



Miller Huggins, the Midget Manager

The Bar vs. the Diamond—Shortstop vs. Second Base—
The Fall of Bresnahan—St. Louis as a Ball Town
—Joys of Piloting a Tail-End Team

By J. R. McDERMOTT

Miller Huggins is one of the younger generation of big league managers and one of the most unfortunate. There may be harder tasks than piloting the Cardinals to victory, but if so we do not know them. The club when Huggins took charge was an indifferent one, much below the average and what is more significant, they were fast declining at that. The loss of Hauser and Bresnahan was a serious handicap, and the resultant club probably the poorest in either league. Under the circumstances it is not to be wondered at that they are so far down the winning column. Huggins received his appointment after a dramatic clash between Bresnahan and the St. Louis ownership. The clash somewhat resembled the historic display of fireworks when Chance left Chicago. In both cases the manager was succeeded by his own second baseman,

and in both cases the said second basemen have been unfortunate. Huggins is one of the great infielders of the game and a fine fellow personally. He deserves better treatment than he has yet received from fickle baseball fortune.

THE great Chance deal whereby the Peerless Leader was railroaded out of the city where he had won so many pennants was paralleled by the experience of the St. Louis National League club in the city of the muddy water front. Not so well heralded, not blazoned from coast to coast, not the theme of a thousand feature writers on baseball topics, but nevertheless the entire grand little drama act for act, scene for scene, just as it was staged in the larger theater at Chicago.

Chance was one of the most successful managers the game has ever known. If anyone were secure in his position it was he. But the baseball sky became overcast, the cold winds which blew in from the vastnesses of the lake were but the faint prototype of Murphy's slumbering wrath, and when the storm broke in all its fury Chance bowed his head and departed to the land of orange groves and perpetual sunshine, while his own second baseman reigned in his stead.

HUGGINS' HITS

The manager is the honored one when he wins and the goat when he loses. My experience has been slight at the former, but I know all about the latter.

I have no alibis to offer. I have worked hard and done my best. No man can do more.

The St. Louis club was not very strong when I took charge. No one, I believe, will deny that. They were weakened greatly by the loss of Hauser at short and of Bresnahan as catcher.

The first part of the season the pitchers were not going well and the men were hitting. Now the pitchers are going good but the men are not hitting. In other words, the St. Louis club is not a well-balanced club.

At St. Louis Roger Bresnahan was the first manager in many weary years that had brought the far-off gleam of the pennant to the weary eyes of St. Louis fans. His career was certainly much inferior to Chance's so far as standing of clubs was concerned. But Roger might well take his place among winning managers for all that. Furthermore, in a way, the great Cardinal was more firmly seated in power than ever his redoubtable prototype. The Peerless Leader had behind him only the security of actual achievement, his unparalleled record, and his supposed ability to continue on a course of equal good fortune. These to Charles W. Murphy proved scant guaranty for the future and dissipated like summer mists before the wrath of the magnate, enraged beyond the bounds of policy. Roger on the other hand had a cast-iron riveted contract calling for the comfortable salary of ten thousand dollars per, plus ten per cent of the profits. This document was officially recorded and sealed and had a guaranteed life of five years. Alas! even contracts have an uncertain lease on existence in the great game. Certainly Bresnahan's was not destined to live out half its days. Mrs. Britton didn't like the Duke. She thought he was laying down on her and she resented it. What was a five-year contract to her? What, indeed? True, it cost her between eight and nine thousand dollars to soothe the Duke's feelings, but the Duke went, that is the main thing. The woman in the case had her will. And behold, Roger's second baseman reigned also in his stead.

To make the parallel the stronger, Bresnahan went his way following the thorny path which the capable feet of Chance had already somewhat smoothed, surcharging the atmosphere with epithets to mingle with those sounds of exasperation that came floating back over the determined shoulders of the Peerless Leader as he pursued his way to the oblivion of his orange grove. Both fretted their proud souls with anathe-

mas directed toward their erstwhile henchmen and accused said henchmen of having resorted to deep, dark plots in their rise to power. Evers and Huggins were both branded as traitors to their chiefs and both with equal reason. Which, truthfully stated, was in all human probability no reason at all save what naturally arose from the inflamed imaginations of the deposed leaders.

