

Professionalism—Its Rise and Growth.

THE entrance of the professional into the various sporting circles of the day has been marked by much antagonism. Yet in spite of this feeling against him, wherever he has made his appearance, he has been accepted as a necessity. In Europe, in the United States and in Upper Canada he has gained a firm footing, and in the past year for the first time has invaded the Maritime provinces. Hence the question of his right to exist is a very live one among us.

Now there are a great many things to be said both for and against professionalism. In this short essay, however, it will be necessary to confine ourselves to the discussion of only a few of the most outstanding features.

One of the first objections to professionalism, advanced by its enemies, is the cheapening influence of the commercialism that the "pro" drags along with him. These amateur supporters claim that the aim of sport should be pleasure and that honor rather than commercial gain should be its reward; that where the hockey or foot-ball player is paid a salary for each rush he makes down the ice or the campus they cannot but realize that he is going to get his dollars for it.

Thus the pride that they used to take in the local player, the enthusiasm with which they were accustomed to follow his brilliant dashes, and the sympathy they gave to his reverses, alike vanish. The sport is cheapened, lowered in their eyes to the plane of the horse-race or the prize fight.

And there is much truth in their contention. We cannot look upon the professional in quite the same light as the amateur. Picture the runner of the first Marathon or the winners of the great games in ancient Athens receiving at the end of the contest a stipulated wage instead of the laurel wreath! I cannot but believe that our respect for these first great combatants would thereby greatly suffer.

Again the anti-professional urges that the rising local men, in whose interests and toward the further efficiency of whom the benefits derived from the playing should be invested are, with the entrance of the "pro" relegated to a secondary and obscure position. But we will return to a discussion of this again when presenting the other side of the question.

The last, and perhaps the most potent objection raised against the professional that we will consider is,—That while the different players