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# CHRISTY MATHEWSON'S NEW BASEBALL SERIES—CROP OF 1913

## STAR UMPIRE BAITERS AND THEIR CONVERSATIONS

By CHRISTY MATHEWSON, of the New York Giants

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It has long been an invariable rule of McGraw that, after a pitcher has worked and won, he deserves one day of absolute rest during the long, hard drive of the championship race when he does not require every man on the bench each afternoon. This means the twirler is given the luxurious privilege of remaining in his regular clothes, and that he can stay away from the ball park. But, strange as it may seem, the missing pitcher can generally be found in the grand stand.

Is has been my good fortune to draw a few of these afternoons of leisure since I have been with the Giants, and I spend my time studying the crowd rather than the game. The contest is the secondary interest to me, the spectators the first, because the ordinary situation is reversed, and, instead of being watched, I am watching.

The thing which has impressed me most frequently is the attitude of the fans toward the rows between players, managers and umpires. There is a universal desire in the grand stand to know what is being said, because the performance is necessarily a pantomine.

This opinion appears to prevail that the conversation is spicy, and that the repartee is so well seasoned it would make a longshoreman ashamed of himself, and so embarrass a Billingsgate fishwife, if she were to hear it, that she would immediately wish she were deaf and dumb.

"Look at McGraw now. I'll bet he is handing it to that blind gink," a gentleman sitting in a box near me said one day last season. He looked as if he might be a deacon or a Sunday school superintendent from the middle west, where they have to depend upon the newspapers for their regular Big League diet, and can see only an occasional game. He had on eyeglasses attached to one of those black string cables which disappear within the collar, and do not display their terminals.

The fans are usually wrong in their surmise as to the conversations. Modern day dialogue between the umpires and the players has improved with the progress of the game. But most of the regular kickers are great actors, and umpires are strict believers in the text that actions speak louder than words, especially on the ball field, where the fan in the grand stand cannot hear what is said. The great desire of the judge of play is to keep from being shown up. Therefore an umpire will stand for more conversation from a kicker than actions of protestation. A few of the cardinal sins which mean instant expulsion are:

Throwing the glove into the air.

Tramping on an umpire's toes with the spikes, especially if he has corns.

Tossing up the bat when called out on a third strike.

Tearing the hair after a decision as a tragedian—one of "Johnny" Evers' favorites.

Laying a hand on the umpire in argument.

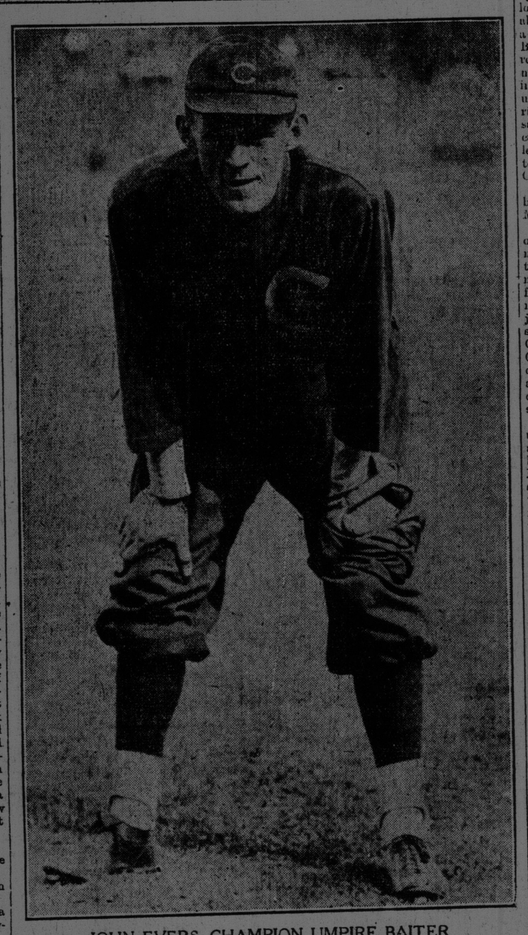
Making any motion of disgust.

### Evers Champion Baiter

Perhaps John Evers holds the first place among umpire baiters, while there are numerous runners up for the title. "Bill" Dahlen was good in his day, but he is going back, while McGraw was no slouch. Griffith, Tinker, Bresnahan, Devlin, Magee and Fred Clarke have all had their places among the National League arbiters. But umpire baiters as a sport, with horse racing and bicycling is now on the decline in this country. It isn't what it was.

