"THE MOST REMARKABLE PLAY I EVER SAW IN BASEBALL—"

MEMBERS of the Climbers Tell About Diamond "Stunts" That Impressed Them—Clark Griffith Partial to a Play Made by Shanks—George McBride Recalls a One-hand Pick-up by "Fateem" Foster—Walter Johnson Tells One of a Player Who Was "Beaned" in Center Field—Clyde Milan Comes Across With One About a Marvelous Catch by "Red" Walker—And So the Ball Keeps Spinning, Each Player on the Team Giving it a Twirl.

"WHAT'S the most remarkable play you ever saw pulled off on a ball field?"

It's always pretty hard work to get a ball player to talk about the game. Almost to a man they'd rather play it, and leave the talking to somebody else. And it was especially hard to induce the various members of the Nationals to confide to The Star man just what play had impressed them most. Even the irrepressible Germany Schaefer was silent, while Big Chief Griffith, the wild Andalusian lion who refuses to eat anything but pennants this year, was as coy as a sixteen-year-old boy who has been asked to step into the parlor and sing for some of his mother's friends.

But at length they loosened up—every member of the squad. And here's what they had to say. Griff led off.

"It's this way," said Griff, gazing earnestly at his cigar and seeming to be amazed at the discovery that it was still lighted. "I've been in the game so long and seen so many wonderful plays that asking me to pick out the best one of the bunch is just about as hard a one as to ask whether I prefer my left eye or my right one. I remember one play, however, back in Cincinnati, when—But no, I guess I've seen better ones, at that.

"Lemme see. M-m-m-m." There followed a tense moment of deep reflection, and then Griff continued: "Thinking it

CLARK GRIFFITH.

all over, I honestly believe the greatest play I ever saw was pulled off by one of my own boys—young Howard Shanks. That kid actually came in from the outfield, gathered up an error, carried it into the infield and converted it into a double play. I might add in passing that the stunt retired the side, and saved the game for us.

"It happened only last year—and for some strange reason nobody paid much attention to it—this in spite of the fact that I don't believe a similar play was ever made in the history of the game. The Chicago White Sox were the victims—and it happened when we were making that little western trip that made the other teams sit up and take notice. The game was going along, with a squeeze every inning. In the seventh the score was 1 and 1. We came to the bat, and then we went back to the field. Nothing doing.

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"Then the White Sox came to the bat. The first man up is easy. Then up steps Rath and cuts loose with a terrible pole. When we got the ball back Rath was on third—and still only one out. Lord came up and slammed the first ball pitched for a sizzling grounder to George McBride. George juggled it a minute and Rath started for home. But George was there. He got the ball to Ainsmith, who was catching, in heaps of time—too much time, in fact, for Rath, seeing he'd be caught if he kept on, turned around and made tracks back for third base. Lord, meanwhile, had rounded first and kept on to second.

"Ainsmith started to chase Rath, hoping to catch him before he got back to the bag. After a few steps, however, he saw he couldn't make it, so, still running, he tossed the ball toward third—and tossed it about a mile over the third baseman's head.

"That was fine business for the Sox—for about a minute. Lord rounded second and kept on toward third. Rath drew himself up as fast as he could—he had slid back into the bag—and started for home again. Then enter Shanks.

"Howard had come speeding in from deep left at the beginning of the fun. He was still coming in when Ainsmith's wild heave hit the ground directly in front of him. He grabbed it up on the bounce and kept right on running—only he now began running toward Lord. He got him, too—got him and tagged him two feet away from third base. Then he looked toward home. Rath had been slow in getting back on his feet and was only about half way there.

"And so, very calmly and quietly, Howard shot the ball to Ainsmith, and when Rath slid into the plate he found the pellet waiting and ready. That play retired the side—and the next inning we got a run and won the game. Without the play the White Sox would have certainly scored one run—and probably two."

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George McBride, the dandy captain and shortstop, was found by The Star man doing things to a large slab of custard pie. George consumed the remainder of the pie, thinking deeply the while before replying:

"I've been playing this little old game—well, for several months," said he finally, "and I've seen some plays—with accent on the some. I've seen men catch and field balls in just about every conceivable position, and I've seen the folks in the stand get so excited over a play that they'd throw money at the man that pulled it off. Maybe the next day they'd throw bricks at him for knocking a home run when he came up with the bases full and four runs needed to win—but never mind about that. It's all in the game. I guess about the classiest play I ever saw, though, was pulled off by the fair-faced child that plays third for us—'Fateem' Foster.