Bresnahan is now a stopper of pitched balls in the employ of Mr. Charles Murphy (not of Tammany Hall). Here he is doing quite well as times go. Let us trust he may do even better anon. Chance, the doughty pilot of the Yankees' unseaworthy craft, is at present standing resolutely at the helm with the waters awash in the hold of the crazy hulk up to his knees. He thinks that by putting a new keel, bulkheads, decks, mast and rudder in her he may some day, somehow steer successfully out of the shoals and narrows of last place. But enough of the two disgruntled leaders. We have all wept at their sorrows and wished them well. They have had a liberal shower of the calcium. They have had their honors along with the reverses. We are now more interested in the coming generation. In short, our theme is Miller Huggins.

Huggins, like Evers, suffered somewhat from dark insinuations of undermining his chief. He was accused of double dealing, of advancing himself by the devious method of undermining his superior in rank. In our opinion there was as much excuse for one claim as for the other. And both were equally unsound. Naturally a manager retiring somewhat unwillingly from the place where he has long occupied a responsible position will not take his exit kindly, neither can he be blamed for looking askance at the man, once his lieutenant, who is now in the act of lacing up his erstwhile leader's shoes. But in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand there is no reason for his so thinking. And Huggins is not the thousandth exception by any means.

Miller Huggins is five feet five inches high and weighs 140 pounds. He has sad blue eyes and a mild manner, little in accord with the common view of a manager. According to popular concep-

HUGGINS' HITS

You can't make men do things who can't do them.

The manager of a club is little better than a builder.

McGraw is, in my judgement, the greatest manager in baseball, but he has never won pennants without the aid of his club.

Many people claim the Giants are not a great club. They are wrong. The Giants have the greatest pitching staff in either league. They have a well-balanced club of usually heavy hitters. And they are the fastest aggregation in the world.

There is only one of the Giants, outside the pitching staff, who cannot get from first to third on a hit.

Speed is the main thing in baseball. It used to be slugging and then for a time it was fielding, but now it is speed.

tion the general of the big league club must be something of an aggressive character with a neck not over-slippery to the touch and the general bearing of John L. Sullivan in the ring. There are turbulent spirits in baseball who need a strong hand and occasionally a strong foot to keep their shuffling feet from lagging outside the bounds of the narrow way. But in the main big league players are like the more intelligent type of men in other business pursuits and need no more brutal prodding than in any other profession. Huggins thinks so at any rate, so does Connie Mack, and there are many others.

Huggins rules by persuasion, by common sense, by moderation. And his team is at the bottom of the list. From that safe haven (for the cellar dweller has this advantage, he knows that no possible knock-out wallop of fate can force him lower)—from this snug nook then, Huggins can gaze in the general direction of the neighboring league and find Chance occupying the corresponding corner of the cellar in the American League. And Chance is a man of a different stamp. Where Huggins handles his men with gloves on, the

HUGGINS' HITS

The Giants are a well-balanced club. There are not so many stars in the line-up outside the pitching staff. Other clubs could show more stars. But they are a well-balanced team. All the men hit consistently if not brilliantly. Furthermore, when one of them is slumping the rest are hitting. So they usually get about the same number of hits every game.

We might go in one day and make twenty hits and the next day make ten. It is consistent plugging which makes games.

McGraw has gilt-edged pitching and great base running; in addition he is a wonderful manager. He wins half a dozen close games each year that another club would lose by superior pitching. He wins as many more by brilliant base running, and he wins almost as many by his shrewdness in coaching and directing his club by accurate sizing up of a pitcher and careful manipulation of left and right-handed pinch hitters.

Peerless Leader was wont to argue with the undraped fist. Which system is the better? That is not for us to say. Perhaps the median way is the best of all. At least it usually is in other matters, and baseball should be no exception.

