

Conversations with an Old Sport

IN WHICH HE HANDS OUT A LITTLE DOPE ABOUT THE ANVIL CHORUS—BY JIM NASIUM

"WELL, what do you think of the game today?" asked a fan, as the Old Sport butted into the fanning bee in the hotel corridor.

"The boys were up against it today like a guy with the prickly heat in a wooden undershirt," replied the Old Sport. "but they fought for get-away to tape. And let me tell you that's more than you guys up in the stands can say. That bunch of knuckers out at the grounds today had a yellow streak running through it that would make the Comstock lode look like a basting thread. If I asked you fellows what you despised worse than anything else in sports, I'll gamble that you'd every blamed one agree that it was a quitter. Yet you guys will crawl into the stands at a ball game and get your heads off till the visiting team gets a lead, then you run up the white rag and quit like a bunch of Chila chewing Greasers. Simply because the other fellows got a lead at the get-away today, you guys made about as much noise as a game of what at the deaf and dumb asylum."

"But there was nothing to root for," said the fan.

"Nothing to root for?" asked the Old Sport. "Look here, let me hand you a tip. It takes a mighty poor brand of a sport to be a good and cheerful yeller. Any dub can turn handspins and yell his head off when things are coming his way, but the only guy who is worth wasting breath to talk about is the sport who, when he is getting it put all over him, can crawl up onto his hind legs like our worthy sport of an ancestor, John Paul Jones, and yell, 'We haven't begun to fight yet.'"

"Yes, sir, it was the sporting blood in Paul Jones' veins that brought home the bacon after he'd had the eternal day-lights knocked out of him in the English Channel, and it was the sporting blood in old George Washington's veins that pulled his army through a Winter of living on belled bootlegs at Valley Forge and sent them out in the Spring to put the British down for the count, while the whole country was roasting him and saying he hadn't a chance in the world, just like the gab you fellows in the stands hand out at a ball game. They were sports who didn't know when they were licked, and let me tell you that if those guys had had a yellow streak running along their spinal column like the one that decorates your dorsal fins, you guys would be running around today with a monacle sticking in your face and there never would have been a Star-Spangled Banner or a game of baseball.

"And that's the kind of sporting blood it takes to come up from behind and pull a game out of the fire in the face of the roasting that the quitters in the stands hand out to the players the minute the other fellows get a lead on them. You can take it from me, that if there was a bigger display of this fighting spirit up in the 'Rooters' Row' and less yellow splashes there would be a blamed sight more brackets hung up for the home team. The crowd in the stands has a thundering lot to do with winning or losing. A few fellows who can't do it by cutting loose with the anvil chorus when a player fans with the bases full or pulls off a stunt in the field, and they can't do it by sitting in



discouraged silence when the other fellows get a lead either.

"What thunder is the use of rooting when the home team has things all their own way? They don't need it then. The time when you fellows up in the stands can be of some earthly use is the very time when you fall down hard. And that is when the home team is down in the rut and taking the other fellow's dust. And let me tell you that's just why you see so many teams go to pieces when they are on the wrong end of the score, and play several notches below their regular form. It isn't because they aren't trying all the time, and it isn't because the other fellows have their goat either. But it is because nine out of every ten of the dubs up in the stands

are diled-in-the-wool quitters, to whom the game is lost the minute the other fellows get a lead, and they cut loose with the anvil chorus and hand out a brand of gab that puts the team up in the air, instead of plugging all the hard-core for a victory. If the players were as yellow quitters as the fans are, baseball wouldn't be worth a tinker's dam.

"I don't mean to say that every mother's son who goes to a ball game ought to get up on his hind legs and yell for the home team till he busts his larynx, but I do say that a good motto for a good sport is: 'If you can't boost, don't knock.' And probably the next best motto for the baseball public is: 'The game isn't lost till the last man is out.' You can take my tip that the lack of

good sporting blood in the veins of the home fans has lost pennants for many a time.

"There's a lot of shallow-headed dubs who seem to think that it's all right to sit up in the grandstand and roast a player because he can't slam out a hit when it's needed or go down in the dirt and dig up every hot shot that comes his way, but just the same I'll gamble that if you guys had to sit up in your office and grind out your daily work while your boss' customers were splattered around through the joint yelling into your ears that you were a 'fathead' and a 'lobster,' and telling you that you ought to apply for admission to the Old Women's Home, it's a cinch bet that your work would go on the punk a blamed sight worse than

the ballplayers do. And let me tell you that it would be just as reasonable for them to do this as it is for you to patronize a ball game for the purpose of knocking the brand of work turned out.

