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Ring Lardner

Where Do You Get That Noise?

The trade was pulled wile the Phillies was here first trip. Without knockin' nobody, the two fellas we give was worth about as much as a front foot on Main Street, Belgium. And the fella we got had went better this spring than any time since he broke in. So when the news o' the deal come out I says to Dode, I says:

“What’s the matter with Pat—tradin’ Hawley? What’s he goin’ to do with them two he’s gettin’—make ticket takers out of ‘em? What’s the idear?”

“It does look like a bad swap for us,” says Dode. “Hawley’s worth six like them you’re givin’ us, and he ain’t only twenty-seven years old.”

“That’s what I’m tellin’ you,” I says. “The deal looks like you was tryin’ to help us out.”

“We are,” says Dode. “Didn’t we just get through helpin’ you out o’ the first division?”

"Save that for the minstrels," I says. "Give me the inside on this business: Is they somethin' the matter with him? The trade's made now already and it won't hurt you none to come clean. Didn't him and Pat get along?"

"Sure! Why not?" says Dode. "Did you ever see a guy that Pat couldn't get along with him?"

"Well then," says I, "what's the answer? Don't keep me in suspenders."

"I ain't sure myself," says Dode, "but I and Bobby was talkin' it over and we figured that Pat just plain got sick o' hearin' him talk."

"Feed that to the goldfish," I says. "If Pat couldn't stand conversation he wouldn't of never lasted this long."

"Conversation, yes," Dode says; "but it's a different thing when a bird makes an argument out of everything that's said. They wasn't a day passed but what Hawley just as good as called everybody on the club a liar. And, it didn't make no difference whether you was talkin' to him or not. If I happened to be tellin' you that my sister was the champion chess player o' Peanut County, he'd horn right in and say she wasn't no such a thing; that So-and-So was the champion. And they wouldn't be no use to argue with him because you couldn't even get a draw. He'd say he was born in the county seat o' Peanut County and empired all the chess tournaments there. They wasn't no subject that he didn't know all about it better'n anybody else. They wasn't no town he wasn't born and brought up in. His mother or his old man is first cousins to everybody in the United States. He's been operated on for every disease in the hospital. And if he's did all he says he's did he'll be eight hundred and twenty-two years old next Halloween."

"They's lots o' fellas like that," I says.

"You think so?" says Dode. "You wait a wile. Next time I see you, if you don't say he's all alone in the Argue League I'll give you my bat."

"If he's that good," I says, "he'll be soup for Carey."

"He will at first, maybe," says Dode; "but Carey'll get sick of him, just like Pat and all the rest of us did."

II

I didn't lose no time tellin' Carey about Dode's dope, and Carey didn't lose no time tryin' it out. It was the second day after Hawley

joined us. It looked like rain, as usual, and we was stallin' in the clubhouse, thinkin' they'd maybe call it off before we had to dress.

"I see in some paper," says Carey, "where the heavy artillery fire over in Europe is what makes all this duck weather."

He didn't get no rise; so he wound up again.

"It seems like it must be somethin' that does it because they wasn't never no summer like this before," he says.

"What do you mean—no summer like this?" says Hawley.

"No summer with so much rain as they's been this summer," Carey says.

"Where do you get that stuff?" says Hawley. "This here summer's been dry, you might say."

"Yes," says Carey; "and you might say the Federals done well in Newark."

"I mean," says Hawley, "that this here summer's been dry compared to other summers."

"I s'pose," says Carey, "they wasn't never such a dry summer?"

"They's been lots of 'em," Hawley says. "They's been lots o' summers that was drier and they's been lots o' summers when they was more rain."

"Not in the last twenty years," says Carey.

"Yes, in the last twenty years too," says Hawley. "Nineteen years ago this summer made this here one look like a drought. It come up a storm the first day o' May and they wasn't a day from then till the first o' September when it didn't rain one time or another."

"You got some memory," says Carey—"goin' back nineteen years."

"I guess I ought to remember it," says Hawley. "That was the first year my old man left me go to the ball games alone, and they wasn't no games in our town from April till Labor Day. They wasn't no games nowheres because the railroads was all washed out. We lived in Cleveland and my old man was caught in New York when the first o' the floods come and couldn't get back home for three months."

"Couldn't he hire a canoe nowheres?" says Carey.