Huggins was born at Cincinnati, March 27, 1880. There are no photographs extant of him at the age of two years holding a baseball in his hand. However, from his earliest years baseball was his daily dream. He played it from the first, played it on the school and high school clubs, played it on semi-pro teams, played it whenever and wherever the opportunity offered. "I had no hope at that time of ever becoming a big league player," admitted Huggins. "The most that I could dream of in those days was how I was going to get hold of a quarter to pay for a bleacher seat. That was the summit of my hopes and didn't happen any too often at that. I was too short to pitch or thought I was," says Huggins. "I did have a strong throwing arm from

the first, but I fell out of an apple tree when I was fourteen years old and broke the arm. It mended all right, but I have never been able to use it so well since."

Huggins was accompanied on the sad journey of life by two brothers and one sister. One of the brothers, the older one, played baseball very well. "I think he would have made good in the majors," said Huggins, "if he had kept at it, but he didn't. He thought he could make more money in something else and perhaps he has. There seem to be all kinds of wind-blown illusions about the way ball players pile up the coin. I know a prominent business man of St. Louis who congratulated me a while ago on my business sagacity. I had never known I possessed such a thing, so I tried to look unconscious of the compliment and asked him what he meant. 'Why,' he said, 'I understand you are rated as being worth in the neighborhood of half a million.' I fainted. When I came to he had gone. After that it occurred to me he had not said half a million what. He may have referred to cents, in which case I might qualify. But one of my players told me some time ago that if I was not worth eighty thousand dollars he would eat my shirt. I told him while he was entitled to eat it I couldn't permit it, as I needed the shirt. But I also told him if I had eighty thousand dollars I wouldn't be worrying how I was going to crawl out of the cellar into the warm sunlight once more. I only wish it was as easy to make money as some people think it is, I would have made my fortune long ago."

Having completed his studies at high school Huggins entered Cincinnati University. Here he plodded along the paths which lead to the heights of learning for the space of two laborious years. Then the thought occurred to him that it would be some few circling moons before he could make any money at the present pace. Also he learned in his desultory reading that most Presidents of the United States had been lawyers. Considering the position of President of the United States as a reputable job and not wanting to escape any chances that might lie in the way thereto he reversed his progress toward an academic degree, entered the law de-



Huggins Out at Third, During the Game at the Polo Grounds, August 15

partment of the university instead and graduated with a well-won sheepskin from that institution. Admitted duly to the bar he entered a law office and practiced for the space of six months. "Practiced is right," said Huggins. "When you say practice you mean the exercise you go through before you really begin to do a thing. I did nothing in law. I practiced. Then I started to play baseball and have been a wage slave ever since. It may be that I made a fatal mistake. It may be that I might have been chief justice of the Supreme Court if I had stuck to it. But, anyway, I didn't, and here I am safe in the cellar of the National League. Kind of lonesome there at that," admitted Huggins.

The Cardinal's real baseball career began with his engagement to play for the baseball club at Wappakoneto, Ohio. This is an Indian name. At least it passes as such. The Red Man isn't here to defend himself. Huggins played shortstop there and was considered a comer. This was in the season of 1898. The following year, 1899, he went to Mansfield, Ohio, of the Interstate League. Here he also played short. In

1900 he jumped the club to cast in his fortune with the roving band of ball players gathered together for the pleasure and edification of Fleischman, the millionaire yeast man and present part owner of the Cincinnati Reds. The Fleischman club engaged in extensive tours, embracing several states. They played a large number of games, 68 in all, and lost but four. This was either an indication of their own superiority or their opponents' weakness or both. But the club was intrinsically strong with such men as Harry White, later with the White Sox, Red Dooin, manager of the Phillies, and several other notable ball players. During the seasons of 1901-02 and '03 Huggins played for the St. Paul club, of the American Association. During the winters he attended law school, graduating from the law department of Cincinnati University in the winter of 1902 and was admitted to the bar the same season. He entered an office immediately, where he practiced as we have already seen for the space of nearly six months or until the following baseball season opened. Huggins isn't certain whether he liked law as a profession or not. "I was in the

HUGGINS' HITS

The hardest part of a manager's work, in my opinion, is: first, to get out of the players under his charge all there is in them; second, judging pitchers correctly.

It is impossible to overestimate the importance of confidence. Every winning club has it; no losing club has. It is the mental force which, added to the physical force, wins so many games.

