

BASEBALL!

(By Dave Wyatt.)

Recent happenings in baseball circles amongst Negroes have a decided tendency to cause one to feel that the game, as a business proposition, is fast and surely reaching the point to where it is a dying struggle for existence. The Negro first gained prominence in baseball as a traveling attraction and, as such, he was a wonderful success; away back in the early nineties, it was an ordinary state of affairs for a colored club to play league clubs upon league parks. Of course in those days he was considered a novelty as an attraction, running a close second to a circus. There was not such a hoard of minor leagues and semi-pro clubs as that of today; so the Negro athletes had smooth sailing. One club, the old Page Fence Giants, traveled over the country in a private car. They were also furnished bicycles and the players did all the towns in which they played upon the machines, thereby furnishing much advertising for their wares. The scheme was one for advertising purposes and the Page Fence (Woven Wire) Co. and a bicycle firm stood sponsors. The organization had quite a run of prosperity until the companies withdrew their financial support. When thrown upon their own resources they began to sink. It was then that Gus Parsons, their white manager, sought a way to rid himself of them. Parsons was a wise old owl in the business of handling the semi-pro or independent baseball operations. He unloaded the gang upon an organization of colored men known as the Columbia Club and composed of a number of the richest, most influential and biggest business Negroes in Chicago. The baseball teams was perhaps one of the greatest aggregations of colored ball players ever put together. They were planted in a park which is the exact plot of ground now occupied as a home by the American Giants. They were surrounded with luxuries such as a colored player never dreamed of. They had traveling and home uniforms and it was a special point of the business management to see that all uniforms were cleaned, pressed and creased for all Sunday games.

In spite of the financial resources behind the club the active life of the baseball team was about three years. Many persons have been of the opinion that because the American League located upon the same plot and adjacent to them that it contributed mainly to their downfall. In time, it would have, but the fact is the club was floundering before the White Sox located there. They were in a bad way for attractions that would draw and at the same time put a decent showing against the strong team that they owned. However, if you will scan back over the baseball horizon you will find that about three years has been the average life of prosperity of about all Negro baseball organizations doing park business, that have come to life within the last fifteen years. The American Giants have perhaps had a longer lease of life than any, but they had their ups and downs and today are facing the same proposition that the Columbia Giants faced—that is, they have to almost form baseball clubs themselves in order to have attractions for themselves. The Columbia's often loaned the visiting club a battery in order to insure a decent showing. The conditions at that time were just about as they are now—there were enough clubs but they were only mediocre in playing ability. After a club had traveled all week playing to small business and then, perhaps, make a long jump back to Chicago for a Sunday to a lot of empty seats, sure the business didn't go. A man running a baseball plant now has a little better chance, but happenings of the past few weeks would indicate that—to use the familiar stuff—the country ain't safe. You couldn't make the most poorly posted baseball bug believe that the class of clubs in on the deal at the recent baseball meeting at Indianapolis, have a line-up fit for show against the strong aggregation that is doing business in "Chi," eliminating, of course, the Cubans and Taylor's clubs, we might

be safe in saying that if our only salvation has come to that, we might as well close up shop and go to war.

Acting upon the theory that with Chicago in the closed town class on Sunday, and the large portion of the Southern exodus that has settled here, you can bank on a large crowd no matter who or what the class of teams that show. These fellows who put a couple of hundred dollars into a set of uniforms, balls and bats are like the majority of players; they have no thought of the future, they only seek a little notoriety for the present. They are doing the game much harm; business men or persons of influence and means are detracted from baseball as a business by their acts; it is an ordinary occurrence for that sort of so-called baseball mogul to accept a flat guarantee of \$200 and play to a \$900 or \$1,500 house. In that way they became affiliated with the big ring and are used as a wedge, making an opening by which others must enter. After one show you never hear of them any more. This does not make for success. The fellow who gets into baseball with no financial resources has no particular standing or credit in his community, or has no baseball business knowledge or ability to get out and hustle, and who is willing, for a paltry sum, to take any kind of a part in any kind of a movement, no matter what the effect or result may be to the worthy in baseball, should be tabooed and discouraged.

The Cuban baseball men are wise to the shortcomings of the colored fellows in baseball and have started out with renewed energy, the main object is to corral all the best baseball dates that is possible. They have two clubs traveling in the states and did last season have the third one located at Long Branch, N. J. Aside from that three or four of the gang were with the All Nations Club from out West. These fellows all work in harmony and are dragging down more real baseball coin than twice their number of our colored boys. There is no doubt but what a goodly portion of this money reaches the same spot for distribution. The Cubans always make it a point to have a snappy and peppery line-up and are a big drawing card wherever booked. However, the club which is showing in these parts now has many new faces, about the only familiar ones being Padron, the pitcher; Pedrosa and Junco. There is not a single player upon the club who was with the gang when they made their appearance here during the season of

1908, unless it be Figarola, who acts as business manager and change catcher. Chacon, the great little shortstop is with the club of Cubans playing East, while some of the other well-known stars, it is said, are out around Kansas City. At any rate the bunch doing business here are showing us enough to make us fear them, that is, if their showing against the C. I. Taylor A. B. C.s is a criterion upon which to go. The Cubans won out in a five-game series and I guess there was not much fluke to it, either. The Cubans batted for a percentage of .182, which looks small. They fielded for a percentage of .975; they had 4 stolen bases; 4 double plays (3 in the last game), and in the series tabed up 7 sacrifices. They worked Taylor's pitchers for 9 bases on balls. Against their record the A. B. C.s batted .280, fielded, 968, stole 2 bases, 4 sacrifice hits, pulled 11 bases on balls, 3 double plays and one triple play. The Taylorites had 19 men left on bases while the Cubans had 29 stranded on the sacks. The record of the clubs run so close together that it is hard or difficult to determine just how the Cubans won out. At any rate, they seemed to excel in offensive strength, the 7 sacrifice hits and 4 stolen bases, together with their fast fielding, seems to be the winning ticket.—The Freeman.

Necessities instead of luxuries are being taxed by the U. S. senators. What more could be expected from a millionaire's club.

Hindenburg may have paraphrased Grant's famous line so that it reads: "We'll fight it out on this line if I have to take the line with me."—New York Morning Telegraph.

When the Stars and Stripes were flung to the breeze from the peak of Parliament House, London papers commented that it was the first time a foreign flag had ever flown over Westminster. Excepting, of course, the flags on those German Zeppelins.—Nashville Southern Lumberman.

Cumberland University has a law professor ninety-one years of age, who is at his class room every school day of the week, which he has done for sixty-one years. Doubtless this accounts for the mireable laws of Tennessee as well as their ridiculous execution. The South is the seat of fogydom and here is one of the promulgators.

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