"And I want to tell you fellows that the guy who goes to the ballgrounds and plugs for the home team as long as they are making the pace, and then joins the anvil chorus when they begin to get their bumps is the kind of a dub who is your best friend and hands you a pat on the back and slobbers all over you while you are living on the velvet and taking up some room in the world, but as soon as you hit the toboggan and go down for the count he can't see you. And I'll gamble that there isn't many of you willing to admit that you have any use for a guy like

that. This old dump of a world can plug along pretty blamed well without that brand of loyalty.

"You can take it from me that the biggest coward that ever pumped ozone into his breathing bellows is the guy who will hide himself in a mob of several thousand and throw the gaff into a ballplayer when he knows blamed well that the player can't crawl over the railing and pick him out of the throng for the purpose of leaving his imprint on his mug. And now this year the baseball duds have gone and shoved in a rule that places a fine of \$5 on a player who even opens his face to a spectator. I'm not very strong for this Scriptural dope about turning the other side of your mug around when you get a crack on the maxillaries.

and I think that it would be a blamed sight more like a square deal if they instructed the ump's to stop the game long enough to allow the player to crawl into the stand and hand the knocker what is coming to him. You can take it from me that this would put a huddle on the brain of gab which a baseball gang turns loose, and I have a hunch that the calico that is splattered around that vicinity would just about as soon see a knocker getting his face moved around till it hangs onto his left ear as they would sit all afternoon and have such phrases as 'mutt-head,' 'rummy' and a bunch of indecent melody poured into their ears by a skinny shrimp who would be kicked out of decent society in any other place the minute he was discovered.

"And you'll usually find, too, that these guys know about as much about baseball as a Fiji Islander does about table etiquette. Their brains are so shriveled up that they rather than they wally like a bunch of peas in a gourd. They don't know enough about the game to get wise to the fact that a team may be playing a mighty nifty article of base ball and yet lose. There are only two factors in baseball that penetrates the thick walls of their conning tower, and that is the winners and the losers. Winners are playing good baseball and the losers are a bunch of duds. And let me tell you that these bone-headed guys often put the game on the bum with their misguided applause, too. They yell their heads off over the dub who plays to the stands by holding back on a ball and then racing up and spearing it with one look, while the good, reliable player who plays everything safe and cuts out the spectacular trimmings never gets a hand.

"You can take my tip that the applause of these bone-headed fellows is the cause of many good ballplayers going to the bad. It is to get this merry mit, which is sweet music to the average player, that you often see some guy out on the lot holding back just long enough when a ball is hit so that he will have to take it on the dead run, when the sure player who plays everything safe, would start with the crack of the bat and make the play look easy. And it is this playing to the bone-heads, too, that causes a player to guess in on a high bouncer and go up in the atmosphere to pull it down when it would come right into his pocket if he played it safe and met it right. These spectacular stunts and one-hand catches are a showy piece of business when you get away with them, but you can take it from me that they don't win many pennants. The successful ballplayer is just the same sort of a guy as the successful business man; he is the guy who pulls off every transaction in the easiest way he can and plays it safe.

"So there you are, fellows; that's the whole blamed business in a nutshell. The trouble with you guys who are kicking about today's game is that you belong to that bunch of dubs who think that every game that the home team wins is a good game and every game that they lose is a rotten one. Now, if you just let this dope that I've handed you soak into the sponge cake in your belly, and get you to the grounds tomorrow and plug for the boys till the last man has got kibosh, you'll get a run for your money, whether they win or lose. Think it over, fellows. Good night."

THE EMILY EMMINS PAPERS

BY CAROLYN WELLS

I SUPPOSE that the earliest thing that happens anywhere is the London dawn. In all my life, my waking hours had never reached three o'clock A. M. from either direction, and when, on the first morning after my arrival in London, I was awakened at that hour by a gently intrusive daybreak, I felt as if I had received a personal and intentional affront.

I rose, and stalked to the window, with an air of haughty reproach, intending to close the shutters tightly until a more sedate hour.