"Remember that nineteen-inning game we played with Connie Mack's Athletics over in Philadelphia last year—the one we finally grabbed, five to four? That was when the midget pulled his stunt—one of the grandest little plays I ever saw, because it not only required perfect fielding, but fielding of a sort just exactly the opposite of the kind Foster was expecting. If he'd slipped by the fraction of a second that game wouldn't have gone nineteen innings. It would have stopped right there—and we would have lost.

"It came in the fourteenth inning—the last half, with the score four apiece—Johnson had relieved Groom a little while before and was pitching—well, the kind of ball he usually pitches when he is right. Somehow, though, the Athletics had managed to get a man around to third with only one out.

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"Collins was at the bat. He's a pretty nifty hitter, and we naturally expected either the hit and run play or a long sacrifice fly. With only one out those seemed about the only two plays that would be logical. But Collins didn't do any such thing. Seems to me I read somewhere once that Mack attributed his success in turning out a winning team to the custom of pulling off the unexpect-

GEORGE McBRIDE.

ed. That's what happened this time. Instead of whaling the ball as everybody expected, Collins laid down a perfect swinging bunt.

"The whole thing was so absolutely unexpected that it took our men off their feet—all, that is, but Foster. Fateem had been bracing himself for any hard drive that might come his way, but that didn't make any difference. That ball had hardly left the bat before he was in on it and had it scooped up. He got it on a dead run, and he didn't stop. Without even turning his head to look he shot it to first—and it was a cinch out. That wasn't all, either. As soon as Foster threw to first the Mackman, who already had a big lead off third, waiting to see whether Foster was going to get the ball or boot it, started digging for home.

"He made pretty good time, too—but not quite good enough. Fateem's throw to first came back to Ainsmith at the plate almost as quick as it had started—and the runner was out—only by a couple of inches, but out just the same. Fateem's coolness, perfect fielding and marvelous throw turned an almost certain sacrifice or safe hit into a double play and retired the side."

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Walter Johnson, who has an arm like a thirteen-inch gun—only a thirteen-inch gun has been known to miss fire—rammed his hands down deep in his pockets, pondered a while, and finally remarked he "didn't know about the 'best play.'"

"I've seen so many bully plays," said Walter, "and I've seen some that looked easy, when as a matter of fact I knew they were next to impossible, that I would not like to say just which one I considered the best. Tell you what, though—there isn't any doubt in my mind as to the most remarkabe play I ever saw. It was down in St. Louis a couple of years back. We were tail-enders then" (and Walter grinned ruminatively).

"Things were going along pretty evenly—and it was anybody's game, when this play happened—I can't say it was made, because it wasn't—it just 'happened.' We were at bat, and we had managed to get the bases full, but there were two men out. Then Dutch Schaefer stepped up to the bat. Dutch grinned at everybody, waved his hand to the folks in the stand, and then proceeded to lift a fly about a mile high out into left field.

"It looked like a sure out—looked so

WALTER JOHNSON.

sure that if there hadn't been two out already the men would have stuck to their bases. As it was, however, they dug around the circuit like race horses. Hogan was playing left field for St. Louis at that time. He went after the ball with all the confidence in the world, got underneath it, took a stand, raised his head and began to watch it come down. It seemed to be all over but the shouting for a second or two. Then the crowd saw Hogan suddenly duck his head and cover his face with his arms. He had been blinded by the sun.

The crowd began to roar, but Hogan stood just there, without making a single move. And, believe me, he had judged that ball correctly. It came down exactly where he was standing—and cracked him square on the head—hit him so fairly that it bounced about five feet in the air, then came down and started rolling toward the fence.

"The blow ought to have put Hogan out, but it didn't. On the contrary, it seemed to wake him up. He started after the ball on the double quickstep. But it was too late. While that ball was hitting him on the head three men were scoring. Germany could have scored himself, but he wouldn't do it. He said it wasn't fair to make too many, and refused to go any farther than third."