"Him and some others was thinkin' about tryin' the trip on a raft," says Hawley, "but my old lady was scared to have him try it; so she wrote and told him to stay where he was."

"She was lucky to have a carrier pigeon to take him the letter," says Carey. "Or did you swim East with it?"

"Swim!" Hawley says. "Say, you wouldn't talk about swim if you'd saw the current in them floods!"

"I'm sorry I missed it," says Carey. "I was still over in Portugal yet that year."

"It dried up in time for the world serious," says Hawley.

"The world serious between who?" ast Carey.

"The clubs that won out in the two leagues," says Hawley.

"I didn't know they was two leagues in '96," says Carey. "Who did they give the pennants to—the clubs that was ahead when it begin to sprinkle?"

"Sprinkle!" says Hawley. "Say, you'd of called it a sprinkle if you'd saw it. Sprinkle! Say, I guess that was some sprinkle!"

"I guess it must of been some sprinkle!" says Carey. "It must of made this summer look like a sucker."

"No," says Hawley; "this summer's been pretty bad."

"But nowheres near like nineteen year ago," says Carey.

"Oh, I guess they's about the same rainfall every year," Hawley says. "But, still and all, we've had some mighty wet weather since the first o' May this year, and I wouldn't be su'prised if the heavy artillery fire in Europe had somethin' to do with it."

"That's ridic'lous," says Carey.

"Ridic'lous!" says Hawley. "Where do you get that stuff? Don't you know that rain can be started with dynamite? Well, then, why wouldn't all that shootin' affect the weather? They must be some explanation."

"Did you make him?" says Carey to me afterward. "He trimmed me both ways. Some day he'll single to right field and throw himself out at first base. I seen I was in for a lickin', so I hedged to get a draw, and the minute I joined his league he jumped to the outlaws. But after this I'm goin' to stick on one side of it. He goes better when he's usin' his own stuff."

III

In battin' practice the next day Carey hit one up against them boards in right center on a line.

"Good night!" says Smitty. "I bet that's the hardest wallop that was ever made on these grounds."

"I know I didn't never hit one harder here," says Carey. "I don't never hit good in this park. I'd rather be on the road all the wile. I hit

better on the Polo Grounds than anywheres else. I s'pose it's on account o' the background."

"Where do you get that stuff?" says Hawley. "Everybody hits better in New York than they do here. Do you want to know why? Because it's a clean town, without no dirt and cinders blowin' in your eyes. This town's all smoke and dirt, and it ain't no wonder a man's handicapped. The fellas that's with clubs in clean towns has got it all over us. Look at Detroit—one o' the cleanest towns in the country! And look how Cobb and Crawford hit! A man in one o' these smoke holes can't never pile up them big averages, or he can't last as long, neither."

"No," says Carey; "and that accounts for Wagner's rotten record in Pittsburgh."

Do you think that stopped him? Not him!

"Yes," he says; "and how much would Wagner of hit if he'd been playin' in New York or Detroit all the wile? He wouldn't never been below .500. And he'd of lasted just twicet as long."

"But on account of him landin' in Pittsburgh," says Carey, "the poor kid'll be all through already before he's fairly started yet. It's a crime and the grand jury should ought to take steps."

"Have you ever been to Washington?" says I.

"Have I ever been to Washington?" says Hawley. "Say, I know Washington like a book. My old man's brother's a senator there in Congress. You must of heard o' Senator Hawley."

"Oh, yes," says Carey; "the fella that made the speech that time."

"That's the fella," says Hawley. "And a smart fella too. Him and Woodruff Wilson's just like brothers. They're always to each other's houses. That's where I met Wilson—was at Uncle Zeke's. We fanned together for a couple hours. You wouldn't never know he was the President. He don't let on like he was any better than I or you."

"He ain't as good as you; that's a pipe!" says Carey.

"Where does your cousin live?" says Smitty.

"Cousin Zeke's got the swellest apartment in Washington," says Hawley. "Right next to the Capitol, on Pennsylvania Street."

"I wisht I could live there," I says. "It's the best town in the country for my money. And it's the cleanest one too."

"No factories or smoke there," says Carey.

"I wonder how it comes," I says, "that most o' the fellas on the

Washington Club, playin' in the cleanest town in the country most o' the wile, can't hardly foul a ball—let alone hit it."

"Maybe the silver dust from the mint gets in their eyes," says Carey.

"Where do you get that noise?" says Hawley. "The mint ain't nowheres near the ball orchard."

