

“Over There”

Playing Baseball Behind the Lines Where the Umpire Likes His Job

(Behind the battle lines, some time in the near future.)

THE GENERAL: Oh, I don't see any reason for you folks to swell up and figure on a flag right off the reel. You may have Alexander and Killifer for battery—yes, they're all right—but we have Rixey and Gowdy working for our bunch, and I fail to see where there's anything wrong with that bright young couple.

THE COLONEL: Maybe you are right, sir. But I'm banking on Alex. He'll burn 'em through so fast that your spavined aggregation will be hitting after they've gone by. Yea bo! We are the people, and we're going to fly that flag. Then we'll go back to the United States and clean up both the big leagues over there—

THE ADMIRAL: Hey, hey! 'Vast piping landmen! We have a Navy team, please remember, with Shore pitching, and Maranville on short, and Duffy Lewis in the field, and—

THE GENEAL: One of your men is in wrong Admiral. What right has any one named Shore to be pitching for the Navy?

THE COLONEL: The winner of this series can climb the Navy team just about 7 to 1—

THE ADMIRAL: By the great horn spoon that went to Davy Jones's locker! Have you any money that says so? Shiver my mizzen and furl my royals, but here's my check for anything you want to make it—

THE GENERAL: All right, Admiral. Take you up after the game. Captain Rixey, how is the good left arm today?

CAPT. EPPA JEPHTHA RIXEY: Powerful husky, sir. Let me at those people till I comb their feathers, sir!

THE COLONEL: Lieutenant Alexander, can you go nine innings and keep strong?

LIEUT. GROVER ALEXANDER: Yes, sir. I think three hits will do them, sir.

THE GENERAL: Naturally, we must find an umpire. How about Major Til Huston? Will he be acceptable?

CHORUS OF BOTH CLUBS: Yep! You bet! Him's the boy! Come on, you Til!

MAJOR TIL HUSTON: Sorry, boys. Awful sorry. Can't do it, though. I've got a small bet down on one of the clubs, and I wouldn't umpire for the world.

THE COLONEL: How about you, Admiral?

THE ADMIRAL: Pipe down soft on that chantey, you swab—beg pardon, Colonel! I want to see this game, not provoke a riot.

THE ADJUTANT: Might I suggest, as wholly disinterested, the Baron Friedrich von Zunnermann, our distinguished prisoner?

BARON VON ZUNNERMANN: Vot? Umbire a ball-game? I glaim de righds gifen und aggorded to brisoners of var! I vill nod submid to such an outrache!

THE GENERAL: Now, Baron, listen to reason. Be a good fellow. Make yourself popular with us. Umpire the game, won't you?

BARON VON ZUNNERMANN: Make meinself bopular, iss id? Himmel und blitzen! I have seen umbires ven in America I vos trafeling—und ven vas an umbire efer bopular? Ach, Louie! Iss diss de Yankee sense off humor? Vell, I am a brave man. I dake de chob! I show you dot a Cherman officer hass no fear! Blay ball!

LIEUT. ALEXANDEE: Aw, say, right over, right through the middle!

CASEY STENGEL (at bat): Don't let him bluff you, Umps! That one was way wide!

BARON VON ZUNNERMANN: I said von ball. Und von ball id iss. Und if I hear vrom you von odder vord, oudt you go! Ach, choyfulness—I never hoped dot I could exercise authority ofer you Yankees!

THE COLONEL: Hey, hey! Robber! Porch-climber! Door-mat thief!

THE GENEAL: Atta boy, Baron! Keep your head! This game wil make a real live human being out of you yet!

CASEY STENGEL: Low, right along my shoe-tops!

BARON VON ZUNNERMANN: Von sdrike!

CASEY STENGEL: Aw-w! Rotten!

THE COLONEL: Blamed good strike!

THE GENEAL: Crook! Burglar! Yeggman!

BARON VON ZUNNERMANN: Back by der bench for you, Cheneral. I am der master off der field!

CHORUS OF WARNING VOICES: Lookout! Duck! 'Ware shells!

A GERMAN SHELL: Ker-rash! Ka-boom!

THE GENERAL: Great luck! Nobody hurt! But look at the hole it dug back of second base!

BARON VON ZUNNERMANN: Time! Fix oop dot infield, und be qvick apout id! Cheneral, can I haf a signal flag? Blease. I wish to do somedings. Dankeschön. *Climbs high trench parapet, and signals: "Cease firing, immediately."*

THE GENERAL: Now, what do you think of that?

THE COLONEL: I give it up. Say—he's coming back!

BARON VON ZUNNERMANN: Chentlemen, both off you haf galled me names. Under ordinary circumsdances, I would challenge both off you. Under de bresent circumsdances, id iss differend. Blay ball!

(Scene, night. Baron von Zunnermann writing at a desk in his prison-quarters.)

BARON VON ZUNNERMANN: Finished! The High Commander should receive this in the morning. Let me see: did I word it right: "Most Noble High Commander: I am in despair. It is impossible for us to ever conquer a nation that plays such a game as baseball. I am in despair, yet I am happy. I am umpiring, and today I ran seven off them off the field on general principles. Do not offer any exchange for me. I wish to stay here till the wind-up of their baseball season."

(Curtain.)

A GOOD EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW

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