

The New Players

*The Men Who Have Filled the Gaps in the Ranks as
Baseball's Stars Have Responded to the
Call of the Colors*

By W. A. PHELON

UNDER ordinary baseball conditions the "new player" is a crude novice who is getting his first chance right after the Southern training trip of the big club that has placed him on the payroll—a raw rookie, one who has never had a chance before—and, very likely, will never get a chance again. When you said "new player" just a year ago, that was exactly what was meant, and that had been the accepted description of a "new player" through the forty seasons of the major leagues.

It's all different this season. The war-call; the rush of eager enlistments among the athletes; the demands of the draft—these circumstances have changed everything, and changed nothing so much as the status of "new players." Right now, almost every club has several kinds of "new players," all differing materially, and all making good. The new member of a club, this season, may be a strangely different animal from the reinforcements of the past—and he usually is decidedly different in identity, self-confidence, and chances of remaining on the team.

"New players," in 1918, may be any of the following varieties: The raw and awkward rookie, just the same kind of recruit that the clubs have had fun with—and developed—for the past forty-seven years.

The young failure of a year or two ago—a lad who had his big league chance, fell down, and, under previous conditions, might never have had a second call.

The hardy veteran, retired to the minors for age and slowness, now recalled to fill the ranks and add his brain and generalship in compensation both for his physical deficiencies and the loss of younger stars.

The substitute of last summer, hardly heard of in 1917, but now receiving every possible chance, every possible encouragement.

To all of these "new players" the Great Chance has fairly come. No longer need they fear condemnation and a sudden ejection from the payroll. They bask in newfound popularity; they are coddled and cheered upon their way; they are made to feel that the club needs them, and that the fans and management alike are for them. Encouraged in this manner, stuffed to the gills with confidence and red feathers, they

are furnishing some of the best and fastest baseball seen in many seasons, and are doing wondrous work in making the fans forget the absence of the bright marvels who have gone.

It's a great season for the has-been who was chased too soon, for the never-was who didn't get an honest chance, for the rookie who no longer fears his own awkwardness, and the sub who had thought himself doomed to roost upon the bench forever.

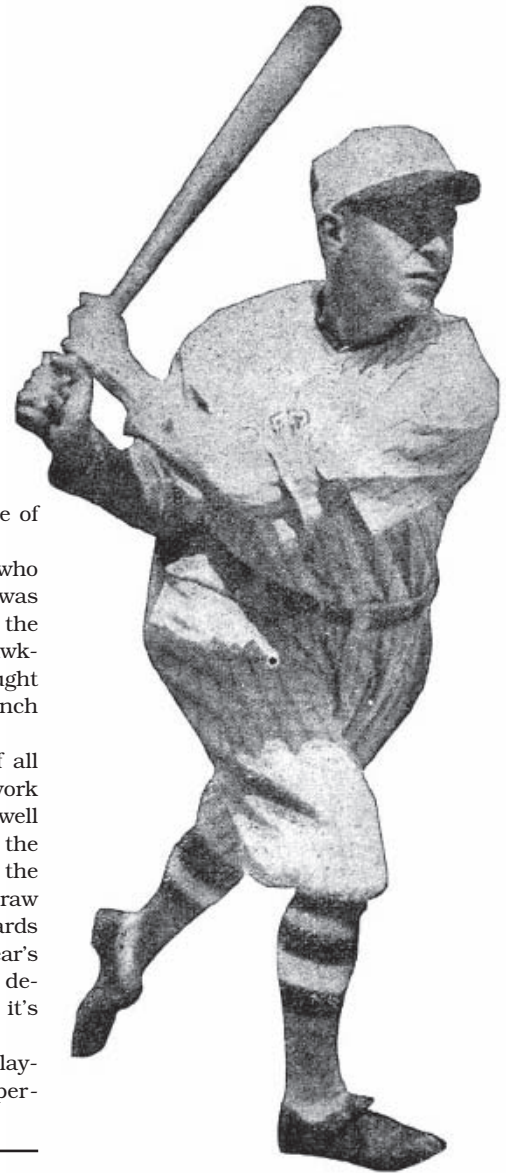
Take a slant at the new men—of all these varying types, note the good work they've been doing, and realize how well they have improved the chance that the gods of war sent to them. Notice how the veterans have perked up, and how the raw kids are capering. Note how the discards bear themselves, and how the last year's subs are garrisoning their parts of the defense. It's no unpleasing story, and it's quite an epic of the Only Game.