"Well then," I says, "how do you account for the club not hittin'?"

"Say," says Hawley, "it ain't no wonder they don't hit in that town. We played a exhibition game there last spring and we didn't hit, neither."

"Who pitched against you—Johnson?" I ast him.

"Yes; Johnson," says Hawley.

"But that don't explain why the Washington bunch can't hit," says Carey. "He ain't mean enough to turn round and pitch against his own club."

"They won't nobody hit in that town," says Hawley, "and I don't care if it's Johnson pitchin' or the mayor."

"What's the trouble?" I says.

"The heat gets 'em!" says Carey.

"No such a thing!" says Hawley. "That shows you don't know nothin' about it. It's the trees."

"The trees!" I says. "Do they play out in the woods or somewheres?"

"No," says Hawley. "If they did they'd be all right. Their ball park's just like any ball park; they ain't no trees in it. But they's trees all over the rest o' the town. It don't make no difference where you go, you're in the shade. And then, when you get to the ball park you're exposed to the sun all of a sudden and it blinds you."

"I should think it would affect their fieldin' too," says Carey.

"They wear goggles in the field," says Hawley.

"Do the infielders wear goggles?" ast Carey.

"No; but most o' the balls they got to handle comes on the ground. They don't have to look up for 'em," says Hawley.

"S'pose somebody hits a high fly ball that's comin' down right in the middle o' the diamond," says Carey. "Who gets it?"

"It ain't got," says Hawley. "They leave it go and it gen'ally almost always rolls foul."

"If I was Griffith," says Carey, "I'd get the Forestry Department to cut away the trees in some part o' town and then make all my ball players live there so's they'd get used to the sun."

"Or he might have a few big maples planted round the home plate some Arbor Day," I says.

"Yes," says Carey; "or he might trade Johnson to the Pittsburgh Federals for Oakes."

"He'd be a sucker to trade Johnson," says Hawley.

IV

Well, we played down in Cincy one Saturday to a crowd that might of all came out in one street car without nobody ridin' in the motor-man's vest pocket. We was discussin' it that night at supper.

"It's no more'n natural," I says. "The home club's been goin' bad and you can't expect the whole population to fight for a look at 'em."

"Yes," says Carey; "but it ain't only here. It's everywheres. We didn't hardly draw our breath at St. Louis and the receipts o' that last double-header at home with Pittsburgh wouldn't buy enough shavin' soap to lather a gnat. All over the circuit it's the same way, and in the other leagues too. It's a off year, maybe; or maybe they's reasons for it that we ain't doped out."

"Well," I says, "the war's hurt business, for one thing, and people ain't got no money to spend on box seats. And then golf's gettin' better all the wile. A man'd naturally rather do some exercisin' himself than watch somebody else do it. Besides that, automobiles has got so cheap that pretty near everybody can buy 'em, and the people that owns 'em takes their friends out in the country instead o' comin' to the ball yard. And besides that," I says, "they's too much baseball and the people's sick of it."

Hawley come in and set down with us wile I was still talkin' yet.

"What's the argument?" he says.

"We was tryin' to figure out why we can't get a quorum out to the games no more," says Carey.

"Well," says Hawley, "you know the real reason, don't you?"

"No," says Carey; "but I bet we're goin' to hear it. I bet you'll say it's on account o' the Gulf Stream."

"Where do you get that noise?" says Hawley.

"If you want to know the real reason, the war's the real reason."

"That's what I was sayin'," says I. "The war's hurt business and people ain't got no money to blow on baseball."

"That shows you don't know nothin' about it," says Hawley.

"Then I got you tied," I says, "because you just sprung the same thing yourself."

"No such a thing!" says Hawley. "You're talkin' about the war hurtin' business and I'm talkin' about the war hurtin' baseball."

"What's the difference?" I says.

"All the difference in the world," says Hawley. "If everybody was makin' twicet as much money durin' the war as they made before the war started yet, the baseball crowds wouldn't be no bigger than they have been."

"Come acrost with the answer," says Carey. "The strain's somethin' awful."

"Well, boys," says Hawley, "they ain't nobody in this country that ain't pullin' for one side or the other in this here war. Is that right or wrong?"

"Which do you say it is?" says Carey.

"I say it's right because I know it's right," says Hawley.

"Well then," says Carey, "don't ask us boobz."

