

# Curve Balls

The "Spit Ball," the "Rise Ball," the "Fade Away Ball" and Other Marvels of the National Game. Why a New Curve Is a Bonanza.

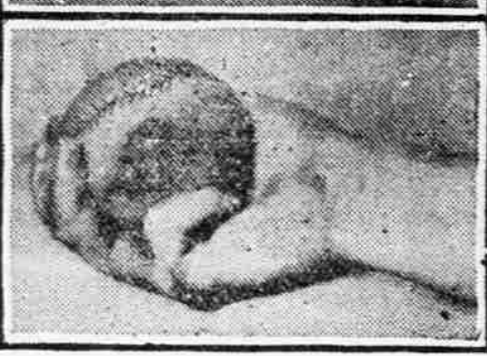
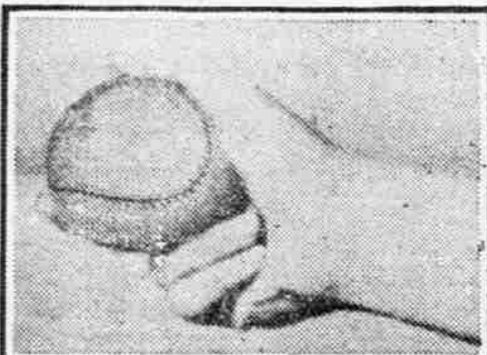
By FREDERICK R. TOOMBS.



HOW THE "SPIT BALL" IS HELD.

BASEBALL pitchers find the study of curve balls a most interesting as well as valuable pursuit. It was the discovery of the curve that gave baseball much of its impetus as a scientific sport, and men spend years in seeking to develop new variations of it and new possibilities. Those who successfully demonstrate a new species of curve find no difficulty in earning \$5,000 to \$8,000 or \$10,000 a year. Considering that almost any major league pitcher can, by careful living and judicious treatment of his so-called "salary wing," succeed in staying in the game for ten years, it is seen that it is almost as profitable to study ball curves as it is to elect yourself president of the United States. And, so far as a corporation presidency is concerned, the clever pitcher for a big league team makes practically as much money and runs far less risk of going to jail.

Among the new curves are what have become known as the "spit ball," the "rise ball" and the "fade away ball." The "spit ball" is probably more disconcerting to batsmen than any other curve because it is said to "break" or curve in at least two different directions and in such a manner that not even the man who delivers it can accurately gauge just how it is going to act. The "spit ball" is grasped in the middle of the pitcher's palm with the



HOW PITCHERS HOLD THE BALL IN THROWING CURVES. [At the top, ready for an incurve or shoot; in the middle, an out curve or shoot; at the bottom, a drop.]

thumb and all the fingers extended as far around it as they will go. The pitcher moistens with his tongue (hence the name of the curve) one or two of his fingers so that these fingers exert practically no pressure on the ball and then throws it with all the force that he can muster and yet be reasonably accurate. The fingers that were not moistened exert pressure on the sides of the ball so peculiarly as to make the revolutions of the ball vary in direction during its flight, and so the two different curves during one flight of the ball are produced. The "initial" cut in this column shows how the ball is held by the pitcher who delivers the "spit ball." This photograph and the others used in illustrating this article were specially posed for by Joseph McGinnity of the New York National League team.

The "rise ball" is the result of experiments of men who have for years been trying to perfect an "up curve" or "up shoot." While pitchers could produce without much difficulty "incurves," "outs," "drops" and "out-drops," they could not for many years make a ball rise as it went over the home plate.

The inshoot is delivered by sending the ball away over the ends of the index and middle fingers.

It is the revolving of the ball on its axis that makes it curve, or, to be more accurate, that leads to its curving. The ball that revolves swiftly from left to right offers more resistance to the air on its left side than it does on its right, so the ball swerves to the right, or in toward the batsman.

The outshoot is delivered by sending the ball away over the side of the forefinger, and when the ball is released the back of the hand is turned downward. Now the ball revolves from right to left, and so it swerves to the left, or out from the batsman.

