

I came at the youngster this way: 'Of course, I understand—I know your drinking doesn't amount to anything. But if anybody was to ask me about you, of course I couldn't 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 is 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.*"

"Perhaps there's something like a tip in that," commented Mack. "Any business man who has to handle men can take it for what it's worth. I haven't any patent on it, although it's my method."

"But that was a raw recruit. Could you handle a veteran in the same way?"

"What I'm going to tell you now happened at the time the Athletics hooked up with the Chicago Cubs for the World's Championship. I've said that our club has no regular rules. Somehow, because of reports about previous series, I was unnecessarily anxious. So I took the players into conference: reminded them how, in some former World's Series, the stories went about the circuit that the losing team had dissipated and hadn't played their best baseball. I told our players that if the stories were true, then it was an example of awfully poor business, with sixty per cent of the players' pool going to the winners, as against forty per cent to the losers.

"Then I told our boys that I, for

one, did not want any such reports flying round later about the Athletics. It would be bad enough to lose the championship, I reminded them, without having a bundle of regrets to pester you. It's hard enough to lose to a better club, but to beat ourselves—say, that's another way of throwing away a game when you have won.

"After this little talk on 'efficiency' I suggested 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—the team that met the Giants in 1905—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 then 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 set-to with the grip. I wasn't surprised to have him come to me about himself. Near as I can recall it, our talk went 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 was 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!

"Next season when we played the Giants for the title, it wasn't necessary to put it on any ground other than the club's own experience. 'Total abstinence worked so well last year, why change to something different this year?' was my argument. Anyhow, every man promised willingly—and we beat the Giants.

"The following year—1912—three of my men didn't take care of themselves, and we lost the pennant. Somehow, I've always thought it was our year to win it."

"How about last year—1913?"

Connie Mack smiled in unalloyed contentment. "Well, now I don't need to exact promises. At the banquet tendered the Athletics by the City Fathers in October,—just to let the boys know that their efforts in keeping Philadelphia on the map were appreciated,—one of the best speeches, in my opinion, was made by Ira Thomas. Ira speaks as well as he knows how to catch—which is going some for the man who out-caught Kling and Archer and made 'Chief' Meyers look to his laurels.

"'We don't look up to Connie Mack as a manager,' said Ira, 'but as a father.' Then he went on to give his idea of the Athletics—first as a ball

club, but more especially as men. He told those present that not a man on the 'hundred-thousand-dollar infield,' as it is popularly called, had 'ever known the taste of liquor,' and that a team of nine first-string men could be put in the field not one of whom had ever taken a drink! Taken in conjunction with his first remarks,—his hand-out to me,—I felt highly pleased about it. It meant not only success, but the right kind of success, as I look at it.

"About twenty years ago," continued Mack, "when catching for the Pittsburgh Nationals, I was taken by surprise one day. The owners of the club offered me the management. It was too attractive a proposition to turn down, and I took the reins and did my level best to make a winning ball club. My notion was that ball-players fit for the major league, with certainty of employment and real money assured them, would keep themselves in good physical condition as a matter of course. But I found they wouldn't, and that I couldn't induce them to—not the players I had under me in those days. That's the reason why I went to the minors—went of my own volition: because I wanted to learn how to handle men.

"I learned—and I came back. Since then, or in thirteen seasons, our club has won five American League pennants and three World's Championships. Could anybody wonder why I am partial to clean living and quick thinking?"

"You say you have no rules about the players' personal habits?"

"Not a rule," said Mack positively.

"Don't you ever discuss the subject?"

"Sure I do—in our morning talks. You know, we have baseball talks every morning. Of course, the gen-

eral idea is to go over carefully points in the game of the day before, and also to plan for the day's battle. Well, I take every opportunity to discuss drinking. There will be days, you can see, when the last game requires no discussion, and when the coming game is with a team we know very well—in other words, we've got our plan of attack thoroughly worked out. So I switch from baseball to highballs."

"What do you hang it on—what's your angle of approach?"

"Maybe one thing, maybe another," said Mack. "Perhaps we've heard about certain members of the opposing team—perhaps we know of some of the players have been making a night of it. Then I tell our boys it may not show today; it may possibly not show in their playing tomorrow; but it's sure to show the day after."

Getting Hold of a "Wild" Player

"How do you get hold of a player who is inclined to be wild? How do you appeal to him?"

"I make my appeal from four different sides," said Mack. "First, from the standpoint of the public—the people who pay their twenty-five, fifty, seventy-five cents, or a dollar to see good baseball. They are entitled to see the player at his best—not slowed up by drink. Second, from the standpoint of the club—the player gets a good salary for which he owes his best services. I say that the man who doesn't do his best is dishonest with the club. The third appeal is from the standpoint of a man's fellow players—it isn't fair to the other members of the team to have one important part of the baseball machine going bad, as we say. Fourth, I put it straight to the man himself: tell him that he

isn't honest with himself—that he isn't giving himself a fair chance. I find that in one of these four ways I can get to a man.

"Of course," explained Mack, "I don't single a man out and aim my remarks at him personally in the morning talk. I talk generally—vaguely, as far as the object of my remarks is concerned—but straight to the point. I shoot an arrow into the air—you know the rest. It generally strikes home."

"Is this all about drinking—or do you touch on other bad habits—other violations of clean living?"

"Mainly about drinking," answered Mack. "Other matters I always talk to a player alone about. I got my idea on this when I first broke into professional baseball. I was playing on a minor league team, and a number of the players were sports. They wouldn't be tolerated a minute on a big league team now. The manager was an outspoken, decidedly coarse fellow. The way he used to talk to us was fierce. So I decided then that there were matters relating to a player's habits which should be talked about between manager and player alone. That's what I do now—and it's the hardest part of a manager's job.