"No matter what a man says about he bein' neutral," says Hawley, "you can bet that down in his heart he's either for the Dutchmen or the Alleys; I don't care if he's Woodruff Wilson or Bill Klem. We all got our favorites."

"Who's yours?" I says.

"Don't you tell!" says Carey. "It wouldn't be fair to the other side."

"I don't mind tellin'," says Hawley. "I'd be a fine stiff to pull for the Dutchmen after all King George done for my old man."

"What did he do for him?" says Carey.

"Well, it's a long story," says Hawley.

"That's all right," says Carey. "They's only one game to-morrow."

"I'll give it to you some other time," Hawley says.

"I hope you don't forget it," says Carey.

"Forget it!" says Hawley. "When your old man's honored by the royalties you ain't liable to forget it."

"No," says Carey; "but you could try."

"Here!" I says. "I'm waitin' to find out how the war cuts down the attendance."

"I'm comin' to that," says Hawley. "When you figure it out they couldn't nothin' be simpler."

"It does sound simple, now it's been explained," says Carey.

"It ain't been explained to me," I says.

"You're in too big a hurry," Hawley says. "If you wouldn't interrupt a man all the wile you might learn somethin'. You admit they ain't nobody that's neutral. Well then, you can't expect people that's for the Alleys to come out to the ball park and pull for a club that's mostly Dutchmen, and you can't expect Dutchmen to patronize a club that's got a lot o' fellas with English and French names."

"Wait a minute!" says Carey. "I s'pose they ain't no Germans here in Cincinnati, is they?"

"Sure!" says Hawley. "The place is ran over with 'em."

"Then," says Carey, "why don't they break all records for attendance at this park, with Heine Groh and Fritz Mollwitz and Count Von Kolnitz and Wagner and Schneider and Herzog on the ball club?"

"Because they's others on the team that offsets 'em," says Hawley. "We'll say they's a Dutchman comes out to the game to holler for some o' them boys you mentioned. We'll say that Groh kicks a ground ball and leaves three runs score and puts the club behind. And then we'll say that Clarke comes up in the ninth innin' and wins the game for Cincinnati with a home run. That makes the Dutchman look like a rummy, don't it? Or we'll say Schneider starts to pitch a game and gets knocked out, and then Dale comes in and they can't foul him. Your German friend wishes he had of stayed home and washed part o' the dashhound."

"Yes," says Carey; "but wouldn't he want to come to the game again the next day in hopes he'd get his chancet to holler?"

"No," says Hawley; "because, whatever happened, they'd be somethin' about it he wouldn't like. If the Reds win the Alleys on the club'd feel just as good as the Dutchmen, and that'd make him sore. And if they lost he'd be glad on account o' the Alleys; but he'd feel sorry for the Germans."

"Then they's only one thing for Garry Herrmann to do," I says: "he should ought to trade off all his Alleys for Dutch."

"That'd help the attendance at home," says Hawley; "but when his club played in Boston who'd go out to see 'em?"

"Everybody that could borrow a brick," says Carey.

"Accordin' to your dope," I says, "they's only one kind of a club that'd draw everywheres, and that's a club that didn't have no Dutchmen or Alleys—neither one."

"That's the idear," says Hawley: "a club made up o' fellas from countries that ain't got nothin' to do with the war—Norwegians, Denmarks, Chinks, Mongrels and them fellas. A guy that had brains enough to sign up that kind of a club would make a barrel o' money."

"A guy'd have a whole lot o' trouble findin' that kind of a club," I says.

"He'd have a whole lot more trouble," says Carey, "findin' a club they could beat."

v

Smitty used to get the paper from his home town where his folks lived at, somewheres near Lansing, Michigan. One day he seen in it where his kid brother was goin' to enter for the state golf championship.

"He'll just about cop it too," says Smitty. "And he ain't only seventeen years old. He's been playin' round that Wolverine Country Club, in Lansing, and makin' all them birds like it."

"The Wolverine Club, in Lansing?" says Hawley.

"That's the one," Smitty says.

"That's my old stampin' grounds," says Hawley. "That's where I learned the game at."

"The kid holds the record for the course," says Smitty.

"He don't no such a thing!" says Hawley.

"How do you know?" says Smitty.

"I guess I'd ought to know," Hawley says. "The guy that holds that record is talkin' to you."

"What's your record?" says Smitty.

