

ASK ME ANOTHER?

A General Quiz

The Questions

1. The Romans had an organized system of shorthand as far back as what year?
2. Where was the last shot of the Civil war fired?
3. Chinook winds are peculiar to what region?
4. How often do quintuplets occur?
5. What does mountebank mean?
6. Who was the first woman to land from the Mayflower?
7. Coffee was first introduced into France in what year?
8. For every ten people in the United States there are how many phones?

The Answers

1. In 63 B. C.
2. At Palmetto ranch, Texas, on May 13, 1865, more than a month after Lee's surrender at Appomattox.
3. Pacific northwest.
4. Once in about 75,000,000 times.
5. An imposter.
6. Mary Chilton.
7. In 1662.
8. Two telephones.

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DOAN'S PILLS

THE FICTION CORNER
'Biff' Tells a Love Story
By Gene Brockhaven

PICKING his way slowly through the massed humanity crowding toward the exits, Matt Walsh, sports writer, pondered the sensational ending of the ring battle he had just witnessed. He was blasé about quick knockouts; he had seen many of them and undoubtedly would see many more. But he still thrilled to the brilliant—if boxing skill could be called that—and masterful job turned in by Spot Mathers.

Well, here was a new champion and Walsh felt he should know more about the boy. Something of his personal life.

It was after midnight when he reached the hotel at which the new champion and his entourage were stopping. At the door of the Mathers' suite he was halted by a blast of noise—the victory celebration. The big living room was a bedlam. Walsh glanced about the room but saw no sign of Mathers. He sought out the boy's manager, Pete Miley, busy in the role of lavish host.

"Mathers? Just went down the hall to room 1117," Miley answered his question. "Go on down and see him."

Walsh did. The door was slightly ajar. He tapped lightly, waited, then tapped again. When there was no response he opened the door and peered in. He stepped back, closing the door softly. Mmm-m, that tableau was something unexpected and unusual on victory night in the fight racket. Young Mathers, his arm around a dark-haired girl—a sleeping baby tucked in carefully between pillows at the head of the bed. This was no time to break in for an interview, so Walsh returned to the other room. He managed there to corral Biff Jones, old-timer in the ring business and Mathers' trainer.

"Biff," said Walsh, "how about some dope on the new champion? And what about that gal and baby down the hall? Let's go some place where we can talk."

"Okay. This party's slowing down anyways."

They went down to the hotel grill and found a table in the corner of the room.

"Now, tell me about Mathers. What kind of a guy is he?"

"Sure, I can tell you lots about that kid and about his wife and baby, too. I like 'em, all three of 'em, and I'd like to tell their story. But I gotta tell it my way." Biff blinked at Walsh.

"All right, tell it."

"Well, it begins some two years ago," Biff began. "Me and Pete Miley is sittin' in Pete's office gabbing about nothin' much when in walks a cocky, good lookin' kid. He's got a letter for Pete from some guy down south. He walks up to Pete, ignorin' me, and says: 'You Pete Miley? This is for you.' Pete takes the letter, reads it and looks up at the kid.

"So, you're a fighter, eh?" Pete says.

"Yeah, and good one," says the kid.

"Come on, Biff, get on with it," interrupted Walsh impatiently.

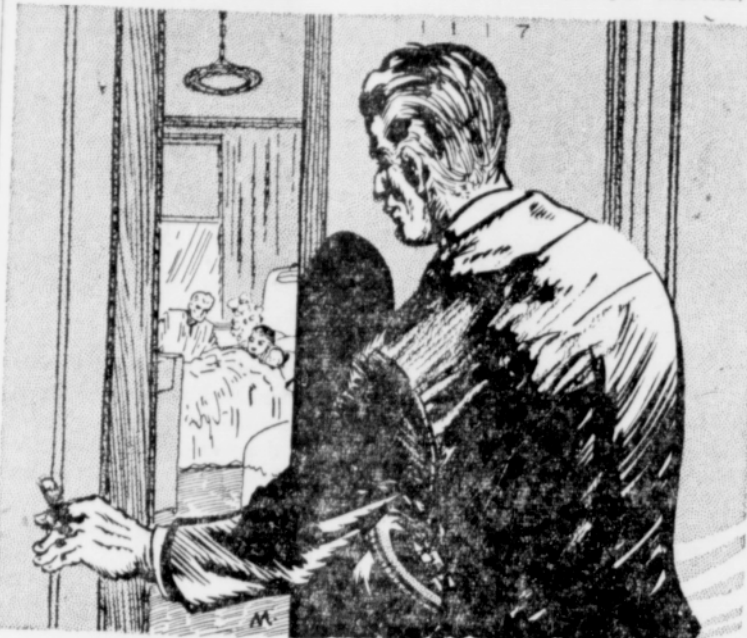
"As I was sayin'," Biff continued, "the kid says, 'I gotta get a fight right away. We gotta eat.'"