Here's about the way the "new players"—all types of them—have been performing:

NATIONAL LEAGUE

BOSTON

Al Wickland, who had two big league trials and never lasted long, has been hitting terrifically for Stallings. He seems to be one of the safest and hardest hitting left-hand batsmen in the game today. Massey—not the same Massey who was with this club last year—has shown good allround quality as utility man. Conway, a young infielder, hasn't had much show, but has done all that was assigned to him in able fashion. Jimmy Smith, who has bobbed in and out of the big show repeatedly, is under Stallings's wing, and doing nicely whenever he breaks into the game. Canavan, a new pitcher, has shown well when given an opportunity. Hearn, a big lefthander, who has been on the verge of starring in the big show for several years, is at last getting his opportunity, and delivering the goods. A new pitcher named Upham cut in June 17, and showed excellent ability. One of the big sensations has been supplied by Dana Fillingim, a young spitballer from the Ameri-



Charles J. Hollocher, the new Cub shortstop who has fielded and batted like a miniature edition of Hans Wagner

can Association. This bird, up to June 18, had won five games and lost two, both by one-run margins, and only eight runs had been scored off him in the seven battles! The draft, it is said, will claim him in the near future, but his big league career has been splendid while it lasted.

BROOKLYN

Ollie O'Mara, recalled from the minors and shifted to third base, has fielded well but batted lightly. A tall young first baseman named Raymond Schmandt was placed on second, and proceeded to electrify the whole circuit with fine, fielding and .300 hitting. Just as he was going at his best pace, the draft called him, and he left for war.

Mack Wheat, Zack's mask-wearing brother, crowded out a couple of times in the past, is getting a fair trial now and doing well. Dan Griner, recalled from the minors after a couple of seasons in the

CINCINNATI

Russell Blackburne, once famous as the shortstop for whom the White Sox paid a heap of wasted money, has played a daz-

zling short for the Reds, but his batting, after a brilliant start, slumped sorrowfully. Nick Allen, in and out of the big show again and again, has caught nicely and batted better than he ever did before. Harry Smith, the same Smith who had sundry tries with eastern teams, is established as third catcher for the club. Rube Bressler, whom the Athletics had years ago, staged a sensational comeback with the Reds and won a flock of games before the army called him away. George Smith, turned back to the minors by McGraw, has shown considerable class with Matty's team.

NEW YORK

Ross Young continues to be one of the real finds of 1918—and Young, be it remembered, was farmed out for a year or two before he got his chance. Rodriguez, the Cuban infielder, has shown that he can play nice fielding ball, but hasn't batted hard enough to frighten a healthy flea off a counterpane. Joe Wilhoit, sub of last season, is still subbing. Causey, a young Texas pitcher, has shown considerable "stuff," and has received more of a chance than McGraw usually gives kid pitchers.

PHILADELPHIA

Fitzgerald and Meusel, the California outfielders, have kept right on showing themselves A 1, first-class ballplayers. Meusel in there every day and Fitzgerald as utility man. McGaffigan, farmed out last season, has shown plenty of ability around second base, but hasn't hit much. Pearce, a new infielder, has done very well in the few chances given him. Bradley Hogg has pitched right creditable ball. So has Miles Main, who debuted under the big tent four or five years back. Davis, a pitcher who has had one or two tentative chances, has shown well in a few battles.

PITTSBURGH

Caton, from the Southern League, has clung to his job, though hitting under .250. It is believed that this boy has the makings of a great shortstop—but the draft will get him soon. The veteran Gus Getz has gravitated to the Pirates, and may stick, as he is over draft age and has a lot of baseball in his system, Shaw and

Blackwell, new catchers, had little to do with Schmidt putting on the mask every day, but were both held as third catchers till Blackwell should join the army. Roy Sanders, with the Reds a while last year, has pitched good ball for Pittsburgh, but has been frightfully unlucky—two wins and seven defeats at last accounts.

ST. LOUIS

Heathcote, a college outfielder, who was sent to the Southern League, and returned as too light a batter, seems better in the big show than in the minors—anyhow, he has hit heavily since he rejoined the Cardinals. Smyth, a sub last season, has been put in regularly, either on second or in the field, and has played some good ball. Jakie May, a young southpaw, has pitched elegantly, and Sherdell, another lefthander, has shown a lot of stuff. A real surprise was the return to life of Rhody Wallace. This grand old athlete, now 43 or 44, has played some rattling good ball for Jack Hendricks, and seems just as agile and effective as the younger men.

