

The Old Time Heroes

The Bugs Indulge In an Animated Discussion of Former Baseball Stars

THE FAT BUG: Now, you can talk all you like 'bout your heady ball players, but there ain't none of um, not a one, that can think wit' King Kelly. He had um all beat. Beat a city block. Show me the ball player, anywheres, right now, that can think so fast as Kelly. You can't do it.

THE TALL BUG: Oh, I don't know. What did Kelly ever do that Ty Cobb couldn't do? Or what did Kelly ever do that Ty Cobb ain't done, I wanta know?

THE BUG WITH THE GREEN HAT: For my part, Buck Ewing had 'em all skun. Buck Ewing could do tricks that Kelly never thought of.

THE FAT BUG: Who? Buck Ewing? Well, now, lissun to me: I ain't saying but what Buck Ewing wasn't a great ball-player, y'unnerstand. Buck Ewing had the mosta them guys nowadays beat so far they couldn't see him for the dust. But when it come to matchin' Buck Ewing an' King Kelly—well, bo, yuh might as well talk uh matchin' a dray-horse wit' a Derby winner.

THE TALL BUG: Say-y-y, where didja get that noise? Ty Cobb coulda run rings round the both of 'em—

THE BUG IN THE PINCHBACK SUIT: Aw! right—but did any of you waffles ever see Bill Lange? Tell you what I seen Bill Lange do one day up in Chi—with the bases fulla Boston runners, an' two out in the ninth, there's a ball hit so hard it goes over the center field fence. And Bill Lange breaks through that fence, an' catches that ball on the outside of that fence, making the third out an' savin' that ball game. Show me any time Ty Cobb ever done anythin' to equal that?

THE TALL BUG: Aw, well, Ty Cobb's got sense. Bill Lange probably had a stone head, an' goin' through a fence wouldn't hurt him none.

THE VENERABLE BUG: Now, you'll pardon me, gents, for butting in. But I saw Ross Barnes, and I tell you—

THE FAT BUG: You mean Jess Barnes, don't you? Jess Barnes, with the Giants? He's a good pitcher, but—

THE VENERABLE BUG: No! No! I mean Ross Barnes, with Chicago forty years ago. Best ball player that ever wore the spikes—

THE BUG WITH THE GREEN HAT: Say, old friend, you're all right. But you're livin in a land of dreams. You forget that the game was just in its infantry then—

THE BUG IN THE PINCHBACK SUIT: Lemmo ask you something, gentlemen: Which of your fancy players, right now, can do all Bill Lange could do? Can Ty Cobb play first, second, third, short, AND catch, like Bill Lange used to? Answer me that?

THE FAT BUG: Aw right, young feller. Right back at yuh. King Kelly could do all them things, and done um, too. Done um right along. And I never heard where Bill Lange, nor no other player, could do the thinking things what Kelly done. They never could catch Mike Kelly on a double play. He could think so quick he could fool um every time.

THE BUG WITH THE GREEN HAT: Show me anything Buck Ewing couldn't pull. Why, I seen him once, when he was catching an' a guy hits a home run over the fence, say to the guy "Too bad that hit was foul," an' he done it so neat the guy falls for it, an' the umpire falls for it, an' there ain't no kick, an' the guy bats over, an' strikes out.

THE EYE-GLASSED BUG: Well, gentlemen, I've heard you all. And I kept still till now. Now, lemme say something. What do the people like best in a game? Ain't it batting? Course it is! And where was there ever a man could bat as hard as Eddie Delehanty? Tell you what I see him do in Chicago: he pickles four home runs one after another, just as fast as he could get to bat. And what I see him do at Philadelphia: there was a little lad named Flaherty, that was the last of the bare-handed infielders. And Delehanty hits just one at this Flaherty, and do you know where they found Flaherty? Lying stunned out past the left fielder. That hit carried Flaherty way out past the left fielder and banged him up against the fence. That was how Ed Delehanty usta hit that ball.

THE FAT BUG: King Kelly could hittum just as hard as anybody. I see him hit one day that cracked up against a stone right-field fence so hard the ball broke in two. And the right fielder caught half of the ball, and claimed a putout. And right there King Kel showed his head. He took the rule book outa his pocket, and showed the umpire where it said "In case of doubt, the preference should be given to the batter," and got the decision on quick thinking.

THE TALL BUG: Nothin' like that never happened—

THE FAT BUG: I suppose I'm a liar, huh, when I was there and seen it with my own eyes—

HEAVY CANNONADING AND FALL OF CURTAIN.