The drop can be delivered in two or three different ways, and in most cases the ball is held just as for an outcurve, but it is frequently let go with more of a snap and always with the back of the pitching hand turned to the right or partly to the front, so as to make the ball revolve away from the holder and with its axis at right angles to the course it pursues to the plate.

## A MODERN MERMAID.

Annette Kellerman, Champion Woman Swimmer, and Her Adventures.

There are no mermaids now except in variety shows and fairy stories, but Annette Kellerman, the champion woman swimmer of the world, comes pretty near to being one. She is almost as much at home in the water as on dry land. Miss Kellerman recently came to this country from England to meet the expert swimmers of the United States. She is of practically perfect physique, with tapering wrists and ankles, olive complexion and gray eyes, which light up a winsome face. She is of Australian birth, but her mother was born in America of French parents. Miss Kellerman is twenty-one



MISS KELLERMAN AND A SNAPSHOT AT HER WHILE SWIMMING.

and has been an expert swimmer from childhood. Last year she made a new record on the Danube, swimming twenty-three miles in 3 hours, 11 minutes and 20 seconds. She has had some amusing experiences in the water, but the most unique was when, during her attempt to swim the English channel in 1905, a man proposed to her. In relating the story Miss Kellerman said:

"Rather a unique place for an offer of marriage? I call it my 'channel proposal.' A well known swimmer, and a very fine one, too, paced me during my swim. After a half hour or so of silence, to my great amusement, he turned suddenly and said:

"We go very well together in double harness, don't you think? and forthwith made me a proposal of marriage. Surprised? Yes, but more amused, I think. I told him I preferred waiting until I saw him out of the water, as I would never marry a little man. I met him after at the supper given in my honor and found he was of short stature, so I declined his flattering offer."

## A WELCOME BOY.

Queen Victoria of Spain and Her Gift to Alfonso of an Heir.

Great preparations were made for the heir to the Spanish throne who has just arrived. Queen Victoria made King Alfonso a very proud papa when she presented him with a bouncing boy. Although a girl would have been welcomed, a boy in this particular instance was much more desired. If the little prince lives to succeed his father on the Spanish throne it will be the fulfillment of the present young monarch's most ardent wish. In consequence of the importance of the birth of an heir the king himself issued an official proclamation shortly before the event was expected, giving explicit directions as to all ceremonies connected therewith. The decree began thus:

In order that the ceremonies which must take place in connection with the approaching accouchement of my dear and beloved spouse, when the Almighty per-



QUEEN VICTORIA OF SPAIN.

mits that so happy an event shall be realized, may be carried out with all the customary solemnity, I make this decree.

Then followed directions as to the dignitaries who should attend the presentation of the heir. Article 5 read:

In order that the inhabitants of the most heroic town of Madrid may know without delay whether the newly born child is a prince or an infant, there shall be hoisted in the first case the Spanish flag over that part of the royal palace known as the Punta del Diamante, and there shall be fired a salute of twenty-one guns at the customary places; in the second case the flag shall be white, and the salute shall be fifteen guns. Should the birth take place at night, a light of the appropriate color shall be placed beneath the flag.

## BAPTIZING SHIPS.

The Modern Method of Survival of a Barbaric Custom.

If fair young women sponsors who take a great deal of pride in breaking a bottle of champagne over the prow of a ship as she slides into the water for her first float knew something about the origin and significance of the launching custom, the chances are they would not be so eager to see the bottle crash and the foaming liquid wet the sides of the vessel.

It is a survival of a barbaric custom when sacrifices were made to the gods and some living victim or offering was held up and its throat cut so that the blood flowed over the prow of the ship being launched. The vessel was baptized in warm blood. Now sparkling wine or pure water is used, and the change has many advantages, though the symbolism remains.

