



Five minutes, ten minutes—then decision. It bulleted undauntedly away to the east

and none of the boxes would go over thirty pounds. But it was a hell of a way to learn the business. Slogging all day like a hunkie—three years of it now. Grease and pushing a truck. Hands all festered—

"Brown!"

It was Luby Zapp—Luby looking extra thin and jittery without his blue frock.

"They want you over at the general office. P. F. Chisholm wants you."

"P. F. Chisholm?" Bill said.

"Sure—vice-president in charge of sales. Hurry over there."

"But I got a truckload of sausage, Mr. Zapp."

"We'll take care of it." Luby grabbed Mulcahy's checking slab away from him. "Take Brown's truck, Joe. I'll check the load for you." There weren't any razzberries in Mulcahy's eyes when he took over the truck.

Bill hiked off down the loading dock toward the general office. P. F. Chisholm, vice-president in charge of sales! That meant they'd been watching him after all. They knew he'd given his best to the job in the cooler. They were calling him in to send him somewhere. Like they'd called Put Bliss, the Harvard guy with the cane—called him in from the bush in South Chicago and sent him to South America.

BILL asked at the information desk inside of the general office where he'd find P. F. Chisholm. The man gawked a second at his greasy frock, then told him third floor.

Up on the third floor, Bill followed a boy down the center aisle, between a hundred desks. At the end of the aisle the boy stopped at a desk and whispered to a man. The man got up and went around and whispered to another man.

This second man came around to him and shook Bill's hand. "Go right in, Mr. Brown," he said, and pushed him through a door set in a partition of frosted glass.

Bill found himself in a big room, looking at a heavy-shouldered old man sitting at a vast glass-covered table desk. The old man had on a black derby, and the juice from the big chew of tobacco that bulged one of his ruddy cheeks was trickling down his lantern jaw.

In a flash Bill knew who he was. He was Snoozer Chisholm, the toughest man who'd ever trod the coolers. Beef-lugger, butcher, salesman, manager—forty years in the coolers, the best judge of beef the game had ever known. A legend out there now—an awe-inspiring, unprintable legend, used to humble the college novice and make him like the sweat and strain.

Bill stared at P. F. Chisholm and wasn't nervous. He was glad he found him as he was. He knew, somehow, he had something in common with P. F. Chisholm.

"Sit down, Brown." The old man didn't rise, and Bill sat down, looking back into the old deep eyes that looked him over. "You seem to be one of our students, learning the provision end of it."

"Yes, sir," Bill said.

P. F.'s cooler-cracked voice went querulous.

(Continued on page 41)

## Blue Cupid

By Jeffers Godfrey

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE DE ZAYAS

About a pigeon with an instinct for romance. He knew that home is where the heart is going to be

five-degree angle. Then it began to circle—its pale blue body and blue-black wings a kaleidoscope of gilded color in the slanting early morning sun. Five minutes, ten minutes—then decision: it bulleted undauntedly away into the east.

The agent was stumped. He thought he knew pigeons, he thought this cock bird was the best racing pigeon he'd ever seen. He read again the tag on the box. "Return to William Brown, 182 East 189th St., Chicago, Illinois." Chicago was due west from where he stood, yet the bird had gone due east. The agent shook his head. He said sorrowfully: "I never thought a pigeon like him would do a wrong-way Corrigan."

THE long loading dock of the biggest packing-house market in the world lay in late afternoon shadow and desertion.

Inside the pork cooler, Bill Brown was rushing to finish up by five-o'clock quitting time. The cooler was just about spick-and-span, and he was working on the loose pork loins, when the cooler door swung back. Mulcahy the checker

stood in the doorway, the razzberries in his cold eyes for all college guys. He bellowed, as to a multitude: "There's a load outside!"

Bill winced at the dreaded cry, and his long frame folded a little in fatigue as he made for a truck. He grabbed despairingly at the handles of a barrel-runged two-wheel truck—started doorward with it. He'd have to truck the load alone—no use looking for his strikers. Old Jimmie had ducked home a good half-hour ago; big, flannel-mouthed, stalling Day was out somewhere, his frock stowed away, all set for a five-o'clock dash for the El. No use of complaining to Luby Zapp, the head provision man. Luby was supposed to run the cooler, but he never gave an order. All day he was on the phone, selling pork.

"What is it, Joe?" Bill asked Mulcahy as he trundled past the scales.

Mulcahy reached for his checking slab to follow Bill. "Truckload of summer sausage—get humping, big boy," he snapped.

Not too bad, Bill thought. A half-hour,

THE station agent at White Springs carried a plain box about a foot square across the double track. He stopped at the edge of a field and peered through the wire mesh on top of the box. There was a blue-checker cock inside there, and it was about the best-looking pigeon he'd ever seen.

The agent put down the box, let fall the door, and stood back. The blue pigeon came out and flew up at a forty-



## Left-Handed Press Agent

By Don Glendon

How baseball ever got along without him is a mystery to everyone, including the Great Walter Mails himself.