"Pete says, 'We, who's we?'"

"Me and Sally," the kid says, and goes on talkin' about him and his wife comin' up to New York to pick up some of the big fightin' sugar they been readin' about. They come up in a old jalopy, the kid says, and now the dough's run out. Pete says to the kid what's his full name and the kid says, without battin' an eye, 'Spottingham T. Mathers,' and looks at the both of us like darlin' us to laugh. Pete kinda grins but he aint laughin' out loud. I could see Pete's takin' a likin' to

good. Him and Sally is livin' on their own now because Pete's been pullin' down some good pots for him and I know personal that Pete aint takin' any cut, leastwise not much. He likes them kids, specially Sally, like everybody does. But let me tell you, this Sally aint no eye-waver. She's stuck on Spot and don't make no bones about it. But that Spot, now, he's got a bit of a rovin' eye, and like I told you, he's a cocky punk and he aint against steppin' once in a while, now the dough's comin' in. But I guess when a kid's 21 he gets to thinkin' he's really somethin' special.

"Well, them once-in-a-while steppin's begin to get quite frequent and many's the night I find myself keepin' Sally company on lonely nights when that milk-sop is sowin' a few oats. I feel sorry for Sally, and I tell her it's just like a case of the mumps or the gallopin' measles, a



Young Mathers, his arm around a dark-haired girl—a sleeping baby tucked in carefully between pillows at the head of the bed.

the kid and soon he hands him a

finif.

"Pete tells the kid to go out and buy him and Sally a big steak and to come around tomorrow with his fightin' togs and he'll see what the kid's got. I go to the gym with them next day and Pete sticks the kid in there with a old warhorse named Batalia. The kid, considerin' he aint been eatin' so good, does okay and Pete holds him.

"We get our first peek at Sally when Pete moves her and the kid over to Pete's hotel. Pete tells the kid to go to the gym a few days and for me to work with him.

"Well, as I says, we get our first peek at Sally, and boy, she's somethin'! She aint got only looks but she's got somethin' else I don't know what. Anyways, I go for Sally big—don't get me wrong, mister, my courtin' days is long gone—she's a nice kid. Well, them two kids, eatin' regular again with Pete payin', bloom like a couple hot house flowers put out in the sun. Soon Pete spots the kid in a four-round prelim at St. Nicks and the kid comes through with a quick kayo. O'course he knocks over a bum, but we like the way he does it.

"It aint long before the kid's moved up to semi-finals and then final spots, because, as I says, he's

little while sick and you're good as new again. But that Sally can take it, she's no plater, and she keeps smilin'."

Biff reached for his glass.

"Well," he resumed, "the kid starts going around with a show gal. I talk to him.

"Listen, knob-ears," he says, 'you're keepin' outta this.' He tells me a lot more about him and this show gal gettin' married after he wins the title and gives Sally the air.

"NEXT day I tell Pete all and we head over for the gym where Spot's workin' out. Pete quizzes him and all he gets for his trouble is abuse.

"I go around to see Sally next day to see if she knows anythin' about this marriage business. I poke around kinda subtle like and then quiz her if she's heard anything about Spot and this show gal. Well, she starts cryin' and I feel like a four-star dope. I don't know what to do and just stand there sayin', 'there, there, like I heard a mother once with a cryin' baby. It don't do much good. Sally keeps cryin' soft like. That kinda cryin' don't need no sound effects, it goes deep. Pretty soon she says she's goin' back home. And she does, leavin' a note for the punk.

"He goes around a couple days sour-pussed. I don't hear a word from Sally for weeks and I don't think the punk has neither, but Pete is goin' around with a wise look and I get a hunch he knows somethin'. The kid has changed some. He aint so cocky no more and he seldom goes out at night. One night, just before we're leavin' for the trainin' camp where the kid's gonna get ready for the final 'limination bout, I'm in his room helpin' him pack.

"It aint long and the phone buzzes. The kid's near it and picks it up. He says, 'I aint here,' and hangs up. Pretty soon comes a knock on the door and dummy me opens it. A show gal is there. I figure it's the show gal and I'm right. She steps over to the kid, 'Honey,' she says, 'you aint seen me lately?' The kid keeps on packin'. Then he says he aint gonna see her no more.

