

The Thirteenth Floor

A Case Where the Number Thirteen Makes Good Its Reputation

By CLARISSA MACKIE
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As the office door closed behind the retreating form of Homer Dickson the stout stenographer sighed relievedly and drew a magazine from her desk. "I thought he'd never go," she said. The dapper bookkeeper took a silver quarter from his pocket and flipped it toward the office boy. "Peanuts," he said succinctly as he spread the morning paper over his ledger and turned to the market report. "I saw Homer beatin' it for the ferry," remarked Jimmy when he returned with the peanuts and they had been divided into three portions. "I guess he's good for the day." "So he said," agreed the bookkeeper, cracking shells and tossing them over his shoulder into the waste paper basket with admirable dexterity. "If you want the afternoon off, Miss Porter, you can have it," he said, with a smile. The stenographer smiled lazily as she reached for another peanut. "This suits me," she murmured, turning the pages of her magazine. Suddenly the outer door opened and precipitated confusion upon the trio. A tall man, middle aged, with a strong, clean cut face and piercing dark eyes glanced from one to the other. "Mr. Dickson in?" he asked sharply. "Out," said the bookkeeper curtly, thrusting the newspaper into a drawer and dipping pen into the ink well. "When will he return?" asked the stranger quietly. "He didn't say. I think he's gone for the day," replied the clerk ungraciously as he bent above his ledger. "I'll wait awhile," remarked the visitor, seating himself in a chair and opening a notebook. Bray, the bookkeeper, shrugged his narrow shoulders and applied himself to his neglected work. Miss Porter laid aside her magazine and thumped noisily upon the typewriter, while Jimmy swept up the accumulation of peanut shells and filed letters with brisk attention. The stranger sat absorbed in his notebook, making calculations with a stubby lead pencil. "Nice weather for crops," remarked Bray, with a slight wink toward the stenographer. Miss Porter ruffled her flaxen pompadour and giggled. "We got our hay all in," said Jimmy nasally, as he scuttled past the stranger on business intent. "You recollect our old black hen?" went on Bray facetiously. "Waal, by gum, she laid a egg yesterday most as big as a grapefruit. I reckon on sending it to the county fair." "Did Mr. Dickson mention having an appointment with Mr. Penworth this morning?" asked the rustic. A leaden silence settled on the office. Bray broke it at last. "Penworth?" he gasped, with a sickly smile. "J. Augustus Penworth?" The stranger nodded impatiently and glanced at his watch. "Did Mr. Dickson mention having an engagement with me?" "No, sir," returned the bookkeeper respectfully. "I think he must be detained somewhere. I'll try to trace him by phone. Jimmy, give Mr. Penworth a seat in Mr. Dickson's office." Bray disappeared within the telephone booth with agitated countenance. "Tell that idiot to keep away from the telephone. I'll wait till Mr. Dickson comes in," growled the visitor so savagely that Jimmy skipped to obey. The brutal message, conveyed verbatim, Mr. Bray emerged from the booth with a very red face and returned to his ledger, while Mr. Penworth accepted a comfortable Turkish rocker in the private office and lighted a long black cigar. "J. Augustus Penworth, Multimillionaire and King of Finance." So the special article in Bray's Sunday newspaper had capitalized him. His name was as well known as that of the president of the republic, and the entire office force had laughed openly at him. Bray writhed on his high stool as he looked at the back of the millionaire's gray head, and he cursed his own bad manners in ridiculing the stranger. Bray was ambitious, and Penworth was known to be especially interested in young men and if he knew them to be capable and willing to work could always find places for them in his numerous industrial plants. The bookkeeper had read the article in the Sunday paper, and his imagination had been fired with the possibilities that would open out if he should ever cross the path of the great man. Here he was—J. Augustus Penworth, and Bray had ridiculed him! It was too much to bear calmly, yet the bookkeeper soiced himself with the thought that perhaps the millionaire had been too much absorbed in his notebook to heed the idle chattering of the office force. Bray's usual alert manner and his courteous, almost servile demeanor toward his employer's customers would ordinarily attract the attention of a business man. He welcomed a sudden acceleration of business now. He transacted trivial matters with a crispness and courtesy that made Miss Porter and Jimmy open their innocent eyes. He darted from telephone to ledger and from

