

## BASEBALL

*By Capt. Wilbur Lowry*

Like a vast number of our games "Baseball" had its origin in England. Like rounders the game requires a ball, a bat and bases but it has in addition developed a set of rules and regulations which make it far different. Baseball is mentioned by Jane Austen in one of her books in 1798.

As an organized sport it was not played in America till 1845. The first regular society, the Knickerbocker Club, N. Y., founded in the fall of that year. The next club, the Excelsior Club, Brooklyn, N. Y., formed in 1860 was the best club of its time. The game was almost obsolete till 1865 when it started to spread throughout the United States and became reorganized as a profession. It has not found favour in England though several attempts have been made to popularize it.

A short description though dull and dry to most of the Readers of the "News" might be of interest to some. Three or four acres of ground are required, a ninety foot square with bases at each angle called home, first, second and third, travelling against the clock. Each team consists of nine players. The defensive side are in at the bat, the offensive team is in the field playing the following positions; Pitcher in the center of the square, the Catcher behind the home base, Basemen near bases, Short-stop between second and third bases, the fielders beyond the square. The object of the defensive team is to send the ball out of reach of the opposing players and so enable him to make the round of bases safely. Each base is a safe resting place till the runner gets a chance to go on. All the bases may be occupied at once. A player can only run on a fair hit inside the field.

A "Strike" is called when the defending player strikes at the ball or it passes over the plate below the level of his neck or above his knees, all other balls are called "Balls."

A player is out when a fly is caught or the ball reaches a base before him. When three men are out the side is out.

Pitching has become an art in itself, the swift ball allows curves to be produced, this renders the ball more difficult of control, but is more difficult to hit.

The game requires good catching, throwing and running powers combined with courage, nerve, good judgment and quick perception of what to do in the field. The game is quick and lively, it is indulged in by schoolboys and professional experts. It allows full scope for the exercise of the mental and physical attributes which make the practiced athlete.

The greatest drawback is the frequency with which the umpire's decision is required. There is scarcely a play made which does not require this decision. A second one is the tendency for the game to develop into a duel between the pitchers.