The days of the old rough-and-tumble, give-and-take umpire are passed. "Tim" Hurst was the highly-developed type of this sort, and he lived in vigorous days when the life insurance companies considered an arbiter a bad risk. "Tim" had a stormy career, for he careered in the times when umpire baiting was in its prime. They tell a funny story about "Tim," one of many which show how deeply his professional tactics were ingrained.

Hurst was never an umpire to dodge the spotlight, and, in the old days, "Cap" Anson was out with a show called "The Runaway Colt." This was several years ago. In each town on the route, some would be impressed to umpire a sliding celebrated citizen or baseball authority scene. "Arlie" Latham, formerly the Giant coacher, had a reputation as a great base runner in those days, and he travelled in the cast for the part which he played in this sliding scene. When the show got to New York, they asked "Tim" Hurst to umpire. The stage was set for the big scene, and Latham came coasting into the sandpit, while some stage hand threw "Cap" Anson the ball out of the wings. He slapped it on the sliding Latham.



JOHN EVERS, CHAMPION UMPIRE BAITER

"Yer out!" bawled Hurst, jerking his thumb over his shoulder, natural and lifelike.

Latham was a great student of the realistic school of acting, and he desired to please the first night audience at Holt's theatre in Harlem. Hurst was down over the play, and Latham jumped up to protest when he had been called out. As he came up, he bumped "Tim" right in the nose, and the blood spurted out all over the stage. "Tim" had a great temper.

"You son-of-a-gun!" he roared.

### Great Fun For Spectators

Then he let fly at Latham with both fists, and there was a stirring fight all over the stage, the audience standing up and shouting in its glee.

"Get off the field!" shouted Hurst at Latham in his anger.

The spectators went home that night declaring they had never before seen anything so realistic on the stage. Latham left the theatre in a carriage, for none ever denied that "Tim" was a good fighter. That was carrying umpire baiting to the limit.

When Harry Wolverton became the manager of the Yankees last spring, he brought with him a reputation for being a hard man on umpires, and he sent out a threat to the Big League arbiters by being put out of a practice game on the way north with his club before the championship season ever opened. Wolverton had real hard luck in New York, things breaking badly for him throughout the season. The best manager in the world would have had trouble in contending with the injuries to stars which he encountered last year. All these things going against a man when he is trying to get a toe hold in a Big League berth naturally upset his temper.

Wolverton was "on" the umpires all the time, so I am told, really believing he was getting the worst of it. I saw the Yankees play maybe ten times last season, and he was always ready to kick on any point. They tell a story about a run-in which he had with "Jack" Egan toward the end of the race, when the New York Americans were comfortably located in last place, with no chance of sinking farther, and very little show of rising. They were in much the same position that a cat finds herself when she gets to the bottom of a river tied up in a bag loaded with stones. Wolverton was, therefore, naturally irritable.

Egan has two great hobbies, literature and boxing. He reads deep books like Carlyle's "French Revolution" and other weighty works. From somewhere, either from his literature or from his heritage, he gets a great line of ready, Irish wit, "Billy" Evans once said to me:

"I wish I could get a line of conversation like Jack Egan uses. Once I tried reading the French Revolution to see if I could accumulate any good ideas on how to handle ball players, but it only put me to sleep after absorbing about twenty pages. The only way to get away with it with ball players is to lick them quick in an argument, verbal or fistic. If they can turn the laugh on you, there is no use. Jack Egan is a star at getting the quick decisions."

That is what "Billy" Evans thinks of Egan's system. On this particular day last fall which I have in mind, Wolverton was coaching at first base, and Egan was appearing on the bases. Daniels got to first and started to steal. The play, I am told, was not very close, and Egan called Daniels out. Wolverton emitted a terrible roar, and protested so violently to Egan that the umpire finally turned to him, after playing deaf for a time, and said:

"Now, Harry, go to the bench and get a nice drink of water and a chew of tobacco for yourself and then run along to the clubhouse, because you are through here for this afternoon."

### Gets as Good as he Sends

Wolverton did as directed, but in his way from the bench to the club-house he passed Egan to indulge in some conversation. That was where he made his mistake.

"I have a good mind," said Wolverton, "to come over and punch you right square in the nose."

"If you are as good a fighter as you are a manager, Harry," returned Egan, "you must be the champion of the world" Come on."

That silenced Wolverton, and he went away grumbling, hanging on the fringe of the field until chased out into the clubhouse by Egan with a wave of his hand. Even some of the New York players, who had resumed their places in the field with Daniels' protested out, it being the third, put their hands to their mouths to conceal their laughter when Egan expressed these sentiments to Wolverton. But the player always has the old percentage with the crowd. The spectators undoubtedly thought Wolverton washanding it to Egan hot and heavy because he made more motions than the umpire did. Perhaps this is as it should be. Far be it from me to side with the umpire; although some are fair talkers.