"Then the fireworks begin. That dame gives him the trimmin's and when she's in high gear she heaves a water bottle at the kid's head and stalks out. He ducks and the bottle whams against the wall. During the ruckus I duck into a corner. I see mad dames work before.

"It's two or three days later when I see Pete at the camp. I tell him about the show and he looks at me kinda funny and says now's the time to tell him and maybe he's all over it. I don't catch the drift, but I tag along over to the house with Pete. The kid's restin' when me and Pete come into the room. Pete says, 'Spot, I got some news for you, news from Sally.' The kid sits up sudden like and he gets kinda white.

He don't say nothin', just keeps lookin' at Pete. Sally, Pete says, 'is gonna have a baby.' Just like that. "The kid jumps up outta the bed and he starts to cry. I think I kinda like him then, even though he's actin' sissy. 'Pete,' he says, 'I gotta go to her! I gotta!'

"Pete says okay and take a couple days off. So the kid goes home to see Sally. You never see such a changed guy when he comes back. He's talkin' again and he's happy and he even gets friendly with me and I kinda like it, too, seem' he aint the smart-alex no more.

"So you see, like I once say to Sally, it's like the mumps, a little while sick and you're okay again, and so's them kids, all three of 'em, now."



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Durocher

year. The Dodgers should be better in 1948 than they were in 1947. Durocher has the same team with a year's more experience. This can be a big help to the Dodger pitching staff which is packed with young talent that only needed a few pitching angles and better control.

It takes a year or longer for a thrower to become a pitcher, but the Dodger's raw material has been exceptional. Durocher should have five or six winning pitchers next spring, including Ralph Branca who may reach the 25-game spot.

Durocher also discovered through his year's rest that even bigger crowds will come out if there is less umpire-baiting, which is no longer required. No one cares how hard the teams and the managers fight one another. Crowds today are no longer interested in arguments with umpires.

Has Fire and Color

Billy Southworth, one of the greatest of all managers, has proved this for years. So has Joe McCarthy, another member of the all-time greats. Shotton proved this case beyond all argument. The crowd comes out to see a ball game—not to listen to a dull and dumb debate between some manager and some umpire.

A fighting manager is all right—but why fight with umpires? This type of baseball belongs with the Dodo and the Great Auk. Being a pretty smart fellow, Durocher has sensed the big change, I believe.

No one can question the fact that Durocher isn't smart. He has fire and color and a scrappy, hustling ball club. He also has one or two tough ball clubs to beat, including the Braves and Cardinals. Also the Giants, if Mel Ott can get any pitching. The Giants have everything else.

The Cards, who made a brilliant showing last year by forging into second place after a dismal start, again will be a threat. The pitching staff will be the main worry, coupled with the advanced age of players.

Only a small improvement on the part of Braves and Cardinals can make a big difference, especially if the Dodger pitching staff doesn't move up and locate, in a vague way, the general direction of the home plate.

Lack of Control

Along this line, we've just received a letter from our all-time favorite pitcher—Grover Cleveland (Old Pete) Alexander, who isn't far from being the greatest all-around pitcher that ever threw a ball. And this includes Cy Young, Walter Johnson and Christy Mathewson; also Carl Hubbell and Lefty Grove.

Here is Alexander's letter: "Dear Grant, I just finished reading your article on what is wrong with present day pitchers, and thought I would drop a few lines. No, I am not looking for anything. I am just trying to figure why they never have taken some old-timers on during spring training to work with these young throwers, as you aptly termed them. They teach hitting and about everything else, but not pitching.

"When I first came to Philly, Pat Moran was the coach, and about the first thing he said to me was this: 'Kid, you have a good arm, but a heck of a lot to learn.' He took me in hand and he sure did teach me. Pat was smart. Of course, it took work. Hard work.

"I never have been able to find out just what I did that put me on baseball's blacklist. I tried several times to get back, and even wrote Mr. Chandler for almost anything to do. I had a nice letter from him, and then another one saying that there was no opening and they did not expect any. I was just out.

"Pitching means control. By control I don't mean the plate—I mean one or two inches of the plate. A real pitcher ought to be able to get the ball one or two inches from where he wants it—not one or two feet. But pitchers need instruction, which few ever get. What good is stuff, the greatest stuff ever thrown, that can't cross the plate? This means hard work—hard work and instruction—learning how, maybe the hard way, which is generally the only way.

G. C. Alexander, Wood River, Ill."

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