Marriage and Baseball.

"Say, I'm not one of those who sit on a fellow and try to talk him out of getting married, even if he's 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 baseball-players. They help their husbands to think quick, because they help them to live clean."

"Necessarily there are exceptions—even under your system; isn't it so?"

"Sure; I have had my own troubles," admitted Mack; "players who broke over the traces—got to drinking hard and wouldn't pull up. Right here," cautioned Mack. "I want to be very general. Aren't there fake names in law, such as John Doe and Richard Roe?" he asked.

"Well, once on a time, as the story books would say," began Mack, "there was a baseball manager with a club that was expected to win a pennant. He had two stars—John Doe and Richard Roe. Richard was lacking in will power, but John wasn't. The trouble about John was that he thought he had arrived at the top of his profession. There was nothing further for him, no greater honor, in baseball. He certainly was satisfied with himself.

"John and Richard got to boozing during the winter, and kept it up after the baseball season was under way. The manager talked drinking to the squad, and to the two men, taking them one at a time. But it didn't seem to have the slightest effect on them. They appeared to be hardened.

"The manager wanted to win that pennant—wanted to win bad. So he went along, putting up with the misconduct of the two stars, trying to brace them up and hoping that matters would change—that every man on the team would come to play his best ball. The manager didn't give up the pennant until he knew there wasn't the slightest chance. But about six weeks before the close of the season it was dead certain that the flag was lost. The two recalcitrant stars were still misbehaving. So the manager called John Doe and Richard Roe up to his room at the hotel—the team was on the road—and told them to pack up and go home; that they weren't helping the club, but were holding it back;

that they weren't any good to anybody, least of all to themselves.

"John and Richard went home. After the season was over—the pennant lost—they came to see the manager. By this time they had got some sense in their heads. John Doe, who had thought himself so high up, found that he was falling off that perch—that not only his prospects but the reputation he had made as a great player were on the wane. Richard saw that his means of livelihood was going glimmering. They were pretty badly scared—and they wouldn't have faced their manager if they hadn't been in need of money.

"Well, the manager went at them hard. He didn't only tell them they musn't drink when the season was on—he told them they had to stop immediately! He impressed on John and Richard that they would get no contract with the club if they hadn't cut booze out altogether before the season opened. You wouldn't think—now, would you?—that men who couldn't or wouldn't stop drinking in mid-season would stop absolutely after the season was over? But they did. John and Richard pulled up short. When the next season opened they were in A-1 condition, having fine constitutions. And they played great ball for the club!

The Player Who Saves His Money.

"Another thing: after their 'come-back' they began to be careful with their money. And say—the player who saves his money is the player who doesn't drink, every time!

"If you stop to think about it, there's nothing strange in this. Why, for a comparison, take the liquor trade—the men in the liquor business. Ninety-nine per cent of the men in the business who put away money

leave the stuff alone—leave it to their customers. There's nothing to that.

"Before we drop the story, let me tell you another important thing John and Richard learned in their experience. When they were going wild, they thought that their friends were those who would take them out and treat them—give them what they then called a 'good time.' But they came to see that these so-called friends were those who stripped them of everything, down to the means of making a living. It's a good thing to find out who your friends are."

"Suppose we jump from cause to effect," I suggested. "How about the quick thinking?"

Connie Mack beamed. Quick thinking hits him right where he lives.

"I guess we won't slow down here," he said. "Trouble is to know where to begin and where to leave off. You're on a subject now that could easily go into extra innings. Let's begin with a youngster."

"There's Schang, our brilliant young back-stop, who, the season before he came to us, was catching for a semi-pro team in Buffalo, and who then had a short experience with the International League club of that city. In the World's Series, at an important stage of the game, with the Giant's at bat, Murray was on third and Cooper on first. McGraw signaled Cooper to steal second; at the same time Murray was given the tip to start as if to come home. Schang took two steps in front of the plate, bluffed Murray back to third by pretending to throw, and then caught Cooper, who is a very fast man, at second. It was the consensus of opinion that Schang's strategy and throw taken together, constituted as sensational a play as was ever seen on the diamond. It sure was

quick thinking—by a steady clean-liver.

"The same game brought Bender to the front—in that quick thinking. I doubt if many in attendance gave the 'Chief' credit for a splendid piece of strategy. When the fifth inning began, the Athletics had a lead of 4 to 1. But troubles started when Bender passed Murray, who legged it to third on McLean's single. McGraw immediately substituted the fleet-footed Cooper to run for McLean.

"Bender put on steam and fanned Merkle on four pitched balls. But the danger was by no means over, for McGraw sent in his formidable pinch-hitter, McCormick, to bat for the pitcher. At sight of him, the 'Chief' motioning with his gloved hand behind his back, pulled Oldring, our left-fielder, in from deep field. Oldring was playing too far out to get McCormick—on the first ball Bender intended to pitch.

"What happened? McCormick knocked a low liner over the short-stop's head. Oldring sprinted in and caught it brilliantly shoe-high, at the same time holding the runners to their bases. Now, if Bender hadn't brought Oldring in from deep left to 'lay' for McCormick, the Giant's pinch-hitter would have made a safe hit, scored a run, and put a man on second—perhaps third, with but one out. A rally, in other words, was nipped in the bud—by Bender's foresight. That was the turning point in the game, which ended, you will remember, with the score 6 to 5 in our favor. Murray's run would have made it a tie—Cooper's would have meant the loss of the game. So I look upon Bender's bit of strategy as a great factor in the contest. Only a steady, clear head could have prepared for that emergency.