There is another curious custom aboard ship that is interesting in the way it has been handed down to us. When a dignitary visits a foreign country, the moment that his ship enters port a formal salute is fired as a signal of welcome. This custom was observed years ago, when it was considered the correct thing for a port to fire its guns to show the visiting stranger that the citizens and authorities placed such confidence in his friendliness that it was not considered necessary to keep the guns loaded, so all the shot was discharged.—New York Herald.

## THE AIR BRAKE.

It Was Ushered Into Actual Use in Most Dramatic Fashion.

The air brake was ushered into actual use in most dramatic fashion. The trial trip occurred in April, 1869. The train selected was the Steubenville accommodation, running between Pittsburg and Steubenville, O.

When the train was going at full speed, suddenly as he came around a sharp curve the engineer saw a stalled wagon in the middle of the track dead ahead. With only hand brakes nothing could have prevented a terrible smashup. The formal time for the trial of the air brake had not come, but the brake was there, and in desperation, not believing for a moment that the thing could possibly avail, the engineer threw on the air. But it did avail.

The observers in the rear were almost catapulted out of their seats by the shock of the sudden stop. But when they saw the engine fairly poking its nose into the wagon bed, so narrow had been the margin between safety and disaster, they forgot all about their shock and stood in awed silence. The air brake had come into its own.—Everybody's Magazine.

## Keyhole Tenure in London.

The curious custom of keyhole tenure still prevails at Crowland, the famous abbey town in the Lincolnshire fens, where there are a number of cottages which are neither copyhold, freehold nor leasehold. They were originally built on waste land, and in each case the possessor of the key holds an indisputable tenancy. Although some of the occupiers have replaced the mud and thatched dwellings of antiquity with brick and slated buildings, they have no power to sell or will them away, for they have no deeds. On a tenant dying the first person to cross the threshold takes his place if he so desires. Many devices have been resorted to to obtain the keys. The properties carry a county vote, but the poor law guardians always refuse to grant relief to the tenants.—London Globe.

## A Vegetable Freak.

California has one tree which is the personification of mystery. Found nowhere else in the world, it had a mysterious origin and thrives in a region of mystery. The Mojava yucca is a vegetable freak which has developed into a species. It has the characteristics of several plants, to which no relationship can be traced. It is an endogen, yet its bark shows concentric rings such as characterize the exogenous stems. It lives and thrives in great numbers in a region nearly devoid of vegetation.—P. E. Magazine.

## Elephants.

People who really know nothing about it used to say that elephants never lie down to sleep. This is not true at all, says one writer. They have been known to stand for twelve months without lying down to sleep. This is regarded as want of confidence in their keepers and of longing to regain their liberty, for when they are perfectly at ease and reconciled to their fate they will lie down on their sides and sleep peacefully.

## A Filippant Jailbird.

"This confinement," said the long faced prison visitor, "must distress you greatly."  
"Yes," replied the facetious convict, "I find the prison bars grating."  
"Ah, life to you is a failure!"  
"Yes; it's nothing but a cell."

## Lazy.

Some friends were discussing an artist whose laziness was proverbial.  
"He is so lazy," said one, "that he paints nothing but winter scenes to save himself the trouble of putting leaves on the trees."

## The Seventh Time.

She—When I accepted Jack he said he felt as if he was in the seventh heaven. He—I can well believe it. He has been engaged six times before.—Fliegende Blätter.

## Made Sure of It.

Molly—When you spoke to father, did you tell him you had \$500 in the bank?  
George—Yes. Molly—And what did he say?  
George—He borrowed it.—Sketchy Bits.

## THE JAPANESE.

He Is Child, Fanatic and Emotional Savage All in One.

He is a bundle of contradictions, and, measured by American standards, he is a bedlamite, straight from topsy turvy land. He may be a Chesterfield and a cheerful liar one minute and a red Indian the next—a sycophant and a welsler today and a Napoleon tomorrow.

