

school, my father purposely settled upon a day school four miles distant, in order that I might have the benefit of the walk there and back—with a little lead ballast in my satchel. Games were compulsory at the school, and I should have liked them well enough were it not for the fact that on my return home in the afternoon, I was at once turned on to a Whiteley exerciser. Three times a week a retired army sergeant (I should, perhaps, mention that my father himself had been in the army) drilled me in the evenings. He used a cane freely.

"I believe that my father would have been disappointed that I never got any colours for any school game, were it not that he believed that his own system—or systems—were better calculated to develop my muscles. Indian clubs, dumb-bells, parallel bars—I was put through them all so that on my twelfth birthday my father felt justified in inviting a few old friends to the house in order to see me lift the grand piano. It was in the drawing room that the exhibition took place. As I heaved the instrument, there was a snap. My father annoyed that anything should go wrong, said, somewhat sharply: 'If that's one of the piano notes, you young scamp, you'll go to bed after this.'

It was not one of the notes of the piano, as it turned out. It was a tendon in my left leg. I went to bed, nevertheless, and stayed there for a couple of months."

Johnson paused. Grinley, who had been gaping at him, said:

"Did the leg get all right?"

"Unfortunately it did," replied Johnson, "and my father, much aggravated by my ungrateful conduct, as he called it, took me from school entirely, and gave me concurrent courses of Sandow, fencing, and the Japanese method of self-defence. Before my health gave way permanently, I could use the spear, raise an elephant, and render helpless by a crook of my little finger the strongest hooligan existing. I could also remain under water for three minutes, and ride a bicycle for thirty-six hours at a stretch."

"But your health did give way?" Grinley asked.

"O, quite," said Johnson. "It was on my eighteenth birthday. I have been always an invalid since then." He rose awkwardly as he said this, and added "Good night."

"Bit of a liar, that fellow," said someone, as the door swung on Johnson's back.

"Yes, said Grinley, 'a considerable bit. But I daresay there's some truth in it. You can't compel people to be strong, you know.'"

"What about national physical education, then?"

"Well, I don't know," said Grinley: "I suppose it'll be the same thing as taking the horse to the water. One ought to do that. If he won't drink it, it shows either that it doesn't suit him, or that there's something wrong with him—or the way you drive him."