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Clyde Milan, the guy who put the "eel" in steal, declared the best play he ever saw was made by Red Walker, who played left field for the Nationals a couple of seasons ago, in a game against the Chicago White Sox. This play, too, had to do with the ball lost in the sun—but the results were vastly different from those in the case of Hogan.

"It was a blistering hot day," said Clyde, "one of the hottest I ever saw—and I'm from Georgia, too. Honestly, there wasn't a thing in the sky but sun. Walter Johnson was pitching for us, and 'Doc' White was on the slab for the Sox—and it was some pitchers' battle. When we had had our turn at the bat in the ninth, we had made five hits, with one run to show for it—and the Socks had made three hits that helped out in the batting averages—but that was all. They

CLYDE MILAN.

hadn't gotten a runner anywheres near the plate.

"For a minute, in their half of the ninth, it looked like a cinch for us. The first two men up were easy. Then up steps a Sox batter and hammers out a hit. Then comes an error, and when the ball gets back to Walter there's a man on first and another on third. A hit will tie—and maybe win.

The next batter let a strike be called on him. Then he swung at one and missed it. Then he waited while Walter wasted a ball—and then he caught a waist-high one, and sent it on a line to left center.

"The ball was just about between 'Red's' territory and mine—and we both started after it. It seemed like running for exercise, though, for if ever a drive looked safe that one did. 'Red' must have been drinking speedballs that day, though. He made so much speed that it seemed that he would accomplish the impossible, and gather it in—and then suddenly the sun hit him square in the eyes, and he went blind. I saw him put his gloved hand up before his eyes, and guessed what had happened. Of course, I thought it was all off—for I was too far off to even hope to get the ball. But I was wrong.

"'Red' put his gloved hand over his eyes, as a shade, and kept on running. The temporary blindness had made him lose a fraction of a second, though, and it seemed that it was all off, anyhow. Then, suddenly, he made one wild leap through the air, gloved hand still over his eyes and bare hand extended. Both feet left the ground in the leap, and he came down on his face. But when he fell his bare hand had that ball—also he held it.

"I've seen a good many outfielders in my time, but I never saw one pull a play as great as that—or even approaching it. Go out in the field, get a touch of sun blindness, and then try to catch a fly—even an easy one—and maybe you'll appreciate it. I've been there, and I know."

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Chick Gandil, the big ne plus ultra guardian of the initial corner, like Johnson, refused to compare great plays. "If I tried to say which play was the best of all the good ones I've seen I'd get as gray as Tom Hughes from studying over it," said he. "But I can tell you the

"CHICK" GANDIL.

rottenest play I ever saw. I'll never forget that, because I was the victim of it. I ought to have had a home run, and with the bases full at that. Instead, I got a third out, retiring the side and losing the game. The funny part of the whole thing, too, is that the play wasn't made by a player at all but by an umpire.

"It was back in 1909, when I was with the Sacramento club of the Coast League. We were playing Los Angeles, and everybody was hammering the ball out of the lot. The result was that when we came to the bat for the last time, in the ninth, it was so dark that the fans were lighting matches, almost, to see the diamond. Still, there was only half an inning to be played, and since we were two runs behind the umpire—no, I won't disgrace him by giving his name—decided he'd give us a chance.

"Well, we started a rally and got three men on base. The next two batters fanned—it was so dark they couldn't hardly help it. Then I went to the bat. I swung hard at the first ball pitched. I'll frankly admit that I just barely could see it coming—and that I just swung blindly and trusted to luck—but luck was with me. I landed on that ball fair and square. It sailed out to center field, where Charley Doyle was playing for Los Angeles, like it had been shot out of a gun.

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"I was just rounding second when I looked out to see how Doyle was getting along. At exactly the moment I looked the ball struck the ground about five feet in front of Charley—he was running back for it. Then it happened instead of rolling on out toward the fence, that ball took one of those strange break twists you never can account for and bounced back right square in his hands. That didn't matter to me, though, I figured I could still make home, so I kept on running.

"Before I got home I noticed that the entire Los Angeles infield was running in with me. I put on some extra speed and finally slid home in a blaze of glory. As I got up the Los Angeles boys hooted at me.