AMERICAN LEAGUE

The younger organization hasn't tried out as many "new players" as the National, but has had pretty sweet returns from a flock of them, just the same. Look over them and see:

ATHLETICS

Shannon, one of the Shannon Twins, tried at Boston two or three years, has rendered excellent service, both at the bat and around the infield. Perkins, a new catcher, has done nifty work, and there is little fault to find with McAvoy, another backstop, who has been almost in big league service two or three times, and is now getting his real opportunity. Merlin Kopp, who had been trying to break in for a couple of seasons, was showing elegant class when he quit to work in a munitions factory. Dugan, who had a good workout last fall, has made good as a regular infielder. One of the stars of the early season was Scott Perry, the tall righthander who had a few minutes' trial last year with several clubs. Perry showed such clever stuff for Connie Mack that the Boston Nationals' urged an old claim for him, and the supreme court of baseball awarded him to Stallings, whereupon Mack set up a warlike howl, and took the case to court. Vean Gregg, supposed to be all in and done for, likewise pitched fine ball for the Athletics, and nobody has as yet alleged a prior claim to his services.

BOSTON

Thomas, a third baseman, was sent in when Stuffey McInnis moved back to first, vice Dick Hoblitzell, gone to war. He has

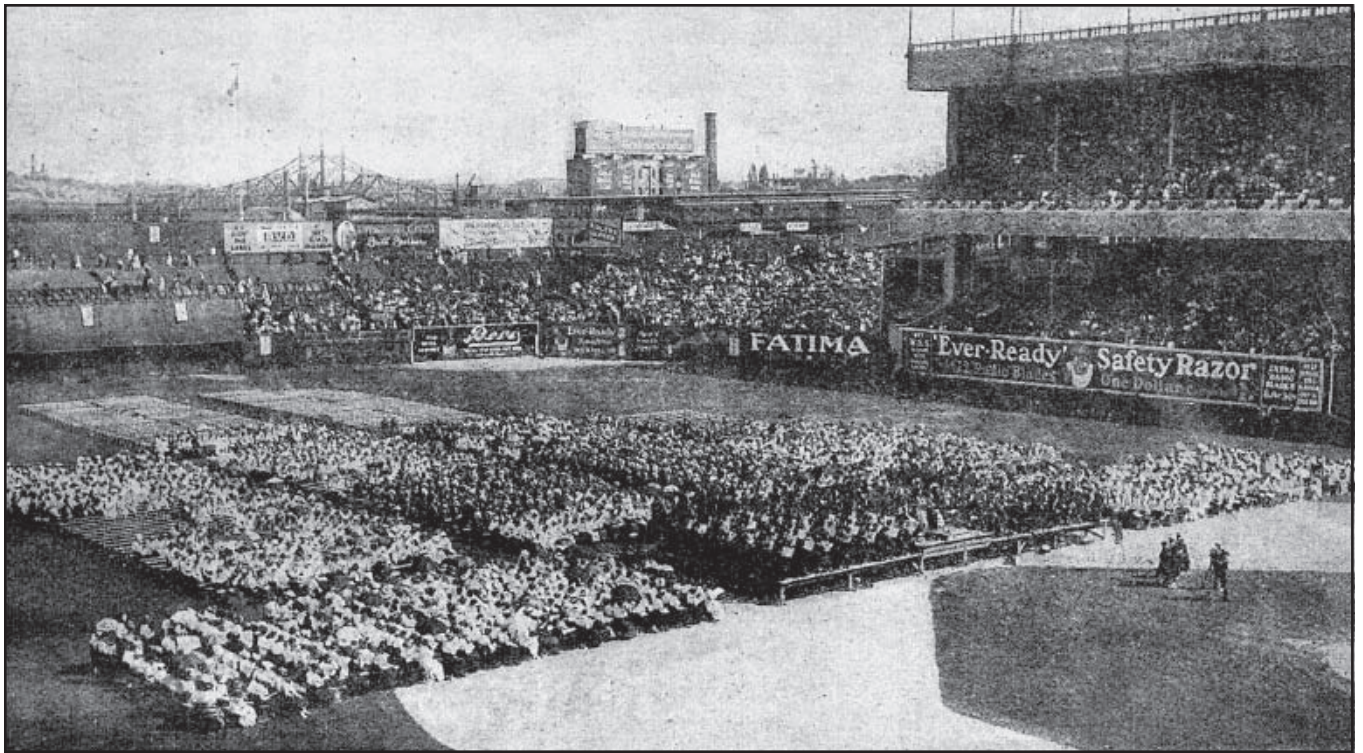


George Burns who has batted at a sensational pace for Connie Mack's Lowly Athletics

brush, was unlucky, and, after winning one game and losing five, went to work in a munitions plant.