"What'd your brother make?" says Hawley.

"Plain seventy-one," says Smitty; "and if you ever beat that you can have my share o' the serious money."

"You better make a check right now," says Hawley. "The last time I played at that club I rolled up seventy-three."

"That beats me," Smitty says.

"If you're that good," says Carey, "I'd like to take you on some-time. I can score as high as the next one."

"You might get as much as me now because I'm all out o' practice," says Hawley; "but you wouldn't of stood no show when I was right."

"What club was you best with?" ast Carey.

"A heavy one," says Hawley. "I used to play with a club that they couldn't hardly nobody else lift."

"An iron club?" says Smitty.

"Well," says Hawley, "it felt like they was iron in it."

"Did you play all the wile with one club?" ast Carey.

"You bet I did," Hawley says. "I paid a good price and got a good club. You couldn't break it."

"Was it a brassie?" says Smitty.

"No," says Hawley. "It was made by some people right there in Lansing."

"I'd like to get a hold of a club like that," says Carey.

"You couldn't lift it," Hawley says; "and even if you could handle it I wouldn't sell it for no price—not for twicet what it cost."

"What did it cost?" Smitty ast him.

"Fifty bucks," says Hawley; "and it'd of been more'n that only for the people knowin' me so well. My old man used to do 'em a lot o' good turns."

"He must of stood in with 'em," says Carey, "or they wouldn't of never left go of a club like that for fifty."

"They must of sold it to you by the pound," I says—"about a dollar a pound."

"Could you slice a ball with it?" says Carey.

"That was the trouble—the balls wouldn't stand the gaff," Hawley says. "I used to cut 'em in two with it."

"How many holes did they have there when you was playin'?" Smitty ast.

"Oh, three or four," he says; "but they didn't feaze me."

"They got eighteen now," says Smitty.

"They must of left the course run down," Hawley says. "You can bet they kept it up good when my old man was captain."

"Has your brother ever been in a big tourney before?" I says to Smitty.

"He was in the city championship last summer," says Smitty.

"How'd he come out?" Hawley ast.

"He was second highest," says Smitty. "He'd of win, only he got stymied by a bumblebee."

"Did they cauterize it?" says Carey.

"Where do you get that noise?" says Hawley.

"They ain't no danger in a bee sting if you know what to do. Just slip a piece o' raw meat on it."

"Was you ever stymied by a bee?" says Carey.

"Was I!" says Hawley. "Say, I wisht I had a base hit for every time them things got me. My old lady's dad had a regular bee farm down in Kentucky, and we'd go down there summertimes and visit and help gather the honey. I used to run round barefooted and you couldn't find a square inch on my legs that wasn't all et up."

"Must of kept your granddad broke buyin' raw meat," says Carey.

"Meat wasn't so high in them days," says Hawley. "Besides he didn't have to buy none. He had his own cattle."

"I should think the bees would of stymied the cattle," says Carey.

"Cattle's hide's too tough; a bee won't go near 'em," says Hawley.

"Why didn't you hire a cow to go round with you wile you collected honey?" says Carey.

"What'd you quit golf for?" ast Smitty.

"A fella can't play golf and hit good," says Hawley.

"I should think it'd help a man's hittin'," Carey says. "A golf ball's a whole lot smaller than a baseball, and a baseball should ought to look as big as a balloon to a man that's been playin' golf."

"Where do you get that noise?" says Hawley. "Golf's bad for a man's battin'; but it ain't got nothin' to do with your swing or your eye or the size o' the ball."

"What makes it bad, then?" I ast him.

"Wait a minute and I'll tell you," he says. "They's two reasons: In the first place they's genally almost always some people playin' ahead o' you on a golf course and you have to wait till they get out o' reach. You get in the habit o' waitin' and when you go up to the plate in a ball game and see the pitcher right in front o' you and the infielders and baserunners clost by, you're liable to wait for 'em to get out o' the way for the fear you'll kill 'em. And wile you're waitin' the pitcher's liable to slip three over in the groove and you're struck out."

"I wasn't never scared o' killin' no infielder," says Carey.

"And what's the other reason?" I says.

"The other reason," says Hawley, "is still better yet than the one I give you."

"Don't say that!" says Smitty.

"When you're playin' golf you pay for the balls you use," says

Hawley; "so in a golf game you're sort of holdin' back and not hittin' a ball as far as you can, because it'll cost you money if you can't find it. So you get used to sort o' holdin' back; and when you get up there to the plate you don't take a good wallop for the fear you'll lose the ball. You forget that the balls is furnished by the club."