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"Matter," repeated the umpire, who was walking slowly in and grinning. "Why, you're out—that's all—good speed, pretty slide and all that, but you're out."

Later I found that Doyle, after catching that ball on the bounce, suddenly remembered that it was so dark that the chances were against the umpire being able to see that far. So instead of throwing it in he simply turned and started beating it for the clubhouse. And his bluff worked to perfection. I was close enough to see the whole thing as it really happened, but do you know I couldn't even make my own teammates believe me."

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"The best play I really ever saw," said Germany Schaefer, looking deadly serious, "was when young Cashion passed a man to first in the ninth inning with three men on bases and the score tied. Ah, me, that was some play, some play! Next to that, the best play I ever saw

"DUTCH" SCHAEFER.

was made by my old friend Flick of Cleveland.

"It happened four years ago, toward the close of the season. I was with Detroit then, and we were having a hard fight for the pennant. We were playing the first game of our final series with Cleveland, and when the Naps came up for their final round at the bat in the ninth we were leading them by one run. Well, it so happened that the man preceding Flick on the batting list—I've forgotten his name; doesn't matter, anyhow—got a hit. Flick was sent up to bunt.

"He tried to bunt—tried twice and missed both times. Then he took a good, healthy poke at the ball—I believe he shut his eyes when he swung—and hammered out a two-base hit over into Cobb's territory. Ty did some quick fielding on that hit, got the ball and hammered it home—doing it all so quickly that the man was held on third. But Flick only saw the ball going home—just as he reached second.

"'Aha!' thought he. 'I don't know whether that's an out or safe, but at any rate, here's where I gather another base.' And dashed madly to third, arriving there triumphant.

"Yep, that was undoubtedly the prettiest steal of third I ever saw. There was only one little fault with it. The base was already occupied! That might not have mattered so much—maybe the umpire wouldn't have noticed it—only Flick, when he saw what he 'had did,' as the villain says, tried to steal back to second, and the man on third, being considerably rattled, tried to make way for Flick by stealing home. What was the result? Oh, nothing much—just a double play!"

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Nick Altrock, who says he is going to play big league base ball fifteen years longer and then study law, hooted mournfully at Schaefer's idea of a great play.

"I'll tell you a great play that is a great one!" quoth he. "A play pulled by an umpire who had been guaranteed to the big leagues as being sound, kind and gentle—a play made in broad daylight, and a play that cost me one of the hardest games I ever lost in my life! For many months after that play I lay wide-eyed and staring through the long watches of the night, wondering whether it was that the umpire didn't like me or whether the game was crooked.

"It was a good many years back—before 'Dutch' Schaefer passed through the university (note the expression 'passed through'; 'tis used advisedly). I was with Chicago and we were playing Philadelphia, on their home grounds. I was pitching, and if I do say it myself, I had 'em eating out of my hand. The ninth inning rolled around and we had 'em beat 1 to 0.

"In the ninth the first Philadelphian got a single, stole second and was sacrificed to third. That didn't worry me much, though, because the weak end of the Phillie batting list was up. Sure enough, the next man up popped up a little fly to me. It was such an easy fly that even I could catch it without nervousness. I did so. Then I looked around to third, intending to inform the man that he'd never see home. I looked, and looked again. He wasn't there. Instead he was about ten feet from the home plate and going faster every second.

"Pity that chap don't read the rules," I said to myself, and then tossed the ball to third for the double play, threw my glove away and started for the clubhouse. But what do you think that umpire did? Said it was all right—that the score would stand. That Phillie player actually had the nerve to claim he waited at third until I, standing in the pitcher's box, only ninety feet from the plate, and possessed of some little speed, had caught

"NICK" ALTROCK.

the ball, before starting for home. And the umpire backed him up. The thing rattled me so that the next man up poked out a home run, and Philadelphia won the game, 2 to 1.

"Yep, all things considered, I think any student of the game will admit that to score from third on a pop fly to the pitcher is about the greatest play possible."

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Long Tom Hughes, who for a good many years has been able to beat many of the major league teams most of the time, with particular reference

"LONG TOM" HUGHES.

to the Cleveland Naps, was another to declare that he was afraid to try to pick the best play he had ever seen.

