

# Contributing Editor's Page



Ban. B. Johnson

# The National Sunday Magazine Section

## The Greatest Game in the World

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**B**ASEBALL appears to be having a more direct and permanent civilizing influence in the Philippines than has been inspired by the fear of bayonets and battleships. Such is the interesting, though not exactly surprising report from our Far Eastern possessions—and it contains food for comment and reflection. Far in the interior of the several islands, where the natives have little use for clothing other than the traditional loin cloth, one can find stored away for safekeeping the apparatus necessary to play baseball.

Recently, in fact, a company of constabulary landed from a steamer on Jolo Island, and shortly afterward received an object lesson in the far-reaching results of the game as taught by the American soldiers. As the military were pitching camp, they heard a tremendous uproar. Cautiously deploying through the jungle they reached a clearing, whence the sounds came, and perceived a ball game in spirited progress, with some thousand natives making pandemonium over a home-run.

Baseball, as a colonizing or as a domestic influence, is medicine for millions—and its endorsement by the Philippines and by growing numbers of Orientals simply confirms the verdict of the western world. Baseball, in the best and biggest way of probably any game, involves the spirit of fair play. Free of that destroying element, gambling—the bane of so many sports—the game calls for the highest development of the mind and eye of the player, and has positively no equal as an all-round popular exhibition of athletic skill. Add the element of luck, or chance, and the result is an out-door game about as near perfect as human ingenuity can make it.

No harmful influence is ever exerted in behalf of the game, no artificial stimulant is needed to keep it alive. There is no place in baseball for the gambler; no room in the ball park for his evil presence. The game, notwithstanding loose occasional charges, stands solely and honestly on its merits.

### The Squarest of All Games

**I**N the heat of an exciting race for the pennant, with clock-work organizations in rivalry, imagination sometimes runs riot and assertions are made, under stress of excitement, that games are not played on the level. As a matter of fact, to fix a ball game, that is, to arrange in advance a scheme whereby one team would be sure to win, would be harder than drawing water out of an empty well.

If the game were not honest, it stands to reason that New York, which spends more money on it than any two other American cities, would never have a cellar team. Furthermore, a player might very often succumb to temptation and throw a game to an opponent.

As an instance: Late in the season of 1908, the New York Yankees and the Detroit Tigers were playing the last inning in the final game of a series of three. It was a vitally important game. Detroit was making a desperate

fight for the pennant, hard pressed by Cleveland, St. Louis and Chicago. The score was five to four in favor of the Tigers, with New York, a cellar team, at bat for the last time—a runner being on both second and third, and two out. The New York batter, as it happened, knew that he was soon to be traded to the Tigers, and that he would share in the championship prize money if Detroit won the pennant. Nevertheless, displaying ordinary loyalty to his team, he made a hit which scored the two men on bases—and Detroit lost the game.

There are two reasons why baseball must be above suspicion. It would be poor sport and a still poorer business proposition if it were not. Its lure is the lure of a game where the best man wins. Each is fighting genuinely, desperately to win. The spectators are thrilled by the zest of a real contest, by the matching of skill against skill, stirring sluggish corpuscles and shaking lethargy into life. It is the call of good sport, and good sport cannot be manufactured. This is not only common sense. It is tested psychology. Considered from a business angle, a fixed baseball game would be commercially suicidal. The fact would be bound to creep to the public—and every player knows that proof of crookedness would spell ruin.

### Millions Are Involved

**S**IXTEEN million people see American baseball games each season. The expenses of a major league will run to a million dollars in one year, without including the salaries of league officials, the business staffs

of the local teams, ground rent, taxes and other items. One hundred thousand dollars a season are spent for transportation, another sixty-five thousand for hotel accommodations. The bill for sleeping cars and meals en route for a single team may easily amount to thirty thousand dollars. Salaries to players will approximate eight hundred thousand dollars and the item of umpires adds another thirty thousand. Baseball is a big business investment and risk. The men who take the risk and put up the money are not going to jeopardize lightly or recklessly their chances of getting it back. Crooked baseball would be a flat business and sporting failure. Furthermore, there is no record of a man retiring from the game with a fortune, with the possible exception of a Chicago individual.

Once let the game be smirched by the malevolent influence of gambling, and the whole structure would topple to the ground. Other sports have been wrecked by the betting evil; but the men who now have baseball in their care, have profited by the lessons of others and there is little danger that the sinister shadow of the gambler ever will fall across the diamond.



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