The evolution of a young pitcher is necessarily slow. There are men like Boehling who make good with a rush. But they are the great exceptions.

game hardly long enough to find out," he says. "It takes years to get started in that game and success is uncertain. I could get a good job playing baseball and the benefits to be gained from the law were all in the future and a bit indefinite and uncertain, so I chose baseball without any great hesitation. As to whether or not I shall ever go back into a law office when my baseball days are over I cannot say. Perhaps I shall. But in any case whether I do or not I have never regretted my slight knowledge of law. It has been very useful to me and is likely to be increasingly valuable as time goes on."

In 1904 Huggins, having gained a secure reputation with the St. Paul club, entered the majors at his home city, Cincinnati. This was in 1904. He remained in the city of grapes and breweries for six years until Clark Griffith, scenting his perennial trade, exchanged Huggins and Oakes for Storke and Beebe. Trading baseball players is much like trading horses. One horse develops into a two-twenty trotter and the other shows a bad case of spavin. Griffith was unfortunate in that he usually gained the spavined horses in a trade. Poor judgment, so the Cincinnati crowd thought. Perhaps not, for Griffith is the last man we would think of as an easy-mark. And still most of his big trades have turned out unfortunately.

It was in 1910 that Huggins found

himself in St. Louis, a city in which he was destined to suffer much in the nature of ups and downs, particularly the latter. Almost as soon as he joined the Cardinals Garry Herrmann repented that he had suffered so good a second baseman to slip away. Furthermore, as the storm of popular protest rose thick and high about Clark Griffith's ears till the little old fox was fairly submerged from view, the genial chairman of the National Commission began to scheme to replace him. Above all he wanted a player manager, and as Huggins developed into a slugging second baseman as well as a good fielder, which he had always been, he cast longing eyes toward St. Louis and began to dicker with more and more enthusiasm for Huggins as manager. This was not unusual, for among the fifty-seven varieties of players who were at one time and another mentioned as strong candidates for the position appeared the names of almost all the leading stars of the league. However, among those names Huggins led all the rest.

In the mid-season of 1912 the affair had gone so far that a trade was actually engineered by Roger Bresnahan, whereby Huggins might be elevated to the position of manager in his home city. Just what occurred to block this deal has been written extensively and perhaps never definitely understood. At this time the dissatisfaction of Mrs. Britton with Bresnahan had already begun to appear. Whether or not this dissatisfaction had as yet crystallized into an open desire to get rid of Roger and substitute Huggins in his place can be conjectured but not definitely stated. In any case the deal did not come off. Huggins will not discuss the subject. He prefers to maintain a dignified silence. He has been accused of undermining Roger and plotting for his place. No one who knows him well believes he would do such a thing and the accusation has never been taken very seriously.

Huggins' career as a manager has been unusually unfortunate. The club bequeathed to him by Bresnahan was at best a doubtful asset. It finished sixth to be sure, but the significant feature of this finish was that the team was already in the throes of a slump

from previous season's form. In 1911, under the fiery and magnetic personality of Bresnahan, the club took a spurt which made it a dangerous foe to meet, if not a real pennant contender. This dash and enthusiasm seemed to have evaporated in 1912 and was followed by a gradual relapse all along the line, and a winding up of the season in sixth place. Here Huggins took control. His first serious reverse was the disablement of Hauser. This brilliant shortstop was fast developing into one of the greatest infielders in the National League. His disablement necessitated a complete shift and while short has been filled capably this season there is no question that the temporary loss of Hauser crippled the club. The passing of Bresnahan as a catcher caused an irreparable blow to the catching staff, admitting the all-round excellence of Wingo. Roger was without question one of the greatest catchers the game has produced and his long years of practical experience could not be duplicated by any youngster, however talented.