"But I'll tell you the most startling play I ever saw," said he, "and I don't believe anybody who ever saw it could possibly have a different opinion on the matter.

"Ollie Pickering was the hero—or rather the victim. If the same thing had happened to ninety-nine out of a hundred, it would have killed them. I don't see how Pickering escaped. He must have a head made of—but let me tell you the story, and judge for yourself.

"It was back in 1909. Washington had a good scrappy team, but it was not very lucky and didn't stand much better than seventh all season. Just the same, though, we fought hard all the time. This particular game was with the New York Yankees, and it was a case of nip and tuck from the start. I was pitching for the Nationals, and a chap named Newton was pitching for the Yankees.

"In the seventh inning we were a run behind, but we had the bases full with only one out, and Pickering was at the bat. Now Ollie was a pretty dangerous man with the stick. He was especially apt to lam out a long fly, with a good chance of hammering the cover off the ball for a clean-up. Newton knew this and I guess it made him a little nervous. At any rate, the first ball he pitched cracked Ollie square in the head and dropped him like a log.

"That was bad enough, but that wasn't all. The ball hit Ollie so hard that it bounced back—off his head, mind you—across the diamond and into the outfield. Also it rolled so fast that Hemphill, playing one of the outer gardens for the Yankees, and not even dreaming that a ball could come so far and so fast except from a bat, actually fielded it for a safe hit.

"We all expected to pick up Ollie a dead man—but not him. He wasn't unconscious fifteen minutes—and the next day he was back in the game, daring the pitcher to hit him again."

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"I think the best play I ever saw was made by old 'Bones' Ely," said Catcher John Henry. "Bones, you will remember, used to be one of the classiest shortstops in either of the big leagues, when the American League was young. I was nothing but a kid at the time, but I was a hot fan, and Ely's playing made a big impression on me all the time—this one time in particular. Bones was holding down short for Boston this particular year—afterward he came to Washington. On this particular occasion, however, he was playing against Washington. I happened to be in Boston and saw the game.

"I'll never forget it. The score was tied; Washington—they were called the 'Senators' then, I remember—was at the bat, two men were on bases and two men were out; but big Ed Delehanty, probably the greatest natural hitter the game ever produced, was at the bat.

"Everybody expected that Delehanty would be passed—but nix. The Boston twirler decided he'd take a chance. He

JOHN HENRY.

put one over, and Delehanty promptly cracked it a mile, but it was foul. That warned the Boston twirler, and he proceeded to try and walk Del.

"But the latter didn't want to be walked. He objected so strenuously that he reached out and swung at one anyhow, managed to catch it on the end of his bat, and sent one of the hottest grounders I ever saw speeding over the infield between short and third. It didn't look possible for any shortstop to get that ball, but Bones Ely made a try for it. First he started to run, and then, when he saw in the flash of a second that he couldn't run fast enough, he made a dive.

"Literally, Bones tackled that ball as if it were a foot ball—but he got it. And now comes the remarkable part. After getting it, Bones was pretty much sprawled out—and time was flying—also the man who had been on second was almost scoring.

"Bones did some quick thinking as to the advisability of trying to get up. Then he rose to a semi-sitting posture, supported his body with one hand, and then, half sitting, half lying, made the throw. That throw was perfect, and the man was out by a good three feet.

"If there's been any play to beat that I haven't heard of it."

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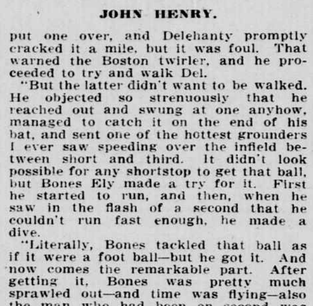
"Clyde Milan made the classiest play I ever saw," declared E. "Dorf" Ainsmith, who expects to catch Walter Johnson during the world series championship next fall. "You'll note I don't say greatest, but 'classiest'—and I use that particular word for two reasons; first, because the play I have in mind required some of the quickest thinking imaginable; second, because it was pulled in such fashion as to fool one of the slickest umpires in the league—one Billie Evans—and, finally, because it was pulled with the fleet-footed and crafty Ty Cobb as the victim.