We westerners have been taught to regard the little Jap as an amusing and precocious child given to obstructing sidewalk traffic with his polite contorts in kowtowing, to suspending from the branches of the cherry tree his dainty poems addressed to his friends and to dawdling for hours over the ceremonial tea, and when we see him under the tent flap, bowing and laughing and playing checkers, he seems a velvet pawed kitten in khaki. And yet you and I have seen him in battle a ramping, raging tiger, greedily of Slav bayonets and afterward dragging himself to the field hospital, shot to rags, unwhimpering, a mere bull hide wrapped around a will.

We never know a character until we have seen it put to the test under stress—least of all the combination of sphinx and Janus known as the Japanese. So studied, the embattled brown boy strikes me as a strange compound of Little Lord Fauntleroy, Peter the Hermit and Sitting Bull—child, fanatic and emotionless savage, all in one.—Appleton's Magazine.

## OLD VIOLINS.

Reasons Why Ancient Fiddles Are Better Than New.

Fabulous prices are sometimes paid for old violins, and many an enthusiastic musician would part with his last dollar to possess one of the masterpieces of Stradivarius or Guarnerius or another of the famous makers of a century or two ago.

The questioned superiority of these old and often battered instruments has been variously ascribed to the peculiar quality of the varnish used in their construction, to the elasticity of the wood employed and to the ripening and improving effects of age and long use.

Of late years, however, much credence has been given the suggestion of an eminent authority that the real cause of the superiority of the old instruments is due to a peculiar warping of the wood to a higher arch, a buckling caused by the position of the "F" holes and sound post.

It might at first thought be supposed that the same effect could be produced by giving an equal arching to a new instrument, but the effect, if attained, is not permanent, because with age the arching increases until too great a degree of rigidity is the result.—Philadelphia Record.

## "Plugging" a Hotel Guest.

The hotel detective stepped out of the elevator and walked over to the counter.

"Well, I plugged him," he said. "Plugged him? Who? What for? Where did you hit him?" quickly asked a friend who was standing by.

"Didn't hit him anywhere. Just plugged the keyhole of his door. Never hear of plugging before? When we have a guest whom we suspect is getting ready to leave without settling or whose credit is exhausted and fails to settle up, we just wait till he leaves his room and plug the keyhole in his door. Then he has to settle up or leave his baggage. The plug fits over the end of a key. It is placed in the lock and turned. The key is then withdrawn, leaving the plug in the door."—Kansas City Star.

## An Oversight.

When Chappie got up the other morning he wandered around his apartments in his pretty pink pajamas, the very picture of woe.

"What's the matter, sir?" inquired his valet.

"I don't know, Alphonse," he groaned. "I passed a most unhappy night."

Alphonse looked him over carefully. "Oh, sir," he exclaimed. "I know what was the matter! The trouserines of your pajamas were not creased. You must be more careful, sir. Those I had prepared for you were hanging across the foot of the bed."—Bohemian Magazine.

## Cannae.

Cannae, where Hannibal won his greatest victory over the Romans, is situated on the opposite side of the peninsula from the city of Rome, on the river Aufidus and about six miles from its mouth. It was from this battlefield that Hannibal sent to Carthage three bushels of gold rings from the fingers of the Roman knights slain in the battle. Cannae is about 200 miles from Rome.

## The Worm Turned.

"Am I to understand, then," asked a disappointed poet as the editor handed back his latest production, "that you do not like my verses?"  
"Yes; I don't think much!"  
"Ah, you don't think! I see—that explains it."

## World Regeneration.

The world will only be regenerated by degrees and by reform of human character, a task that will always and of necessity remain the task of each and every member of the human race.—Saturday Review.

## Vanity.

Little Fred—Why is it that women are always complaining about their servants? Little Elsie—Oh, that's just to let people know they can afford to have 'em.—Chicago News.

Covetousness swells the principal to no purpose and lessens the use to all purposes.—Taylor.

## The Thrifty Man

makes the best and most of what he has, is just as well as generous, hospitable without being extravagant, lives within his income and makes provision against the proverbial rainy day.

In this big, prosperous country the average man is not so thrifty as he should be; he, or his family, want to make more of a "show" of their income than is really just to themselves; they fail to realize the necessity of providing for the future.

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