

BAKER'S BOYHOOD

EASTON JOURNALIST, CHILDHOOD
FRIEND OF REDOUBTABLE
BATTER, WRITES HUMAN
INTEREST STORY.

Describes Frank As a Nice, Quiet Boy,
And Tells Of Time He Shot Her
Brother's Pet Crow And
Scored An Error.

In the baseball extra of the Richmond Evening Journal of October 11 is a down-to-the-ground, human-interest story of incidents of the childhood of that renowned exponent of the home run—John Franklin Baker, of Trappe, Md. And this story was done by a girl from Talbot, Miss Helen Berry, who is now upon the staff of the Journal.

Miss Berry put into this column genuine local color; her touch is light and attractive and the anecdotes are the real anecdotes of real people. This is what she writes on the margin of the paper:

"I did this story marked for the Journal today. They liked it. Mr. Cooke said I could have gotten \$100 for it if I had sent it to a New York paper first; that they would have featured it for the Sunday paper. I hardly think that is true; it seems too much."

And here is the story as it appeared in the Journal:

There's a Maryland girl in one of the Ninth Street office buildings who went to school and played baseball with Home-Run Frank Baker. She has known Baker practically all his life and recounts many interesting stories of their school days together.

One of her most amusing is about a game during the last inning of which she went to bat when there were "five out and the bases full," and when, having bunted the ball, she couldn't run because all the bases were occupied.

"Why, Frank Baker and I were great friends," she said. "I hope he has not forgotten all about me. He was always such a little gentleman and so kind to the girls when we played together.

formerly the old Methodist burying ground, and a creepy place at night, but all the explanations of both teams could not convince me that it was fair to make the other girls run if they did not like to risk it. Baker said: "The next time you play we will have an extra base made for you.

Killed Pet Crow.

Of course, Frank went with the other boys swimming, fishing, gunning, and ducking, and learned, as all the others did, to swim by being unexpectedly shoved off old Trappe wharf into the steamboat channel and having to swim or else be pulled out by the others and laughed at, and he brought up his handful of mud to prove he had touched bottom.

"He is especially good with a gun, and his father depended on him to keep the cornfield free of crows, and he did. My brother had an old tame crow, so well acquainted around Trappe that he went to a different place every day for dinner, and sat outside cawing until the cook fed him. Of course, being a crow, he visited cornfields, and among them Mr. Baker's. Frank was out with his gun, and old Jim flew over about forty yards from him and began to quarrel about it. Of course, Frank was surprised, but thought him wild and banged away. The crow was hard hit and put out of the game for good, but it was Baker's error. Nobody ever made him eat crow that I know of, however.

"Like most famous men still living, he once escaped a horrible death. Down in Talbot, about twenty years ago, was an old horse named Bill, one of the eat-'em-alive, chew-'em-up kind that nobody could manage, and he was traded half over the county, finally to Mr. Baker. This old horse was especially dangerous when grazing, and would chew up everything in his way, from a man to a grass blade.

"Frank was a four-year-old toddler at the time. Old Bill caught him out in the front yard one day, and started for him with ears back and nothing showing but the whites of his eyes, but not having Frank's batting average, he missed his mark, and merely knocked the little kid over on the grass, jumping clear over him, and leaving him unhurt but yelling. Needless to say, the elder Baker went horse trading the next day.