"I've already intimated that the play wasn't exactly legitimate—and maybe it wasn't, strictly speaking. However, the attitude of the ball player regarding put-



EDDIE AINSMITH.

ting one over on the umpire is just like that of the average traveler in putting one over on the customs service. He feels if he can get by with it that he's entitled to it.

"The play I'm thinking of occurred, of course, in a game with Detroit. We were leading them by one run when they came to bat for the last time. Cobb led off, got a two-bagger, and was sacrificed to third. Then up steps Crawford, lets a couple pass by, and then pokes out a Texas Leaguer. Clyde came running in after it. Now, Clyde is pretty fast—but he wasn't fast enough for this one. It hit the ground about one inch ahead of his hand and he got it on the pick-up. We all saw it—and Cobb saw it, for he promptly started for home, with the tying run.

"Of course, speaking from one standpoint, Clyde should have thrown the ball to first to get his man. But he didn't. Instead, he did some quick thinking, in which he reasoned it out that in view of his position when he made the pick-up, and the distance between the location of the play and the umpire, the latter couldn't be sure whether he had made a pick-up or had really caught it on the fly. In such a case as that the umpire naturally is largely guided by the player's subsequent actions in the matter—and so Clyde promptly rose, hurled the ball to third for a double, drew off his glove and ran off the field.

"And the bluff worked. Clyde's actions convinced Evans that the ball had been caught on the fly, and he called Cobb out for leaving his base too soon. Cobb kicked like a steer. He even called on us to back him up—fine chance!"

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"Put me down as a Lajoie fan," declared Pitcher Bob Groom, laying down a perfect "no-trump dummy" and beaming across the table at Henry, his partner in the game. "Four years ago I saw Lajoie pull off a play I never believed possible—and even after seeing it, I'm not dead sure it's possible yet. Re-

BOB GROOM.

member the countryman who looked at the zebra ten minutes and then turned away declaring 'there ain't no such animal?' That's me.

"Lajoie made the play against the Athletics. There was a man on second and third, with one out, and Collins at the bat. The second ball pitched was right in Collins' groove, and he leaned his whole weight against it. It was one of the prettiest drives I ever saw—right on a straight line, and headed for straight over second base. It was so 'hot' that the Nap pitcher instinctively ducked to let it go by.

"That drive had all the earmarks of a two bagger at the very least—when along comes Lajoie. Some instinct must have told him where that ball was going, and enabled him to start before it was hit. At any rate, he made two or three wild leaps, stuck out one long arm—and got it—caught a line drive directly over second base.

"Of course, the rest was easy. There wasn't a man on the team who believed that such a ball could be fielded for an out, and Lajoie only had to take one step forward and put his foot on the bag to complete the double play and retire the side. The Athletics were leading before that happened, but the play seemed to take the heart out of them, and after that the Naps won almost hands down."

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Clyde Milan was again chosen as the hero of the "greatest play ever," when Danny Moeller, who is some shakes of an outfielder himself, described his idea of a regular base ball stunt.

"It was a couple of years ago, up in Boston," said Danny, fumbling with a checkerboard. Next to base ball, Danny

DANNY MOELLER.

says checkers is the greatest game in the world. "Clyde made the play on one of the meanest line drives I ever saw. It was one of those drives that first looks like it's going to be short, and then suddenly changes its mind, and takes a jump upward.

"It was getting along toward the seventh or eighth inning, with the score tied, and Boston at the bat. One man was out and two Red Socks were on the bases, when Alva Williams, who is now one of the tribe of Griffith, was at the bat. On the third ball pitched he let loose the drive.

"As I said, the drive at first seemed to curve down as if it would hit the ground not far back of second base—so Clyde came in at full speed, expecting to have to take the ball off his shoe tops. Then came that quick curve upward, and Clyde saw that he had come in too far.

"There was just one chance and he took it. He stopped short, took two steps backward and jumped high in the air.

"Ordinarily Clyde is no acrobat, but he was that day. The sudden stop, the running backward and the leap threw him off his balance so much that he turned almost a complete back somersault. The Boston fans roared with laughter—but they didn't laugh long. For while Clyde was in the air doing that high jump stuff, the ball hit his hands—and everybody knows that what hits Clyde's hands sticks. Not only that, but still sitting down, he threw the ball to second and made a clean double play."

