pure and unalloyed enjoyment, adding a grace and beauty of its own to existence, as a heightener of obscured visions—who shall estimate its value? Obscured visions—who shall estimate its value? What shall we say, then, of anything that tends to debase sport, anything that cheats and defrauds us of its sweet and health-giving fruits, making us spectators rather than players, not sending us forth into the green fields, ourselves to take a joyous part in some well-beloved pastime, but setting us in a grand-stand to get our exercise and our sport vicariously and to watch paid athletes whose only interest in our city is that our money pays for their services, duping us with a pitiful parody of a wholesome game played in a wholesome way by wholesome men, encouraging unchivalrous and dishonourable behaviour, indulging such mad lack of reason and restraint as might mark the orgies of savages, fostering sinister and brutish passions, breeding clamour, rancour and insolence?

### Judged by its Heroes

Surely anything with these mischievous tendencies should be stoutly resisted by every honest and intelligent citizen. A nation is known by the heroes it sets up. Consider of what sort are the influences at work on the youth of a city where baseball players are pictured, interviewed, admired, flattered, and idolized on every side. For who are such ardent hero-worshippers as children? Imitation of the morals and manners of baseball can yield none but the most vicious results. Our boys are drawn away from the games they should themselves be playing by the artificially fabricated excitement of the diamond; they are blinded to all the more ideal forms of living; they are degraded into hysterical and malignant emotions; they are vulgarized by a behaviour that is nowhere condoned but among the players and supporters of baseball; they are educated in impudence, coarseness, and irreverence. We see the later effects of this and similar influences in a large number of our young men—sallow weaklings, who are called sportsmen only because they are well versed in baseball news, dishonouring the glories of our language by an unintelligible and vulgar cant, loud-mouthed and shallow-brained, flashy in manner and dress, rude and arrogant in behaviour, spending their evenings loafing on street corners, spitting and chewing gum, and leering at the passers-by.

Much has recently been said of the threatened Americanization of Canada. Baseball is a much more powerful influence in that direction than commercial reciprocity. In spite of this the very papers that profess to be most desirous of drawing our country closer to the Mother Land publish column upon column of baseball news in every issue, giving absolutely gratuitous advertisement to a wealthy business organization.

It may be answered that professional Association football in England holds a position very similar to that of baseball on this continent. It is true enough that there exists this stain on the fair 'scutcheon of British sport; but there is at least one very important distinction to be noted. The evil of professional football is recognized and deplored by almost all intelligent English men. The game is supported only by a certain uneducated section of the population, and newspapers of the better sort give it little or no attention. All true sportsmen are well aware that the whole constitution of the thing is fundamentally antagonistic to the principles of sport. And because the danger is felt and known and acknowledged, there is hope that it may ultimately be averted. The worst feature of the baseball situation, on the other hand, is

that the game is patronized by almost all classes of our citizens, and even those who find no interest in it are apt to overlook or condone the viciousness of the thing as a mere manifestation of natural and harmless "animal spirits." Our best newspapers, as well as our worst, have apparently discovered that their readers require full information in regard to everything connected with the game. It is seldom that any real criticism is made, and the number of those who seriously contemplate the nature of the influence that professionalism is exercising throughout our land is both small and inert.

What, then, remains to be said in conclusion? If there is any degree of truth in this indictment of professional baseball, it is clear that it should be abolished from our country, root and branch, and vigorous steps taken to encourage a personal, active participation in real sport by our young men. As to the best scheme for organizing an effective crusade with these ends in view, the writer expresses no opinion. He wishes merely to make an earnest appeal to Canadians that they give the whole matter some serious thought, assured that reflection will end in action, and that a strong public feeling will not be at a loss for methods to accomplish its wishes and enforce its demands.

## THE FAN'S VIEW

BY "BLEACHER."

PROFESSIONAL baseball is one of the world's greatest organized forces. The size of the baseball machine appeals to the public, and the smoothness with which it is run also is impressive.

Baseball attracts both sexes and all classes. It is of as great importance to the people of the twentieth century as the Olympic games were to ancient Greece, or the circus to the ancient Romans, who seem to have invented the modern grandstand. This widespread attraction means generous support. Generous support means the making of great clubs, and great clubs mean a continental interest. People thousands of miles apart are making the same speculations as to what will happen next in the big leagues. For perhaps half the people of America baseball is a common bond.

A whist player once said that one can learn in five minutes how to go through a game of whist, but that it takes a lifetime to learn how to play whist. Much the same might be said of baseball. To learn the main points of the game requires but a few minutes; to understand it with any approach to thoroughness requires years of study. Even the great leaders in baseball are frequently finding out that they have still something to learn.

Baseball had to become professional. It proved to be too great a game to stay amateur. It demands that it be played by the best and brainiest athletes and that they give to it not merely evenings, Saturday afternoons and holidays, but their whole time. If amateurs could afford the time and had an incentive big enough to take the place of the bread and butter incentive that it has for the professional, amateurs might become almost as good baseball players as the professionals are. But there's that big if.