REX HARDY, JR.

WHISTLING blithely because the advance sale reminded him of the Golden Era of Sports, Charley Graham, owner of the San Francisco Seals, entered the club's offices at nine o'clock of 1938's opening day and then stopped suddenly as he saw a couple of ushers tramping by with smudge pots in their hands.

"What are you going to do with those things?" said Graham.

"I dunno," said one of the ushers. "Walter Mails ordered them."

Puzzled, Graham stepped to a door on which was printed: "WALTER 'THE GREAT' MAILES—THE WORLD'S GREATEST PRESS AGENT." He turned the knob and entered. There sat Mails, with his coat off and his eyes flaming. When he saw Graham, he stood up, grabbed the owner by the shoulder and shouted: "I've got it—Charley—the greatest opening-day stunt in the history of baseball. You think that Joe Engel of Chattanooga is smart, don't you? Well, I've got something that will make Engel climb into his hole. Listen—I've got thirty smudge pots. I am going to start them around noontime. Everyone will think the stadium is on fire and turn in the alarm. Every piece of fire equipment in town will be here and you know that everyone likes to follow fires—they'll follow those engines right to the box office! What do you think of it?"

Graham started to fall. Mails grabbed him and said, "What's the matter, Charley?"

"My heart," moaned Graham. "You'll kill me yet, Walter. What would you tell the fire department if they came out to arrest you for that hoax?"

"What would I tell them?" stormed Mails. "Why—I'd tell them we were getting rid of those termites that eat up the stands!"

You can put this down as a sure thing: Walter "The Great" Mails, whom Billy Evans called the greatest left-handed pitcher he ever saw and whom friends and foes alike still call "The Big Lip," is going back to the majors.

Mails, now forty-two, is not going back to repeat his miraculous achievement of pitching Cleveland to a World's Series, as he did in 1920. He is going back as Walter—The Great—Left-Handed Press Agent! His work as a promotion man on and off the field for baseball and the San Francisco Seals has earned him a nationwide reputation.

### Not on the Program

Here's one for your scrapbook:

The scene is Seals Stadium in San Francisco, late October, 1937.

In a benefit game for the Catholic Youth Organization, minor leaguers were playing the major-league stars, led by Joe DiMaggio. Eight thousand people were out to watch DiMaggio, just after electrifying fans with his hitting, fielding and throwing.

Along came the fifth inning. The game was dragging. People were sitting on their hands. The Great Mails, in uni-

form, had been at the loud-speaker, striving to put some life into the drab exhibition.

Joe DiMaggio was on deck, swinging a couple of bats. Mails, taking the spotlight in his usual impetuous manner, bellowed into the public-address system, "Ladies and gentlemen—this is The Great Mails speaking! I notice that Joe DiMaggio—the killer-diller of the New York Yankees—is ready to hit. How would you like to have me go out there and strike him out?"

Thundering cheers and boos greeted the announcement. The crowd stood up as a sort of accolade when Mails jumped over the railing, grabbed a glove and in his best pouter-pigeon walk—known as the Mails strut—took the mound. DiMaggio started to move out of the box to give Mails time to warm up, but the "Great Walter" snapped: "Get in there, busher! I don't have to warm up for you!" Mails looked straight down the alley and squarely into the laughing eyes of DiMaggio. For Joe, like everyone else, thought that Walter was out there clowning.

Dramatically, Walter wound up in slow motion, then cut loose with a fast ball. The umpire raised his arm for a called strike. The crowd roared, not at the strike but at Mails' antics after the pitch. For Walter started to hold onto his left arm and point to a sea gull circling overhead.

He screamed, "Get a gun—somebody—that buzzard is after my arm." After the laughter had subsided, Walter was

again the pitcher. He shook off the catcher's signs three times in a row, while DiMaggio stood at the plate, grinning. Finally, Mails nodded pompously, wound up quickly and floated a curve ball, low and inside. The change of pace caught DiMaggio off stride. He took a terrific cut and missed the ball a foot.

Now, the crowd was laughing at DiMaggio. Mails, realizing that Joe was a bit embarrassed, knowing that it was a benefit game and yet diabolically wanting to set up DiMaggio for the kill, walked halfway down the pitching line and shouted, "It's a pretty lucky thing I'm not in the American League now, Joe. You'd be out there in that crab boat of yours making a living!"

DiMaggio didn't like it. He tightened. Mails grinned. He swaggered up to the rubber, reared back and zoomed a fast ball, shoulder high, that went by DiMaggio like a bullet for the third strike!

### No Time for Modesty

Unbelievable? Certainly. But so is anything that The Great Mails does. He's screwier than "Dizzy" Dean or Buck Newsom ever thought of being. He's a better actor and a brighter showman than Maxie Rosenbloom. And he's almost as smart as he says he is. How many ballplayers do you know who have been on a pay roll for twenty-five years? For pure swashbuckling audacity, for glorified conduct in the thick of battle, Mails' life story is so cockeyed that only

(Continued on page 70)