"And besides that," says Carey, "you're liable to get to thinkin' that your bat cost fifty bucks, the same as your golf racket, and you don't swing hard because you might break it."

"You don't know nothin' about it," says Hawley.

VI

Now I don't care how big a goof a man is, he'd ought to know better than get smart round a fella that's slumped off in his battin'. Most o' the time they ain't no better-natured fella in the world than Carey; but when him and first base has been strangers for a wile, lay offen him!

That's how Hawley got in bad with Carey—was talkin' too much when the old boy wasn't in no mood to listen.

He begin to slump off right after the fourth o' July double-header. In them two games a couple o' the boys popped out when they was sent up to sacrifice. So Cap got sore on the buntin' game and says we'd hit and run for a wile. Well, in the first innin', every day for the next three days, Bishop led off with a base on balls and then started down when he got Carey's sign. And all three times Carey cracked a line drive right at somebody and they was a double play. After the last time he come in to the bench tryin' to smile.

"Well," he says, "I guess that's about a record."

"A record! Where do you get that stuff?" says Hawley. "I come up four times in Philly in one game and hit into four double plays."

"You brag too much!" says Carey; but you could see he didn't want to go along with it.

Well, that last line drive seemed to of took the heart out of him or somethin', because for the next week he didn't hardly foul one—let alone gettin' it past the infield.

When he'd went through his ninth game without a blow Hawley braced him in the clubhouse. "Do you know why you ain't hittin'?" he says.

"Yes," says Carey. "It's because they don't pitch where I swing."

"It ain't no such a thing!" says Hawley. "It's because you don't choke up your bat enough."

"Look here!" says Carey. "I been in this league longer'n you and I've hit better'n you. When I want advice about how to hold my bat I'll get you on the wire."

You know how clost the clubs was bunched along in the middle o' July. Well, we was windin' up a series with Brooklyn and we had to cop the last one to break even.

We was tied up in the ninth and one out in their half when Wheat caught a-hold o' one and got three bases on it. Cutshaw raised one a little ways back o' second base and it looked like a cinch Wheat couldn't score if Carey got her. Well, he got her all right and Wheat come dashin' in from third like a wild man.

Now they ain't no better pegger in the league than this same Carey and I'd of bet my life Wheat was runnin' into a double play. I thought he was a sucker for makin' the try. But Carey throwed her twenty feet to one side o' the plate. The run was in and the game was over.

Hawley hadn't hardly got in the clubhouse before he started in.

"Do you know what made you peg bad?" he says.

"Shut up!" says Smitty. "Is that the first bad peg you ever seen? Does they have to be a reason for all of 'em? He throwed it bad because he throwed it bad."

"He throwed it bad," says Hawley, "because he was in center field instead o' left field or right field. A center fielder'll peg wide three times to the others' oncet. And you know why it is, don't you?"

Nobody answered him.

"I'll tell you why it is," he says. "They's a foul line runnin' out in right field and they's a foul line runnin' out in left field, and them two lines gives a fielder somethin' to guide his throw with. If they was a white line runnin' from home plate through second base and out in center field you wouldn't see so many bad pegs from out there.

"But that ain't the only reason," says Hawley. "They's still another reason. The old boy ain't feelin' like hisself. He's up in the air because he ain't hittin'."

That's oncet where Hawley guessed right. But Carey didn't say a word—not till we was in the Subway.

"I know why I ain't hittin' and why I can't peg," he told me. "I'm

so sick o' this Wisenheimer that I can't see. I can't see what they're pitchin' and I can't see the bases. I'm lucky to catch a fly ball."

"Forget him!" I says. "Let him rave!"

"I can't stop him from ravin'," says Carey; "but he's got to do his ravin' on another club."

"What do you mean?" I says. "You ain't manager."

"You watch me!" says Carey. "I ain't goin' to cripple him up or nothin' like that, but if he's still with us yet when we come offen this trip I'll make you a present o' my oldest boy."

"Have you got somethin' on him?"

"No," says Carey; "but he's goin' to get himself in wrong. And I think he's goin' to do it to-night."

VII

He done it—and that night too. I guess you know that, next to winnin', Cap likes his missus better'n anything in the world. She is a nice gal, all right, and as pretty as they make 'em.

