

Aesop's Baseball Fables

By W. A. PHELON

THE FABLE OF THE LUCKY STAB

ROMPING blithely in the Major Crowd, getting the Large Money year after year, and yet, according to the Jealous Athletes, always playing in nothing but Bull Luck, was a Performer who never knew the Cold Touch of Misfortune and never had a Justifiable Grouch for any Reason. This Son of Good Fortune didn't have much of an Arm, and this was Lucky, because he had to Steady Himself for the Peg to First, and Never heaved them into the Madding Throng. He hadn't Much Speed on Bases, and here again he was Lucky, because he had to study how to Make the Neat Getaway from First, and thus Stole Cushions where other Gazimbats slid madly to a Certain Doom. As to his Batting Ability, the other Players asserted that it was Beneath Contemptible Mention, and so, no Doubt, it Was.

The Lucky Player had a Bad Stand at the Plate, and, when a Fast One came too close, he Stuck his Hind Hoof in the Water Bucket. It was Atrocious to see him abuse all Rules of Proper Batting, but, strange to say, he got his Hits and got them day after Diem. If a Hot one with a big Hop whizzed at him, he would Duck, the ball would invariably hit his Bat, and Bound into the Outfield for two Bases. If the Pitcher tried a seductive slow Fooler, this Lucky Yopp would Swing from the Ankles, and put it over the Barriers for a Homer. He couldn't Bat, he was Gunshy, and he Couldn't learn a Thing, but he turned up each Autumn with an average round .334, and his Uniform was Hung with Horseshoes.

When the Warclouds Hung Over the Universe, and the Lucky Geezer got Caught in the Draft, it was Merrily remarked that his Luck had Finally Quit him, but he never Batted an Eyelash. He acted just the Same, at Camp, as he had Done on the Diamond—he was Gunshy and he was Awkward—but he would shut his Lamps, Shoot in the Air, and the Top-Sergeant would yowl "Bullseye." When he reached the Battle-Front, after being Missed En Route by Three Torpedoes, he proceeded to Demonstrate the same old Bull Luck without Undue Delay. They shot at him Frequently and never touched him, and when he shot Back, Fritz or Heinle keeled over with a Farewell Stutter. If a Trench caved in, this Bird had just Left it; if a Bomb Fell, it always Lit just where he had been Standing but didn't happen to be Right Then. So it went with Old Horseshoes till one Lively Morning, when he was facing a Massed attack. Somebody Slung a Largo Grenade; the Lucky Pelican Squawed and Dove—and the Grenade, Rebounding from the butt of his Rifle, just as the ball used to Bounce from his Bat, went right Back into the Hostile Ranks, Killed Three Generals and One Field Marshal, and Broke the Charge in two.

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And at the next World's Series, it was Gen. Lucky Guy, the same old Child of Fortune, who was the National Commission's Guest of Honor, and who, Roosting in the Foremost Field Box, modestly told how He was always in Great Luck, and how sorry

he was that he Couldn't Bat .390 now excepting in the Game of War.

MORAL—If you are always Lucky, go ahead Over There—your Luck won't Change. And if you are Unlucky in baseball, maybe you will be a Whale upon the Battlefield.

THE FABLE OF THE ATHLETE'S APPETITE

RANGING the Circuit, and giving excellent Value for the Cash his ballclub Paid him, a Tall Young Slugger Roved and Rampaged. This boy could Sting Them when the Southpaws worked their Corkscrews, and could Mash them when the Regular Human Beings sent them over with a nice Fast Hop upon them. Once upon the Bases, he could travel like a Man who sees Three Creditors Approaching, and he Never gummed the Traffic, nor did he Spike the Runner just before him in the Heel. He Hit the Ball, he ran those Bases cleverly, and there was no trace of African Tusk or slow Ossification in his Calibre. Incidentally, be it Noted, this Boy could Eat. Oh, how this Boy could Slay the Chow, and Devastate the bill of Fare! When he Neared the Table, Waiters who Knew him simply Arranged to make Things Cloudy round his section of the Bailiwick, and those who didn't Know him were soon Apprised that they had been Handed a Job of Heavy Lifting combined with Consecutive Carrying. When, he took his Chair, he Beamed Beauteously on the other Fellows round the Board, then seized the Menu in a Strong Right hand. After a Brief Perusal, he would Launch his Order, and the Details thereof would be Enough to Weigh Heavily on the Mind of the Average African Servitor. Summarizing it in Few Words, this Lad seemed Determined to eat his Way through the Big League and Back again, and he was the Dining-room Cobb of both the Circuits. If he Hit .315 out on the Ballyard, he Batted .679 at the Festive Board, and Fielded 1.000 Straight, for not a Thing Got by him.

During a Recent jump of the Club, Things went Hard with the Gastronomic Champion. They had to make a Quick Get-away, owing to a Fifteen-inning Game, and depended on Supper in the Dining-Car. Through some Cruel Quip of Fate, the Diner had not been Attached, and all that Eternal Night the eating Marvel tossed and Moaned, Empty, Agonized, but bearing up with the Thought of the Terrific Vengeance he would take at Table in the Morning.

When Morning Came, the train was Late, and then some Later. It was Far along towards Noon when they Pulled into the next Stand, and the Champion Chow-Slayer, with a roar of Famished impatience, Hurled himself at the Nearest Table.

"Hurry, George, hurry," he cried in Frantic Haste, "and bring me the Largest, Thickest, Richest Steak in the House. Bring me Three of them, George, Three of them, with Gravy Oozing out, and Have them Follow one another in a Swift Procession. Get the first One Started Now, and——"

"Ah'm sorry, suh," Cut In the Dusky Personage, "but dis, suh, am Meatless Day, and so yo'-all cain't have no steak what-soevah!"

MORAL: Tragedy lurks in wait for all of us when least expected.

A WORD TO OUR READERS

The war has hit the publishing business hard. Operating expenses are continually mounting. But while all the items of manufacturing costs, such as paper, engraving, printing, and labor increase almost over night; while other magazines are raising their prices both for single copy and yearly subscriptions, the BASEBALL MAGAZINE is still doing business on the same old stand at the same old price. We are trying to give you, Mr. Reader, a square deal. And we are quite sure you appreciate getting at least one necessity that doesn't cost more than it used to. How about it?