



PHOTOGRAPHED FOR COLLIER'S BY ROBERT YARNALL RICHIE

Those were the days when baseball was really tough. In the clubhouse before the game they figured out how to mangle the opposition. Some players filed their spikes. But it was also the age of the heroes. One of them, Honus Wagner, active again on the big time as coach of the Pirates, tells you of the past and picks an All-Time All-Star team

**By Honus Wagner**

## I Never Got Tired of Playing

PEOPLE always ask me how present-day baseball compares with the baseball of my time and often they don't believe me when I say it's better now. There were great players in the old days and men like Ty Cobb and Ed Delehanty and King Kelly would be as great now as they were then, but the general level is higher. The play is faster, the players are more business-like and the pitching has to be stronger.

I got my start in the big leagues with Louisville in the old National League. That was a twelve-club circuit and I went along to Pittsburgh when the transfer was made several years later and stayed there until I finished my career. Tommy Leach and I went to Louisville together and broke into the lineup right away but that didn't mean we were taken into the club. We were on the team all right but we didn't get a chance in batting practice. I tried to get in for a lick the first day and somebody looked at me and said: "Get out of there, kid, before I brain you with this bat." That was how things went in the old days. Tommy and I shagged flies while the other fellows hit.

After a week of that the manager said:

"Why ain't you taking your licks?" and I said, "They won't let me," and he said, "Who won't let you?" and I said, "The other players," and he said, "You go up there and take your licks or I'll brain you with a bat." So I went up and pushed my way in and made a suggestive motion with my bat at the first man who tried to stop me and after that we had batting practice with the others.

Nowadays the club does everything for the new men but send out their laundry, and I think it's a better system. When I broke in, a newcomer literally had to fight his way into a job. The old-timers ganged together and hung onto their jobs and made it tough on the kids. You've probably heard about Cobb fighting everybody on the Detroit club before they would accept him; that is a true story. It happened on all the clubs. The first college man I ever met in baseball was Wills at Louisville. They tried to kill him. They'd come up close and throw the ball at him with all their might and then bawl him out if he didn't hold it. They didn't want sissies in the game and it was years before the college men were treated as anything but freaks.

I can give you an idea of the difference between present times and the old days by telling how we used to meet in the clubhouse before a game. The manager would say: "We lost to those bums yesterday. What are we going to do today? What are you going to do, Jake?" And Jake would say, "I'm going to bump that first baseman out into right field the first time I hit one. If I get on I'm going to cut that blankety blank at short from the ankle to the eyebrows when I go down." "Fine!" says the manager. And then it's decided that the outfielders should do most of the bumping and spiking because they aren't covering the bases themselves and the other guys can't go out and get to them in return. About this time the pitcher speaks up. "I guess I can do a little something, too," he says, referring to dusting the opponents off. And that was the old times. You've heard tales about the players sharpening their spikes with a file, and they are true.

Nowadays the club meets and discusses the other team. What to pitch to Mel Ott, how to play for Babe Herman, whether it's good policy to give Chuck Klein a low curve on the outside. The

game is much more scientific. The players make it a business and they have the advantage of all the experience gathered from forty years of baseball.

In general I think the old-timers were crazier about the sport. Jack Dots Miller, our second baseman on the Pirates, was so nutty about the game that on rainy days he used to go under the stands and play catch. I can never remember getting tired of playing. I never went stale and I was as keen at the end of the season as in spring training.

The most vital change in the game is the pitching. They talk about the lively ball and I suppose it is better made than they used to be, but what makes the difference in hitting is the elimination of the spitball, the emery ball, the shiner. The only way you could meet that type of pitching was to choke the bat, watch every dip of the pitch and take only a short swing. If they had grabbed the bat at the end and taken the roundhouse wallop they use now, most of the batters would still be trying to get their first hit. I don't think I'd be able to hit at all with the long swing, lively ball or not. The short swing was my style.

(Continued on page 41)

# Six Golden Angels

By Max Brand

ILLUSTRATED BY HARRY MORSE MEYERS



"How do you happen to be here with Mike so much?" he asked her

## VII

QUICKLY, we better get out!" panted Seelig, heading back toward the door. "When it comes to police, there is nothing but questions and talking, talking, talking."

"We're moving now!" answered Martin, starting for the door in his turn. "Monsieur!"

For Ryder was leaning over the dead man to look into his face and his partly open eyes.

"Wait a moment," he said.

He picked up the coat of the dead man and forced his hand to enter the pockets. At last he picked out four tightly folded bills.

"He was playing the game with us," said Ryder. "He hasn't spent any of the money I gave him. . . . Seelig?"

"Yes, sir? For God's sake be quick!" urged the detective.

"Will two hundred dollars get him a decent burial?" asked Ryder.

"Yes . . . I think so," said Seelig.

"We'll make it two hundred more for surety," said Ryder, adding two more bills to the fold. He put the whole sum back in the coat pocket and joined the two other men. A few minutes later, at home, he had Martin bring him a drink and tried with it to wash his mind clean of the last memory.

"Do you know what it means, Martin?" he asked.

"It means that murder is just around the corner from all of us, sir," said Martin. "It's raining murder—Mr. Leggett—Brant—Daley."

Gains called Ryder to the telephone.

"This is Sydney, David," said her voice on the wire. "And may I see you? Soon? Right now? I'll come up to your place, if I may."

He told her to come. Afterward he sat with his chin on his fist and tried to think.

Then Sydney Galloway came.

She wore a blue silk dress that flared out at the bottom and flowed a little too snugly over her body, and she had on a wide-brimmed hat with a colored lining that made a rosy shadow over her face.

"I couldn't go into mourning," she said, when she felt his eyes. "I tried to, but I couldn't. I hate black, don't you, David?"

He said he hated black and took her into a little after-dinner room which a whim of Leggett had transported entire from France. Sydney sat up in one of the ornate chairs and folded her gloved hands. She smiled at Ryder.

She said: "It's really like a dream, except that I keep remembering the ugly look that Porter was wearing. Did you hear about that?"

He watched the pretty ghoul and smiled in turn as he shook his head.

"That was quite horrible," said Sydney. "If he had just gone into a quiet sleep like the great baby that he was—but he had seen something before he died. I think one of those bright detectives might have worked it out if they'd cared to use their brains. I mean, one could almost read the lines of his face and say what they were about. It keeps a chill in the back of my mind, like a cold shadow in a bright room. I hope you don't think I'm too silly?"

"Not a bit," said Ryder. "He was beginning to bore you, wasn't he?"

"He was a fake," said the girl. "One can see things clearly, over the shoulder. By the way, I've heard about you and Eileen (Continued on page 50)