CHICAGO

A real, unadulterated rookie, Shortstop Hollocher, became one of the stars of the game from the very start, batting savagely and playing short with a speed and grace that left nothing to be desired. Turner Barber, a new outfielder, hasn't had much chance to cut in, but has done nice work when given any opportunities. McCabe, a Chicago semi-pro, likewise got small chance, but seems promising, and the same can be said of Catchers Daly and O'Farrell. Daly has been in and out of the big works for years, never getting a real chance in all these seasons. Two pitchers, Walker and Weaver, who have been trying to horn in and get famous for some time, have been given better opportunities with this season's Cubs.



The Great Musical Carnival recently held at the Polo Grounds, N. Y., by the War Savings Committee. John Philip Sousa led a band of two hundred pieces while a chorus of ten thousand voices furnished the singing

shown fine class for a newcomer, and seems to be the genuine goods. Whiteman, an International League outfielder, was alleged to be ticketed back to the minors, but late scores show him still with the Red Sox, and playing some rattling good ball.

CHICAGO

The White Sox, world's champions, may have to send for new players soon or put Kid Gleason in the game, but up to date, they haven't worried. At the kickoff of the season they sent a young pitcher named Shellenback to Minneapolis, but soon recalled him, and this boy has been pitching fine ball for the south side crew.

CLEVELAND

How would you class Joe Wood, anyway? A comeback, or a newcomer, or what? The former star of the Red Sox pitching staff, playing in the Cleveland outfield, has shown that he can catch the flies as well as any one, and has been doing some corking good hitting, too. Halt, a former Federal Leaguer, has helped out at third base, but hasn't hit severely.

DETROIT

Kallio and Erickson, new pitchers, have rendered excellent service, shown a lot of talent, and would have been big winners if the tigers had backed them up as they deserved. Dressen, brought back after a couple of years in the minors, started like a whale, then fell away miserably at the

bat, and hurt the team considerably by his tumble.

NEW YORK

Miller Huggins uncovered a real wonder in young Thormahlen. This juvenile has pitched some glorious ball for the Yankees, and with any sort of support would hardly ever lose a game. He is unquestionably one of the best and brightest youngsters of the year, and deserves nothing but commendation for his speed and all around pitching. Hannah, the sturdy Salt Lake catcher, has done splendidly, both with the stick and behind the bat. Finneran, a pitcher who has had one or two trials, hasn't had much luck up to date.

"POP" WOULD CAN THE GLOVES

"POP" ANSON was asked his opinion in regard to possible changes in the rules of baseball.

"For one thing," he said, "I'd like to see all fielders, except the first basemen, forbidden to wear gloves. It would make the games faster. Those big pillows they wear now cut down lots of drives that would've been hits in the old days. I played first base for twenty years and never wore a glove. I don't see why they should wear them now, except the catchers. A thing I don't favor is the proposal to let a batter take his base on three balls. With some southpaws pitching, and a three-ball-take-your-base rule in force, the side would never be put out."

ST. LOUIS

Lowdermilk, who has bobbed in and out of the big show since the lamented Hector was a pup, seems to be rather better, certainly steadier and more reliable, than he ever was before. Ray Demmitt and Infielder Gerber, often tried and never retained for any length of time, seem to have come into the promised land, and have done all that was asked of them in brilliant fashion. Tobin, left out last year for sundry weaknesses, has mended them all, and ranks well toward the front for general value.

WASHINGTON

Frank Schulte, successively released by the Cubs, Pirates and Quakers as all through, has had a flash of life, and has done some nifty pinch-hitting for Clark Griffith. The real surprise, though, has been the recrudescence of Nick Altrock. That grand old bird, 42 years of age, and for several seasons employed only as a coacher and comedian, staged a comeback recently, followed it with another game just to show that he is no flash in the pan, and has amazed the entire baseball world. The ancient Nickie showed all sorts of generalship and pitching ability; there was nothing wrong with his speed, his control, or the way he worked on the batters—he made good right off the reel, and all baseball—which loves Nick Altrock—rejoiced at his good fortune.