These were the most obvious blows the Cardinals suffered. They bring up once again the time-honored query, How valuable to a club is a manager anyway? Tinker took a much stronger club at Cincinnati, is a skilled and brainy manager past any contradiction, and yet has reposed in the cellar most of the time, giving way gracefully to allow Huggins to occupy the station most remote from the limelight. If it is hard to say why Huggins should be in the cellar it is far harder to explain why Tinker should have been there. But the facts of the case may not be gainsaid. The picturesque anti-prominence of Chance in the American League may be cited as an example, while the disasters of Hugh Jennings, not to mention Jake Stahl, are additional data on the subject. Summing up the available statistics it would seem to be the case that where a manager is winning he is a great manager, where he is losing he is a poor manager. Of course this is absurd on the face of it.

Huggins is in the cellar at present because he has the poorest team in the National League. Without mentioning any of the first division clubs there is no doubt Brooklyn is better, Boston is

HUGGINS' HITS

Pitching is of supreme value, for it keeps men from getting on first. And the players who don't get to first don't score.

Mathewson is a wonderful pitcher, the greatest I have ever seen. I have never seen Walter Johnson, and will admit he must be a wonder. But he can't be any better than Mathewson.

Mathewson has wonderful control and change of pace. He has also a brain and experience that no other pitcher can equal.

He is hit hard at times, but he tightens up in the pinches.

St. Louis is the best ball city on the circuit. The people there patronize losing clubs. Any city will turn out to see a winner, but it takes St. Louis to support the club in hard luck.

better, and Cincinnati is better. That is the whole story in a nutshell. Why anyone should blame Huggins for this state of affairs it is difficult to see. He took possession of a crumbling club which suffered several misfortunes in addition to its general state of mediocrity, misfortunes in themselves sufficient to account for its present standing. Unless a manager has unlimited coin, can go out and buy whomever he wants regardless of cost, it is a slow matter to brace up a team. He may get the most capable young players in the game and unless extraordinary conditions prevail they will not at once serve to raise him in the percentage column. Occasionally a young pitcher like Boehling will come to the fore with a rush in a single season, but ordinarily it is a matter of some years to complete a pitcher's training. The same applies, with scarce inferior force, to the case of other positions. The fact that Huggins is in the cellar is well accounted for by the club he inherited. He could not in a single season greatly increase the efficiency of the club with the limited cash at his command, however great his ability. We have all witnessed the futile efforts of Chance to grope his way out

HUGGINS' HITS

I have played shortstop for several years and second base still longer. Of the two I have no hesitation in saying shortstop is the most difficult, although I have never thought second base by any means easy. On the whole, I consider that batting is of more importance to a club than fielding.

The Cubs were one of the greatest clubs the game has ever seen. They were not wonderful batters, but they were incomparable fielders. They would have been better batters had they wished, however. Their whole policy was to wait them out.

Pitchers are the main thing. They are about the whole thing in a short series, but they are everything in a pennant race.

It is very hard when a pitcher is showing signs of distress in an inning to decide whether he will pull himself together or go bad entirely. This is entirely up to the manager. It rests upon judgment and upon guesswork. If he guesses right he is a good manager, if not he is a dub.

of the cellar by a complete transformation of his club. Chance is a manager who has proved his worth. He has proved that he is a great leader. Consequently his failure at New York is blamed on circumstances. Why not be equally charitable in the case of the corresponding cellar occupant in the National League? Why not say that no one could make a winner out of the crazy combination that now represents St. Louis in the National League? Why not admit all this and lay the blame where it belongs, not on the shoulders of one of the most conscientious, efficient and popular second basemen the game has ever known?

If Huggins has been unfortunate as a manager, and that is the case, unfortunate, not by any means inefficient, there is no doubt of his value as a regular in the ranks. Though well along in years he is playing a game better, much better than when he was supposedly in his

prime. Last season, in addition to fielding brilliantly he hit far over three hundred, and this season as we go to press he has the comfortable average of .308. The only criticism of Huggins' play at second is in the matter of double plays. Here his diminutive stature and advancing age have brought about a considerable degree of caution. He is perhaps a bit prone to save himself from the dangers of advancing spikes and in the matter of double plays the club is rather low in the list.

Through all the first years of his professional service Huggins was a shortstop. He relinquished this position willingly enough for second base. "I have never thought second was an easy position to cover," says Huggins, "but it is a good bit easier than shortstop. I have every sympathy for the man who covers that place. He earns his money."