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Little Fateem Foster, who himself was named by George McBride, his captain, as being the hero of the best play the latter had ever seen, declared that, while wonderful performances might be related by scores and scores anent the big leagues, he believed the greatest play ever made in base ball was made by Danny Moeller long before the latter ever thought of becoming a great outfielder.

"I didn't see the play myself, but I've heard about it no less than twenty times," declared Fateem. "Moeller, it seems, was playing right field on a semi-professional team up in Pennsylvania. A big game was on and in the third inning the left fielder got hit on the hand while at the bat, almost crushing his fingers. He should, of course, have been taken out of the game then and there—but the team, like most semi-pro. clubs, was short-handed, and there was no one to take his place. So he went back to his position, hoping and praying that no flies would come his way. 'For if they do,' he confided to Moeller, 'I can't catch 'em. I might get my hands on 'em, but I'd be pretty certain to drop 'em.'

"Everything went fine and dandy until the eighth inning. Then the other side, after two men were out, proceeded to fill

"FATEEM" FOSTER.

the bases, and sent in a batter who sent a tall sky-scraping fly into left field.

Moeiler, over in right field, did some tall thinking. If his left fielder dropped the ball, at least three men would score, and the game would be lost. And it was probable that the ball would be dropped.

"On the face of it, it would seem that the proper thing for Danny to have done would have been to shout to the center fielder. But he didn't have time to think that far. Besides, action was easier. And so, with one hasty glance at the sky-scraping fly, Danny deserted right field and started running for left. And the remarkable part of it is that he got there in time, actually caught the ball, and retired the side scoreless. There may be another right fielder who had crossed over to left and caught a fly—in a regular game—but I doubt it."

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"I don't know that I can rightly call it the greatest play, but what certainly was the most unusual play I ever saw," said Frank Laporte, Griffith's big heavy-hitting utility infielder, "didn't occur in a professional, or even a semi-professional, game, but on a college diamond down south. A couple of small rival, fresh-water college teams were the contestants, and I dropped out to see them. The play I refer to occurred in the fifth inning. With two men out and a man on third,

FRANK LAPORTE.

a young collegian stepped up to the plate and proceeded to hoist out a beautiful fly between left and center that seemed to be plainly tagged 'three bases.' The center fielder had been playing considerably deeper than the man in left, but both started for the ball.

"Both were chasing that fly without a bit of hope. So hopeless was the left fielder, in fact, that as the ball passed him he took off his glove and threw it at it. And then a remarkable thing happened. Through some freak of chance the glove hit the ball and stopped its force to such an extent that it fell practically right into the center fielder's hands. The umpire called the batter out. For the next five minutes there was more umpire baiting on that field than I've ever seen before or since."

* * *

"When Nick Altrock was in his prime, speeding 'em over for Chicago, he pulled off one of the greatest plays I ever saw," declared Howard Shanks, whom Griffith picks as the hero of the only play of its kind ever made. Altrock, of course, has always been noted for being one of the greatest fielding pitchers that ever lived, but this particular stunt was a great one even for a man with a reputation like that.

"Chicago was playing Washington, on the former's grounds, and Nick was in the box. The score was 0-0 when, in the fifth, McBride led off for Washington with a clean single. Street went to the plate to sacrifice. Nick purposely gave him a good ball to bunt, and then almost as he made his delivery ran in to get it. Street bunted all right, and if Nick hadn't run in so quickly it might have been safe.

HOWARD SHANKS.

As it was, however, the ball went through the air about five feet, and never reached the ground at all. Instead, when it was about three inches from the diamond, Nick made a wild leap and gathered it in on the fly.

"That was bad enough, but that wasn't all. McBride is a pretty wise player, and isn't often caught napping. He figured, however, that no man on earth could get that ball on the fly, so he proceeded to beat it for second.

"And then Nick, after making a great play, proceeded to make it still greater, adding, by way of entertainment, one of his famous circus stunts. After catching the ball he looked, saw McBride speeding for second, and turned himself and raced for first, where he touched the bag. McBride had brushed all the dust from his clothes after a sensational slide before he found that he was out. Fielding an almost perfect bunt, Altrock, from the pitcher's box, had made a double play unassisted."