Professional baseball is worthy of public support because of the excellence of the playing and of the splendid way in which it is managed. "Dirty plays" and disorderly scenes are of remarkably rare occurrence considering the great number of games played and the rivalry aroused. The spectator has almost perfect assurance that he is going to see a real and clean game. The men who are playing baseball every day in the season and keeping themselves in proper condition between seasons put up the best games and pull off the finest plays, and it is the best games and the finest plays the people want to see.

The excellence of professional baseball offers a not-to-be-despised education to the spectator who takes his baseball sensibly. The ball game is a good study, and the cleverness and self-control that the best players exhibit have a wholesome effect upon the spectator.

Also the excellence of professional baseball teaches fairness to the spectator who is willing to accept that teaching. The shrieking, unfair fans by their noise and unsportsmanlike actions bring discredit upon spectators in general and lead the casual observer to conclude that all spectators are "poor sports." But in spite of the shrieking of some fans, the heart of the great body of the spectators is sound. The unsportsmanlike fan is much in evidence at Saturday and holiday games, but he is usually not found at the games played on other days. At these latter games the spectators are very largely quiet students of baseball who applaud good plays by the visiting team just as readily—though, of course, not as heartily—as good plays by the home team, and who in almost every instance take

defeat philosophically and victory not hysterically.

The criticism is often made that in professional baseball no city is represented by its own citizens, and that in Canada nearly all the players belong to the United States. Having each city represented by players really belonging to it would be an ideal condition. But do we reject everything because it is not ideal? Cities are not represented in the larger leagues by their own citizens simply because the idea is impracticable. To make the contests worth watching it is necessary that the clubs in any one league be of much the same playing ability. If each city were compelled to have only its own citizens on its team, some teams would be much superior to others, and the league races would rapidly lessen in interest. So there must be buying and selling of players.

It is true that the more important teams in Canada are composed chiefly of players from the United States. But it must not be forgotten that Canada has furnished some of the greatest players connected with teams across the line. The bigger country has produced the greater number of players. But must Canada keep out players from the United States and so see a poorer line of baseball. And ought Canadian players be forbidden to sign with teams that pay better salaries than Canadian teams?

It has become customary among some people to refer to the members of any city's professional baseball team as "aliens" or "hired men." Admitting that each city's team is composed largely of men from other places, one can see several points that give spectators a realization that each game is a real contest between two cities. The business judgment of the men behind baseball in one city is pitted against the same element in the other cities.

A hundred big and little details, all of which have their effect on the game, are dealt with by each city's own men. Good home grounds, well looked after, may mean a difference of one win or more in a season. Much depends upon the staging of the game so as to minister to the comfort and enjoyment of both spectators and players; and this point also is in the hands of the men in each city who are behind that city's baseball. Finally, the loyalty and fairness of the spectators of each city are not by any means negligible factors in the winning of games. The shrieking, fickle fan is probably not the help in winning games that he is imagined to be. If he gets the opposing pitcher "rattled," does he not "rattle" also the home team's batters and runners? But a team is surely helped by such items as the presence of a big crowd, the applause greeting both good plays and good attempts and peremptory cries from loyal fans to disloyal ones to "Quit yer knockin'." Other things being equal, the city that has a big, loyal crowd pulling for its team is certain to beat out the cities that have many disloyal or lukewarm fans.

## THE PRIZE RECIPROCITY LETTER

MR. JAMES F. NAPIER, of Montreal, is the winner of the prize offered at the beginning of the present election campaign for the best 100-word letter on reciprocity. There were at least half a dozen others between whom and Mr. Napier it was a toss as to merit.

In judging the values of such letters, more than politics must be considered. Chesterfieldian politeness as a letter-writer of course was not taken into account. Choice of diction was not a factor. Nor was mere cleverness in argument the criterion. The winning letter contains a percentage of all these elements. But it has something more.

We hope that some readers of THE COURIER have been benefitted by the discussions in these letters. It is too much to hope either that the fate of the government has been decided by this forum, or that any great number of votes has been swung by the discussion. We believe, however, that the whole philosophy of the greatest election campaign since Confederation is contained in these letters, if one but had time to dig it out. We regret also that a large number of letters came in too late for publication before the election.

### THE WINNING LETTER.

Sir,—I shall vote Liberal because reciprocity gives to us a larger market for our agricultural products, thereby strengthening the principal industry of the country. The larger the market the cheaper the product. More farmers means more manufacturers, creating a demand for mechanics, which means higher wages. Reciprocity gives the fruit grower a market for the fruit that cannot be shipped long distances. It would also give us in the large cities cheaper fruits and vegetables. It would cause new railroads to be built, and, in general, add to the prosperity of our country.

Montreal.

SUNNY JIM.