Bresnahan is constantly after the umpires, and, like all ball players, he is fond of his batting average. It rankled him greatly one day in the season of 1911 when "Rube" Marquard struck him out twice in a game at the Polo Grounds, the third strike being called by "Hank" O'Day both times. "Rube" did not have the reputation then he has now. Roger and Henry never resembled Damon and Pythias in their most intimate moments, and Bresnahan felt that he, an old star of the Polo Grounds, risen to the dignified position of manager, was being shown up before a crowd which had come out to look him over and see how he was getting along. It was hard to be fanned twice by a youngster in the league, especially when Bresnahan was very sure that O'Day was responsible for both third strikes, and not himself. He did a good deal of beefing over the decisions, and, when he came up for his third time at the bat, he carried a whisk broom with him. He did not say a word to O'Day, but bent down and carefully brushed the plate clean. Henry let him finish. As Roger straightened up to take his position in the batter's box O'Day said:

"Now send somebody out here who can bat. You are through for the afternoon. Much obliged for brushing off the plate."

Bresnahan was very much worked up over it, and made a vigorous kick, running from one umpire to the other, as is the custom. The ruling stood, though, as most of them do, and he had to tramp for the clubhouse. Bresnahan is a hard man on umpires. He will nag until the judge of the play gets to dread his constant conversation. For instance, when the Cubs played that famous game with the Giants on October 8, 1908, on the result of which depended the pennant winner, all the boys on both sides were highly excited. Bresnahan was full of fight, and started his work in this way:

"Well, Johnstone, are you going to give us any of the close ones today?" This as he was putting on his chest protector before ever a ball had been pitched. Roger was a great man. It is this aggressive temperament which makes him so valuable to a team. He keeps the players full of pepper when he is catching, and the game never drags with him in it.

### Umpires' Troubles

The old Cubs were a bad bunch, and one to be dreaded by umpires. On the day of this great game, the 1908 one, they were all keyed to a high pitch, and there were no formalities between the players, even in practice. Once, before the game McGinnity got a ball that belonged to the Cubs, and there was a wrangle and a flashing fight over it at the plate. Excitement and bad feeling crackled in the air.

The umpires knew they were up against it. The putting of a man out of the game might mean defeat to one team or the other, and defeat attributed to an umpire in that crowd made things dangerous for the umpire. It was in the second inning that Chance got the first hit made off me, but I caught him too far from first base, a minute later, according to Klem's decision. There was an immediate roar from the umpire-baiting Cubs, and, running from Klem, umpiring on the bases, to Johnstone, behind the bat, the Chicago fighters argued and pleaded. They said things which never would have stood in an ordinary game. Johnstone knew that the elimination of Chance would mean no end of abuse for him. Then came his opportunity. "Artie" Hofman, then the centre fielder on the Cubs, who had taken no part in the argument thus far, was standing down on the first base coaching lines. Just to increase the general excitement, he tossed his cap into the air, and Johnstone caught it out of the tail of his eye over the group surrounding him. He singled Hofman out.

"Beat it!" he shouted at the centre fielder. Hofman came running to the plate to join actively in the kick, but was quickly waved away. There was another storm of protest from the remaining arguers, but it was not so violent now, as it was evident that Johnstone was not afraid to put a man out of the game. He had greatly improved the situation by removing one of the lesser cogs of the Cub machine.

One of the most serious rows with an umpire occurred at the Polo Grounds in 1906 when "Jim" Johnstone was excluded from the park and forfeited the game to the Cubs out in Eighth avenue, while "Sammy" Strang, then with the Giants, was forfeiting the contest to the New York club inside the grounds.

The disturbance was the result of a protracted row between the Giants and the umpires during a series with the Cubs in a season after we had won the world's championship, and were anxious to retain the title. In this particular Chicago series, Johnstone and Emslie got calling all the close ones against us, or that was the way it looked, and the thing came to a head in a game which "Joe" McGinnity was pitching. The score was three to one against the Giants when Devlin tried to score from third base on a double steal. It looked as if he had slid in entirely under the throw, but Johnstone determined him out. That run would have given us a chance to win the game, and Devlin and McGraw put up great kicks. The result was that they were ousted, and McGraw went into the little cubby hole that he had behind the New York bench, from which point he directed the play. Here he was technically off the field, and out of the umpire's jurisdiction.