* * *

Another unassisted double play was picked by Ray Morgan, Griff's speedy second baseman, as the best play he had ever seen, but in Morgan's case the double was made by George McBride.

"It was in a game with Hughey Jennings' Tigers," said Morgan. "The Nationals had 'em licked, 4 to 3, in the eighth, and then the Tigers started a batting rally. There was a man on second, the bases, and sent in a batter who sent a tall sky-scraping fly into left field.

Moeiler, over in right field, did some tall thinking. If his left fielder dropped the ball, at least three men would score, and the game would be lost. And it was probable that the ball would be dropped.

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"I think it was about the fourth ball pitched that Cobb landed on—and the result was a screaming line drive between short and third. McBride started after it, and while he was running he slipped and fell—it had been raining hard that morning. That slip and fall was the luckiest thing that ever happened to George in a ball game. As he fell he naturally stuck out his hand, and the ball hit it—and stuck. About this time along came the man who had been on second, beating it for third—he had started at the crack of the bat. McBride was flat on the ground by this time, but he still had that ball—and as the runner passed he reached out and touched him, making two outs and retiring the side without a run.

RAY MORGAN.

George always declared the whole thing was luck, but I'm not so certain. Anyhow, it was sure one wonderful play."

* * *

"I've seen many a great play, but of them all one of the greatest and at the same time one of the toughest pieces of luck for the other side I ever saw was pulled against Boston last year by a man named Johnson, at that time holding down short for New York," declared Catcher Alva Williams.

"We were playing on the home grounds in Boston, and when the ninth inning came around, we (Boston) were two runs behind. Right there we started a rally and in about forty-seven seconds we had the bases full, with none out. Nunamaker was on first, I was on second and Wagner was on third. Then Stahl sent Carrigan in as a pinch hitter.

"Carrigan got the pitcher in the hole, three and two, and the latter put one over. Carrigan pasted it, and it was one of the hardest sounding cracks I ever heard in my life. Also the ball started on a straight line, and we three on the bases all started to move.

"The ball kept right on with its straight line, but the trouble was that Johnson ran about twelve feet in about one-fifth of a second and got in front of it. Within ten seconds—it couldn't have taken more than that—Johnson had not only caught

ALVA WILLIAMS.

that fly, but had tagged Nunamaker as the latter passed him and then tossed the ball to first. He made an absolutely clean triple play on a ball that I would have bet 100 to 1 was safe."

* * *

"I couldn't to save my life tell you what I consider the greatest play I ever saw," declared J. Carl Cashion, whom opposing batsmen declare "unhittable" when he is going right. "But I can tell you the play that impressed me most—and for a mighty evident reason—said reason being that I hadn't been with the Nationals long—was mighty anxious to stick—and this particular play I'm referring to gor me so nervous that after it, until gently but firmly removed, I proceeded to present about every other batter that faced me with a base on balls. The other batters didn't wait for a walk—they just jammed it out.

"We were playing with Cleveland, out in the Ohioans' city, and I was in the box. The score was tie, and I was going fairly well. Then came a bad inning. It wasn't long before the bases were full and only one man out. Then Olson stepped up to the bat.

"I gave Olson a high fast one, and he hit it—but he hit it a glancing lick that sent it skipping along to Morgan, easy as easy could be. I gave a big sigh of relief—for anybody on earth could have fielded that ball, and it seemed like a dead cinch double play that he would get me out of my hole. But Ray was too anxious for the double, and his feet got in his way. As a result, instead of fielding the ball it hit him on the shins and rolled about three feet away. Ray made a dive for it. This time it was worse than hitting him on the shins. Ray kicked it—and he kicked it good and hard—so hard that he sent it into deep center field. Before they got that ball back

CARL CASHION.

all three men on the bases had scored. Yep, I think, unquestionably, that play impressed me more than any I have ever seen."

* * *

Way out to the Pacific coast went Joe Gedeon, the recruit utility infielder, for the best play he ever saw—and it was pulled off by a Pacific Coast League outfielder named Hundorf.

"I was on the Oakland team," said

(Continued on Sixth Page.)