



YOUNG PRINCETON MAN WHO IS CREATING A SENSATION IN THE "NATIONAL" AND "INTERNATIONAL" LEAGUES

—Chicago Record-Herald.

Methods and Morals in Baseball

Did you ever know that McInnis, Collins, Barry and Baker, that famous \$100,000 infield of the world's champion Athletics, never have known the taste of alcoholic liquors?

Did you ever know that Connie Mack, the manager of the world's champions, can, at a moment's notice put nine first-string men on the field who never took a drink in all their lives?

These revelations are made in an article by Harry Beach Needham in a May magazine article. It is an interview with Connie Mack, whose Philadelphia Americans, during the thirteen years of their existence, have brought home five pennants and three world's championships.

"Clean living and quick thinking," is the title of the Needham article. It tells at first hand—right from the man who knows all about it—how a system of right living makes the real champion ball player.

It is a story with a fine moral. It's about baseball, but it can be well applied to almost any walk of life. Mack, the master of the diamond, opens up his heart and soul and divulges the secrets which have caused so much speculation for these many years.

"It was directly after the world's championship had been won by the Athletics for the third time—a record—that a broad-minded newspaper editor, who is hardly to be classed as a baseball fan," says Needham, "remarked that Connie Mack had more influence with the youth of America than any other man he could name.

"All over the country," said the editor, "mothers are telling their boys that if they want to stand high in sport, if they aspire to be champions, they must not drink—they must lead clean lives. The victory of Mack and his team is a triumph for clean living.

Asked for an explanation as to the

consistent class shown by the champion Athletics, Mack said:

"I have come to the conclusion that the continued class shown by the Athletics can be put down—if you want to in a sentence, right over the plate—to clean living and quick thinking.

"And without the one you can't have the other—the quick thinking. There's nothing to that. Temperance is a fine thing—and don't get the wrong angle on that temperance. For one thing, it applies just as much to eating. One of the most brilliant players of the last ten years ate his way out of the American league. If you think that's far-fetched remember that a former citizen of my home town, Ben Franklin, spoke of men who 'dug their graves with their teeth.' I would make the guess that more folks die from over-eating than from starvation—that is, in America."

The master of the diamond then proceeds to speak more specifically of the booze.

"Who puts the ball player out of the game? You would naturally say the umpire, wouldn't you? Well, all the umpires together haven't put as many ball players out of the game as Old Man Booze.

"Now, don't get off on the wrong foot. Boozing is not common among the highgrade ball players. It was common twenty years ago, but today it is rare in the majors—boozing. Keep in mind, though that steady moderate drinking gets a ball player in the end, just as sure as boozing. Alcohol slows a man down inevitably, and slowing down is the reason for the shelving of by far the majority of players. If you estimate a clever player's years in baseball at fifteen, why, moderate drinking will cut off from three to five years—third of his life of the diamond."

Mack's method in dealing with a youngster is best illustrated by a single example which he cited. Mr.

Needham quotes Connie as follows:

"Going south one spring I took quite a fancy to a youngster who was to be tried out. I liked his looks and I liked his line of talk—above all I liked his high spirits. Seemed to me that he would be there fighting all the time—never down in the mouth and ready to quit.

"So, having taken such a fancy to him, I began to pry into his private life, a little, but in such a way as to make him see that I was—you know—really interested in him, not merely curious about his own affairs.

"I inquired if he drank. Well, that young fellow was frank and above-board about it. Said he took a drink once in a while—a glass of beer occasionally, sometimes a whiskey; but almost always he drank to be sociable—to be a good fellow.

"Do you ever go a while without drinking?" I asked him.

"Sure," he exclaimed. "Sometimes I go two weeks or a month without taking a drink."

"Don't you miss it?" I asked him.

"Not a bit; never miss it at all."

"I kept quiet a few minutes. Then I came at the youngster this way:

"Of course, I understand—I know your drinking doesn't amount to anything. But if any one were to ask me about you, of course I could not ring in exceptions—I'd have to say you drink." Here I stopped, to let it sink in, then I went on:

"Now, so long as you don't miss it when you're not taking it, if I were you I'd think it over and decide whether the drinking was worth classing yourself with those who do drink—with those who can't get along without the stuff."

"Say, in two days that youngster came to me and said: 'Mr. Mack, if anybody asks you whether I drink you tell 'em I don't—for I do not drink.'"

Mack relates an interesting incident relating to the world series with the Cubs when the Athletics won the championship title for the first time. Prior to the opening of the series the Athletics were called into conference by the manager and every man made to pledge that he would not, under any circumstances, take a drink of liquor of any kind until the series had ended. Mack impressed it upon them that they would need 100 per cent of their efficiency in this crucial series and that no man must fail.

"I suggested," said Mack, "that every man on the squad who felt sure that he could go without a drink, if in the habit of drinking, was to say so openly and before us all. But any man that wasn't dead sure was to insist on having his drink—and nobody was going to deny it to him. Around the room we went—and every player promised. Of course, you understand that a number didn't need to—never touched it.

"There was a star of the old Athletics—who was still with us as utility man. He seldom got into games, but was always ready and he made a valuable man to do the coaching at third—the only place it counts for anything. Up to the last game of the series this player didn't handle a ball or swing a bat. But he did his share of winning games on the coaching line. When the fourth game was over—the count was 3 to 1 in our favor—he certainly was in bad shape; had a fierce cold, could hardly speak above a whisper, and seemed to be in for a setto with the grip. I wasn't surprised to have him come to me about himself. Near as I can recall it our talk was like this:

"Connie, I'm a sick man. If I don't take something to brace me up, I'll be in bed tomorrow."

"You mean, you want to take a drink? I asked him.

"He acknowledged it."

"All right; go ahead," I told him.

"Do as you think best. But, if it were me, I'd die before I took a drink."

"He looked at me, saw I was in dead earnest, and said: 'No drink for me, Connie.'

"Say, he wasn't in bed the next day; he was in the game. I put him in to help start our scoring machine. He stole second at a critical moment of the game, which a slow-thinking slow-acting man couldn't have done against Archer. And he brought in the first run of the rally that cinched the world's title—all without his drink."

Quick thinking, quick acting by men who nearly always measure up to 100 per cent of efficiency is the secret of Athletic success, according to the temperate Connie, and this efficiency, he maintains, results from the right order of living.

There is no "night life" among the Athletics. "There are no 'sports' in his crowd, says the manager, and every one of his men is expected to lead a clean life.

And while knocking the booze game and the "sport" life which sends players late to bed and makes them tardy in their rising, Cornelius McGillicuddy (his right name) puts in this gentle boost for matrimony:

"I'm not one of those who sits on a fellow and tries to talk him out of getting married, even if he is a youngster making a comparatively small salary. If I make up my mind that the girl's all right, I—I encourage him to go ahead and hitch up for life. Good wives have a strong influence on high-strung ball players. They help their husbands to think quick, because they help them to live clean."—Nebraska State Journal.

Our idea of a busybody is a person who convinces us that we are mistaken about something.—Ex.

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