

AN EDITOR PLAYS BASE BALL.

We don't know who wrote the following sketch, but feel inclined to credit it to "Mark Twain's" account. He's rich now, and can afford to father it, whether it be his own offspring or the result of chance:

The doctor said we needed exercise. Doctor knows. He told us to join a baseball club. We joined, bought a bunch of instructions, and for five days studied wisely if not too well. Then we bought a sugar-scooped, red-colored belt, green shirt, yellow trousers, pumpkin-colored shoes, a paper collar and a purple necktie, and, with a lot of other delicacies, moved gently to the grounds.

There were two Nines. These Nines are awfully good. The ball is a pretty drop of softness, size of a goose's egg, and five degrees harder than a rock. The Nines play against each other. It is a quiet game, much like chess, only a little more chase than chess.

There was an umpire. His position was a hard one. He sits upon a box and yells "Foul." His duty is a severe one.

I took the bat. It is a murderous playing, described in "Punch" as "the best of the game." The man in front of me was pitcher. He was a nice pitcher, but he sent the balls hot. The man behind me was a catcher. He caught it too!

Umpire said "Play!" It is the most radical play I know of, this base ball. Sawing wood is moonlight rambles beside base-ball. So the pitcher sent a ball toward me. It looked pretty coming, so I let it come. Then he sent another. I hit it with a club and have it gently upward. Then I started to walk to the ward. The ball hit in the pitcher's hand, and somebody said he caught a fly. A-ah! poor fly. I walked leisurely toward the base. Another man took the bat. I turned to see how he was making it, and a mule kicked me on the cheek. The man said it was the ball. I felt like a mule and I reposed on the grass. The ball ran on.

Pretty soon there were two more flies, and three of us flew out. Then the other Nine came in, and us nine fellows went out. That was better. Just as I was standing on my dignity in the left field, a hot ball, as they call it, came skyrocketing toward me. Mr. Captain yelled "Take it!"

I hastened gently forward to where it was aiming to descend. I have a good eye to assure distances, and saw as a glance where the little missile was to descend. How sweetly the ball descended! Everybody looked. I felt something warm in my eye. "Muffin!" yelled ninety fellows. "Muffin!" yelled it's a cannon ball! For three days I have had two pounds of raw beef on that eye, and yet it paineth.

Then I wanted to go home, but my gentle captain said "Nay." So I stayed and said. Pretty soon it was my strike. "To bat!" yelled the umpire. I went, but not all serene, as was my wont. The pitcher sent in one, a high. It struck me in the gullet. "Foul!" yelled the umpire. He sent in the ball again. This time it took it square, and sent it down the right field through a parlor window, a kerowee lamp, and rip up against the head of an infant, who was quietly taking his nap in his mother's arms. Then I slung the bat, and maneuvered forth to the first base. I heard high words, and looked. When I slung the bat, I had with it broken the jaw of the umpire, and was fined ten cents.

The game went on. I liked it. It is so much fun to run from base, just in time to be put out; or to chase a ball three-fourths of a mile down hill, while all the spectators yell "Muffin!" "Go!" "Home run!" "Go round again!" "Go round a couple times!" Base ball is a good little game. When it came my turn to bat again, I noticed everybody moved back ten rods. The umpire retreated twelve rods—he was timid. The pitcher sent 'em in hot. Hot balls in time of war are good. But I don't like 'em too hot for fun. After a while I got a fair clip at it, and you bet it went cutting the middle down the right field. A fat man and dog sat in the shade of an oak, enjoying the game. The ball broke the leg of the dog, and landed like a runaway engine, in the company of the fat man. He was taken home to die.

Then I went on a double quick to the field, and tried to stop a hot ball. It came to waste me, from the bat at the rate of blue miles a minute. I put up my hands—the ball went whizzing along on its way, with all the men from my palms with it.

More raw beef.

That was an eventful chap who first invented baseball. It's such fun. I have played five games, and this the results: Twenty-seven dollars paid out for things, one bunged eye—badly bunged, one broken little finger, one bump on the head, nineteen lame backs, one sore jaw, one thumb dislocated, three sprained ankles, five badly applied legs, one dislocated shoulder, four attempts to throw the ball a thousand yards, two hands raw from trying to stop hot balls; a bump, about the size of a horse's nest, well back; a nose sweetly jammed; five uniforms spoiled from rolling in the dirt at the bases.

I have played two weeks, and don't think that I like the game. I've looked over the scores book and find that I have broken seven bats, made one tally, broken one umpire's leg, broken one baby, broken the leg of a dog, mortally injured the bread basket of a spectator, knocked five other players out of time by slinging my bat, and knocked the waterfall from a schoolmarm who was standing twenty rods from the field, a quiet looker on.

I've used up three bottles of Arnica liniment, five bottles of lotion, half a raw beef, and am so full of pain, that it seems as if my limbs were but broken bats, and my legs the limbs of a dead horse-chestnut.

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