The crowd swarmed on the diamond after the game and resorted to those handy implements, the pop bottle and the cushion, for ammunition. It was a tough throng to handle, and the police had to protect Johnstone. He was the natural vortex. All the New York players were sore about the result of the game, and the crowd waited outside the grounds for a farewell crack at Johnstone. The next day Johnstone was barred from the park, and Emslie refused to come in and officiate alone. McGraw proposed that each team select an extra player to act as umpire, and he picked "Sammy" Strang, and put the thing up to Chance. I remember well that knot of ball players gathered around the plate in dispute.

### McGraw and Chance Argue

"I hire my men for ball players, and not for umpires," declared Chance. "What did you shut Johnstone out of the grounds for?"

"It is not my fault if the regular league umpires do not show up," replied McGraw. "I didn't shut him out of the game. The police refused to let him in because they feared a riot."

"And one of my players would look like a peacemaker, I suppose, if he called a close one against the Giants. His life would not be worth the price of his uniform," replied Chance.

Then McGraw sent Strang to the pitcher's box, where he proceeded to forfeit the game to New York by the score of 9 to 0, while Johnstone, at precisely the same time, was handing the game to Chicago by the exactly the same score out in Eighth avenue. The Giants were in their positions, according to the rules, when Strang did his act.

Fred Tenney used to be a great fellow to bark at umpires all the time, when he was in the league, although he was very mild in his language. The Giants were playing in Boston one day, and "Bill" Klem was doing the umpiring, just after he had broken into the league. The balls are supposed to belong to the home club, and the arbiter is expected to pass them over as soon as the game has been finished. I guess Klem did not understand this, for when Tenney came up to him after the contest he refused to give up the balls, evidently intending to keep them for the next game. Tenney started to search him, and Klem punched Tenney without more ado, as Mr. Shakespeare used to say. There was a lively fight, and both wore the marks of the battle afterwards.

Two players whom I have known in Big League baseball never swore. They were "Al" Bridwell, formerly the shortstop of the Giants, and "Dave" Fultz, once with the Highlanders, and now a highly successful lawyer. Bridwell never smoked or drank either, but he was a great ball player, and one of the best fighters on the team when it came to boxing. "Al" thought he had a man at second base one day when Rigler was working the bases, and the umpire called the runner safe at a critical point in the game.

"Oh, pshaw!" said "Al." "That one looked gol darned bad to me, Rig,"

Rigler promptly put Bridwell out of the game and the park. When some one asked him afterward why he had done it, Rigler replied:

"What Bridwell said to me was a lot worse, considering his habits, than if some of you fellows had sworn ot me."

Once the Brooklyn team was playing the Giants four or five years ago, and it was very short of infield talent. "Tim" Jordan was playing first base, and he got into an argument with O'Day. He fed his stuff to "Hank" so strong that Henry finally whirled on him and said:

### A Final Taunt

"Beat it! You're out of the game."

"Send the bat boy out to play first base," Jordan shouted in at the bench, as he turned to leave the grounds. He realized the paucity of infielders.

So short was Brooklyn of real talent, that Dunn, a young catcher, had to be sent out to cover the bag. As luck would have it, this man broke up the game that day with a drive over the fence. It was the first contest Brooklyn had won in six or seven starts, and the team immediately fell into another losing streak after the victory, with Jordan's return. Somebody was talking to O'Day sometime later and remarked on the peculiar fact that the putting of a regular out of the game had apparently won one for Brooklyn.

"Oh, well," said O'Day, "if these managers do not know how to line up their club, we umpires have to do it for them."

That was before Henry had tried managing Cincinnati.

When the double headers begin to come along in the middle of the summer, many players try to get put out of the game on purpose on the afternoons there is a double bill. A story is told of a Washington player in a double header one day. This man was not feeling very well, but still was not ill enough to ask his boss for the day off. He thought he could get painlessly removed by the umpire, who happened to be "Tim" Hurst. Now "Tim" and the player were good players off the field, but Hurst did not believe in letting personal feelings interfere with his business, so he quickly realized, from the man's chronic kicking, that he desired to be put off the field, and resolved to hold him in the game at any cost.

The player tried all the known prescriptions to be removed, and they failed. Finally he hit on what he thought might be a vulnerable spot in "Tim's" armor. He knew the umpire was a great friend of Frank Farrell, the owner of the New York American League club. He walked up to Hurst early in the second game and remarked:

"If Frank Farrell wasn't a good fellow, we would be buying shoestrings from you. I understand that you double as his valet in the winter time."

This penetrated "Tim's" skin, and he swung on the player.