"Every ball player, good, bad or indifferent, has good days," says Huggins. "We all have them. We need them or all ball players would be pessimists and maybe Anarchists. We get plenty of poor days and we need the good ones to even up the score. Along with the rest I have had mine. I have made five hits in five times at bat in a single game, which is what a batter dreams of doing. Incidentally there is no player in the world, no matter how good a fielder he may be, who would not rather paste the life out of the ball for a three-base hit than to take part in the prettiest piece of fielding in the world. Odd how players prize their batting averages. And those who have the smallest averages, the least excuse to feel swelled over it, are likely to be the ones who take most satisfaction out of a clean drive. I am like all the rest—I like to hit. And so when I have had a good day at the bat it stays in my memory. But I did take part in an unusual fielding stunt one day that I am not liable to forget. I accepted nineteen chances at second base without an error in a nine-inning contest. The circumstances were a bit unusual I will admit, but the thing actually happened.

"As for pitchers Mathewson is the best and the worst according to whether you are backing him in the field or facing him at the plate. He is growing old like the rest of us and isn't quite

all he used to be, but he is still the greatest pitcher in the National League. I don't know anything about the pitchers in the American League, but you have got to show me. You know I am from St. Louis and that is in Missouri.

"There is one thing in that place that hurts and hurts us bad. That is the sweltering climate. They say it ought not to bother us who are there half the time so much as it does the visiting club, but that isn't the case. The visiting club being used to cooler weather comes to St. Louis comparatively fresh and strong. The heat gets them to be sure, but it doesn't get them all at once. They will play with their old vim till about the third day when they begin to wilt under it. We have to endure it all the time and we are a badly frayed lot by the time a long heat wave has been sweeping the Mississippi valley. In my opinion that is one of the worst things about St. Louis, and one reason at least why it is hard to get a winning team there. The other cities of the circuit have no such problem to face as the St. Louis clubs."

Huggins is unmarried. He has no family dependent upon him for support. He is a real soldier of fortune pitting his single intelligence gamely against excessive odds and never whimpering at the result. We can think of no severer test for a young manager than to have a crippled club of the general all-round inefficiency of the Cardinals entrusted to his care on his first appearance on the difficult stage of major league managing. It was a task before which such a man as McGraw might well have quailed. And we believe that if McGraw had managed the Cardinals this season with all his vast experience and admitted ability, he would still have rested in the cellar where Huggins is now. Chance, a manager of equal success, has had that experience in the American League. Huggins is losing with the Cardinals because no one could fail to lose under the circumstances. What his future may be is problematical. The public is largely unreasonable and unreasoning. They expect nothing but success from a manager. They expect that from Huggins. We know little of the future aims and purposes of the St. Louis ownership but we do know they will go a long way

HUGGINS' HITS

Ordinarily it takes two or three years of careful coaching and experience to make a pitcher out of a recruit. He may have all the stuff in the world, but he doesn't have experience.

Since everybody admits speed is so valuable in baseball, why don't all the managers get fast men on their clubs? Where are they?

Every manager is looking for them. No one wants them any more than I do.

It takes years of time to build a pennant winner, even when you have unlimited capital. Where you are limited in both capital and talent the task is doubly hard.

McGraw is a great manager, and has a great club. But he has a winning proposition and unlimited financial resources. That makes a great difference.

Discouragement plays a great part in the losses of a tail-end club. Men can't do so well against the tide as they can when things are in their favor. That applies to baseball just the same as it does to everything else.

before they find a player manager so deservedly popular, so experienced in play, and so persevering in the face of nerve-wracking misfortune.

Huggins has no hobbies. He is interested in no athletic games but baseball. He has no business interests outside his profession save real estate. Here he has made a substantial beginning that will no doubt serve as the basis of a good business when he is through with the worries of baseball. As player, Huggins needs no eulogy. He is one of the best second basemen on the diamond. As manager he has not had a fair show. Let us hope he has one and acquits himself as creditably as his friends think he will. For in every town on the circuit there are good loyal fans rooting for Miller Huggins, the midget manager, in many ways the most unfortunate man in baseball.