As there are only six window-shutters in the whole city of London, it is not surprising that none of these was attached to my window; but it really didn't matter, for after reaching the window that morning I never thought of a shutter again until I returned to America.

My window, which was a large French affair in three parts, looked out upon Piccadilly. It opened on a small stone-railed balcony, and as I looked out three pigeons looked in. They were of the fat and pompous kind and they strutted along the railing with a frankly sociable air, cocking their heads pertly in an endeavor to draw my attention to the glistening iridescence of their neck-feathers.

I liked the pigeons, and I told them so, but even better I liked the sight across the street.

Green Park at dawn is as solemnly impressive as the interior of Westminster Abbey. The trees sway and quiver, giving an occasional glimpse of the Clock Tower of Parliament House. From the throats of myriad birds comes a sound as of one blended twilight, and a strange, unreal radiance pervades the whole scene. With the rapidly increasing daylight definiteness ensues, and railings, benches, roadway,



and other details of the Park add strength to the picture.

Having seen three o'clock in Green Park, I promptly forgot my errand with the shutters, and, hastily donning conventional morning costume, I prepared to watch four o'clock, and five, and six appear from the same direction.

As outlines became clearer I noticed a park bench directly opposite my window, on which sat four old women. All were garbed in black, and all were sleeping soundly. I was then unaware of the large proportion of the elderly feminine in London's seamy side of population, and so casual was the aspect of the quartet that it did not occur to me that they were occupying the only earthly home they possessed.

They seemed to me more like duplicate Mrs. Locks and Mrs. Alabaster, who had paused for a time in Green Park instead of in mid-ocean.

But after I had seen the same women there at three o'clock on a dozen consecutive mornings I began to realize that they were part of the landscape.

Nor was I unduly sorry for them. They sat on that bench with the same air of voluntary appropriation that marked the birds in the trees, or the pigeons on the railing. And as the days went on I became accustomed to seeing them there, and ceased to feel any inclination to go out and try to persuade them to enter an old ladies' home.

At about seven o'clock the omnibuses began to ply. I had never known before what was indicated by the verb "to ply." But I saw at once that it is the only word that properly expresses the peculiar gait of an omnibus, which is a cross between a rolling lurch and a lumbering wobble. Fascination is a mild term for the effect these things had on me.

One omnibus might not so enthral me. I don't know; I have never seen one omnibus alone. But the procession of them along Piccadilly is the one thing on earth of which I cannot conceive myself becoming tired.

Their color, form, motion and sound all partake of the primeval, and their continuity of effect is eternal.

My Baedeker tells me that the first omnibuses plying in London were "much heavier and clumsier than those now in use." But of course this is a mistake, for they couldn't have been. I have heard that tucked away among the gay-colored advertisements that are patchworked all over these moving Mammoth Caves are small and neatly-lettered signs designating destinations. I do not know this. I have never been able to find them. But it doesn't matter. To get to Hampstead Heath, you take a Bovril; to go to the city, take Carter's Ink; and to get anywhere in a hurry, jump on a Horlick's Malted Milk. There is also a graceful serpentine legend lettered on the back of

each 'bus, but as this usually says "Liverpool Street," I think it can't mean much.

Personally, I never patronize one of the things. They are too uncanny for me, and their ways are more devious than those of our Seventeenth street horsecars.

Besides, I always feared that, if I got in or on one, I couldn't see the rest of them as a whole. And it is the unbroken continuity that, after the coloring, is their greatest charm. I have spent many hours watching the Piccadilly procession of them, "like a wounded snake drag its slow length along," and look forward to many hours more of the same delight. But the dawn, the daybreak, and the early morning slipped away, and all too soon my first day in London had begun.

My mall brought me difficulties of all sorts. There were invitations from people, whom well-meaning mutual friends had advised of my arrival. There were offers from friends or would-be friends to escort me about on shopping or sight-seeing tours. There were cards for functions of more or less formality, and there were circulars from tradesmen and professional people.

With a Gordian-knot-cutting impulse, I tossed the whole collection into my desk, and started out alone for a morning walk.

Nor shall I ever forget that walk.

Not only because it was a "first impression," but because it was the most beautiful piece of pedestrianism that ever fell to my lot.

My clubhouse home was almost at the corner of Hamilton Place, and as I stepped from its portal out into Piccadilly I seemed to breathe the quintessence of London, past, present, and to come.