"Get out of the game before I hit you with this mask," he bellowed. "Tim" always bellowed. He was probably one of the best bellowers in the business.

The ousted athlete laughed, and then bolted for the club house. Hurst saw too late what he had done, and shouted after the disappearing man:

"Come back here! You are not out of the game!"

He might as well have tried to stop an express train with a blade of grass placed in the middle of the track.

### Ty Cobb's Quick Temper

Evans, the American League umpire, is well liked by most all the ball players, for he is not autocratic, although he enforces strict discipline. He knows how to handle the men. He was telling me a story about "Ty" Cobb last summer which was interesting. Evans, it seems, had gone through pretty nearly half of one season without being forced to put a man out of the game, and was very proud of his record. Cobb was apparently peevish one day, and his batting eye was not as good as it might be. Stars have their bad days. As George Ade says, not even a humorist can go to bat every day and knock out a three-bagger. He ought to try baseball.

The first time Evans called Cobb out on strikes, he put up a good verbal kick, but Evans passed it over with some remark about Cobb being wrong. But the second time Cobb refused to get into the batter's box when the first ball was pitched, which Evans promptly labeled a strike. The third strike was also called, whereupon "Ty" hurled his bat in the air, grabbed up a handful of dust and sprinkled it to windward, where it was liable to blow in Evan' eyes, and demonstrated to the crowd with his hands spread apart a foot, how wide the ball was. It showed Evans up in a great style.

"You'll have to get out of the battle, 'Ty'" urged Evans.

"Do you mean that?" asked the Detroit star.

"Never meant anything more in my life."

Cobb is said to be very quick tempered. Perhaps the battered appearance of the man's face, which Cobb walked upon when he went into the grand stand here in New York, will testify to this. The fan had been abusing Cobb.

"I have a good mind to lick you," he said to Evans, flaring up.

"Come right around to my dressing room after the game," invited the umpire.

Evans fully expected Cobb would appear to declare war. He concluded that his opinion had been confirmed when Cobb showed up in his quarters after the contest.

"Bill," said Cobb, "why are you always picking on me?"

"Oh," answered Evans, "I thought you were coming round here to do battle."

"No," replied Cobb, now thoroughly cooled off, "but that last one you called on me was a foot wide."

"Your eye was bad today, 'Ty'"

"Want to ride downtown with me in the car, Bill?" invited Tyrus.

That ended it. Players frequently flare up on the field when they think perhaps a decision is shaded against them, but they usually get over it quickly. Few harbor a grudge. The fact an umpire is doing the best he can is very generally recognized around the Big League circuit. The best of some of them is none too good, though.

Most ball players, who are bad umpire baiters, are the nervous, aggressive ones who put their whole hearts into the game, and are highly strung during a contest. "Jiggs" Donohue, the former first baseman of the Chicago White Sox, was always after the umpires on every close play, I have been told, and he was very frequently seen nagging an arbiter's footsteps from first to third base, presenting his argument on the wing. Baseball wore Donohue out while he was still a young man, and he was let go by the White Stockings shortly after the club had won the world's championship in 1906.

"Jiggs" is said to have brooded over his decline in the ranks of his profession until his mind was affected. Somebody told me just the other day that the grand, old first baseman was in a sanitarium in southwestern Ohio, now still making the plays which he executed in the famous world's series of 1906 that the White Sox won from the Cubs. He thinks that the attendants are the umpires, and he argues with them continually on the close ones. That is what umpire baiting may do for a ball player.

As I said before, the sport is on the decline. When such old masters as Elberfield, Jack Doyle, McGinnity and some more passed, it received a severe blow. Once there was a time when a lot of the managers used to spend quite as many of their working hours directing their teams from the field boxes as they did from the bench, because a man in the grand stand is off the field.

McGraw had been transplanted from the bench to a box for a period of three days in 1907, and was giving his signs from this inopportune point. Sitting near him, there happened to be a man who resembled the Giant leader very closely. Some of the players, turing quickly so as not to attract the attention of the umpire or the visiting players, got the actions of the wrong man and misinterrupted them. The Giants lost the game.

As a rule, I believe that most of the bad umpire baiters are subject to home rule, and there is no doubt that the umpires are absolutely dominated by their wives. I could mention the name of one arbiter who was in the league a few years ago, who was whipped regularly by his better half, the "better half" in any sense you care to take it.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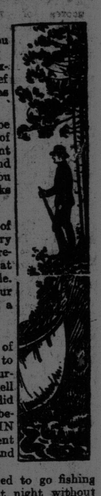

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