Cap's as proud of her as a colleger with a Charlie Chaplin mustache. When the different papers would print Miss So-and So's pitcher and say she was the handsomest girl in this, that or the other place, Cap'd point it out to us and say: "My gal makes her look like a bad day outdoors."

Cap's wife's a blonde; and—believe me, boy—she dresses! She wasn't with us on this trip I'm speakin' of. She hasn't been with us all season, not since the trainin' trip. I think her mother's sick out there in St. Joe. Anyway, Hawley never seen her—that is, to know who she was.

Well, Carey framed it up so's I and him and Cap went in to supper together. Hawley was settin' all alone. Carey, brushin' by the head waiter, marches us up to Hawley's table and plants us. Carey's smilin' like he didn't have a care in the world. Hawley noticed the smile.

"Yattaboy!" he says. "Forget the base hits and cheer up!"

"I guess you'd cheer up, too, if you'd seen what I seen," says Carey. "Just lookin' at her was enough to drive away them Ockaway Chinese blues."

"That ain't no way for a married man to talk," says Cap.

"Well," says Carey, "gettin' married don't mean gettin' blind."

"What was she like?" ast Cap.

"Like all the prettiest ones," says Carey. "She was a blonde."

"Where do you get that noise?" says Hawley, buttin' in. "I s'pose they ain't no pretty dark girls?"

"Oh, yes," says Carey—"octoroons and them."

"Well," says Hawley, "I never seen no real pretty blondes. They ain't a blonde livin' that can class up with a pretty brunette."

"Where do you get that noise?" says Carey.

"Where do I get it!" says Hawley. "Say, I guess I've saw my share o' women. When you seen as many as I seen you won't be talkin' blonde."

"I seen one blonde that's the prettiest woman in this country," says Carey.

"The one you seen just now?" says Hawley.

"No sir; another one," says Carey.

"Where at?" Hawley ast him.

"She's in Missouri, where she first come from," says Carey; "and she's the prettiest girl that was ever in the state."

"That shows you don't know what you're talkin' about," Hawley says. "I guess I ought to know the prettiest girl in Missouri. I was born and raised there, and the prettiest girl in Missouri went to school with me."

"And she was a blonde?" says Carey.

"Blonde nothin'!" says Hawley. "Her hair was as black as Chief Meyers'. And when you see a girl with black hair you know it's natural color. Take a blonde and you can't tell nothin' about it. They ain't one in a thousand of 'em that ain't dyed their hair."

Cap couldn't stand it no longer.

"You talk like a fool!" he says. "You don't know nothin' about women."

"I guess I know as much as the next one," says Hawley.

"You don't know nothin'!" says Cap. "What was this girl's name?"

"What girl's name?" says Hawley.

"This black girl you're talkin' about—this here prettiest girl in Missouri," says Cap.

"I forget her name," says Hawley.

"You never knowed her name," says Cap. "You never knowed nothin'! We traded nothin' to get you and we got stung at that. If you want your unconditional release, all you got to do is ask for it."

And if you don't want it I'll get waivers on you and send you down South where you can be amongst the brunettes. We ain't got no room on this club for a ball player that don't know nothin' on no subject. You're just as smart about baseball as you are about women. It's a wonder your head don't have a blow-out! If a torpedo hit a boat you was on and you was the only one drowned, the captain'd send a wireless: 'Everybody saved!'"

Cap broke a few dishes gettin' up from the table and beat it out o' the room.

Hawley was still settin', with his mouth wide open, lookin' at his prunes. After a wile I and Carey got up and left him.

"He ain't a bad fella," I says when we was outside. "He don't mean nothin'. It looks to me like a raw deal you're handin' him."

"I don't care how it looks to you or anybody else," says Carey. "I still got a chancet to lead this league in hittin' and I ain't goin' to be talked out of it."

"Do you think you'll hit when he's gone?"

"You bet I'll hit!" says Carey.

Cap ast for waivers on Hawley, and Pittsburgh claimed him.

"I wisht it had of been some other club," he says to me. "That's another o' them burgs where the smoke and cinders kills your battin'."

But I notice he's been goin' good there and he should ought to enjoy hisself tellin' Wagner how to stand up to the plate.

The day after he'd left us I kept pretty good track o' Carey. He popped out twicet, grounded out oncet and hit a line drive to the pitcher.