Metereologically speaking, the atmosphere was perfect. The reputation for foginess, that London has somehow acquired, is a base libel. Its air is marked by a dazzling clearness of haze that, more than anything else, "lets the leaden metal into gold transmutes."

This exhilarated at the start, I began my stroll down Piccadilly, and at every step I added to my glowing sense of satisfied well-being. I turned north into Berkeley Street, and thus started on my first sight-seeing tour. And was it not well that I was by myself?

For the most kind and well-meaning clericone would probably have said, "Do you want to see the house where Carlyle died?"

And how embarrassed would I have been to be obliged to make reply: "No, not especially. But I do want to see where Tomlinson gave up the ghost in his house in Berkeley Square."

Nor would my guide have been able to point out that perhaps mythical residence. But I had no trouble in finding it. Unerring instinct guided me along

is the plural of mews?), crossed Berkeley Square, and then, somehow or other I found myself in Bond Street, and my mood changed. At first the shops seemed unattractive and I felt disappointment edging itself into my soul.

But like an ugly woman, possessed of charm, the crammed-full windows began to fascinate me, and I forgot the inadequate sidewalks and unpretentious facades in the absorbing displays of wares.

Bond street show windows are hypnotic. Fifth avenue windows stolidly hold their exhibits up to one's view, without a trace of invitation, but Bond-street windows compel one to enter, by a sort of uncanny influence impossible to resist.

Though I expected to shop in London, there was only one article that I was really anxious to buy. This was a jade cube. For many years I had longed for a jade cube, and American experts had contented themselves with stating there was such thing in existence. Time after time, I had begged friends who were going to the ends of the earth to bring me back a jade cube from one of the ends, but none had accomplished my errand.

I determined therefore to use every effort to secure a jade cube for myself, and forthwith began my quest.

A mineralogist on Bond street showed more interest at once than any of my personal friends had ever evinced. Though he declared there was no such thing in existence, he further remarked his entire willingness to cut one for me from the best quality of Chinese jade.

He was quite as interested as I was myself, and, though it seemed inartistic to end so quickly what I had expected to be a long and difficult quest, I left the order.

The cube turned out a perfect success, and will always be one of my dearest and best-beloved possessions. It has the same charm of perfection that characterizes a Japanese rock crystal ball, and the added interest of being unique. There was, too, a charm in the interest shown in the cube by the old mineralogist, and also by his wife.

The day I went after the completed polished cube, the elderly madame came into the shop from a back room, to congratulate me on the attainment of my desire.

Incidentally, the good people endeavored (and successfully) to persuade me to buy further of their wares.

They had a bewildering assortment of semi-precious stones, curious minerals, and wrought metals and strange bits of handicraft from foreign countries. Beads, of course, in profusion, and fascinating ugly little idols. As all these things have great charm for me, and as I am always easily persuaded to buy, I bought largely to the great satisfaction of the elderly shopkeepers. But, as I had learned a little of their tricks and their manners I offered them, a bit shamefacedly, a lower price in each instance than they asked. To my relief, they took this pro-

ceeding quite as a matter of course, and cheerfully accepted the smaller sum without demur.

But to return to that first morning, after my interview with the mild-mannered mineralogist I strolled along Old Bond street back to Piccadilly.

The Tennyson's brook of omnibuses was still going on, and I stood on the corner to watch them again. From this point of view the effect is quite different from that seen from an upstairs window.

You cease to generalize about the procession, and regard the individual 'bus with a new awe.

The ocean may be wider,—the Flatiron building may be taller,—but there's nothing in all the world so big as a London omnibus.

The New Learning.

"Jersey Jingles" by Leonard H. Robbins. They taught him how to sing, and they taught him how to sing. And how to make a basket out of variegated string. And how to fold a paper so he wouldn't hurt his thumb— They taught a lot to Bertie, but he couldn't do sum.

They taught him how to mold the head of Hercules in clay. And how to tell the difference 'twixt the bluebird and the jay. And how to sketch a horse in a little picture frame. But, strangely, they forgot to teach him how to spell his name.

Now, Bertie's pa was crabbed, and he went one day to find out how to make his son so backward in the mind. "I don't want Bertie wrecked," he cried, in temper. "I want him educated!" So he took him out of school.

Tossed the whole collection into my desk.