ledger to vault and spoke with an air of authority. Altogether he showed himself to be a man of considerable affairs. All the time he was pleasantly aware that the great financier had wheeled his chair about and was watching with curious interest. After awhile when business had quieted down the financier beckoned the bookkeeper into the private office, and as the gratified Bray passed before him Penworth asked: "How long have you been with Mr. Dickson?" "Ten years," stammered Bray excitedly. "And I suppose you are satisfied with your position?" "Well—not exactly, sir. You see, there is no chance for advancement." "H'm—I can imagine not—here!" "How much is Dickson paying you now?" demanded J. Augustus Penworth. "Fifteen hundred, sir." "I'll give you three thousand," snapped out Penworth. "I like your looks, and you're just the sort of chap I'd like to have around—young, active and businesslike. What do you say?" Bray gasped. "Why, yes, sir—thank you, sir! I shall be delighted!" he stammered. "Can you come to me tomorrow?" asked Penworth. The bookkeeper hesitated a brief instant, then: "Yes, sir, I will come tomorrow. Of course Mr. Dickson could not expect me to refuse such an excellent offer," he said reflectively. "Of course not—even if you have been with him ten years," rejoined Penworth grimly. "Now, Mr.—er—" "Bray—Harry Bray, sir." "Mr. Bray suppose you sit right down and pen a letter of resignation to Mr. Dickson. I like to have these matters cleared up as I go along, otherwise I'm apt to forget them. If you resign now I can put you right into our main office here to fill an important vacancy. There are writing materials here on this small table." The bookkeeper sat down and nervously indited a brief epistle to his employer, in which he formally resigned his position, stating his reasons for doing so and generously waiving all salary due him in lieu of longer notice. This he closed in an envelope which he sealed and addressed. Mr. Penworth held out his hand for it and regarded the envelope with a thoughtful smile. "Now that's settled," he said, "I suppose you'll want to settle up your books, Mr. Bray. I'm rather impressed with the rapidity with which that young woman out there operates her machine. Now, I'm in need of just such an expert stenographer, and while I suppose it doesn't look exactly square to take Dickson's help away from him—it's all in the business and I pay my people well. Send her to me, will you?" Miss Porter was flattered and charmed to accept a position in the luxuriously appointed offices of Penworth & Co. at double her present salary. Sooner or later ability will meet with its proper reward, she told herself, while she was writing her letter of instant resignation at Penworth's dictation. He held the two letters in his hand and regarded them thoughtfully. Jimmy drooped forlornly when he heard the whispered confidences of the other. He had not read "From Office Boy to Millionaire" for nothing, and here was his chance to rise. J. Augustus Penworth was pushing him along on the upward path. Why could not honest Jimmy Lee be among the risers? That was how it happened that he approached the great man and respectfully asked for a job as office boy, and he got it. Twice the salary he had been receiving caused his eyes to sparkle joyously. Mr. Penworth had told him that he could write a letter of resignation when there was the sound of rapid footsteps in the corridor outside. Instantly the millionaire leaped to his feet, and Bray and Miss Porter, who were in the line of vision, saw him drop their letters of resignation through the letter slot into Dickson's closed and locked desk, and they exchanged glances of satisfaction. The outer door opened, and there was the sound of footfalls. J. Augustus Penworth thrust aside the startled Jimmy and darted behind the tall desk, where he crouched as if in fear. "J. Augustus Penworth? Let's have a look at him," said a gruff voice, and two dark forms filled the doorway of the private office before they discovered the millionaire and pounced upon him just in time to wrest a revolver from his hand. "No, you don't, Mr. Mike Hennessey, alias The Farmer, wanted for forgery and so forth! We tracked you to this building, and we've raked every office with a fine toothed comb till we come to the thirteenth floor. Say, Mike, this number thirteen 's an unlucky number for you all right." The detectives laughed as they handcuffed their prisoner, and the other asked, with a humorous wink: "J. Augustus Penworth, are you moving in high financial circles, eh? What kind of business you been transacting here?" The prisoner stared impudently at the horrified faces of the bookkeeper and the stenographer and winked toward the locked desk where their resignations waited Homer Dickson's return. "I been studying human nature some and playing schoolteacher by learning these folks some lessons," he said, with an affected nasal drawl. Then they led him away. It was Jimmy, the office boy, who broke the ghastly silence that followed his withdrawal. "I guess I better dust up Mr. Dickson's office," he said virtuously. "He'll be pretty busy the next few days, and somebody's got to be on to the job."

MANAGER CLARK GRIFFITH ESTABLISHES NEW KICKING RECORD.

Manager Griffith of Cincinnati established a new kicking record recently when he was canned from the playing field for kicking on a decision that had never been made. Tom Downey was on second in the eighth inning when Miner Brown uncorked a wild pitch. The ball glanced off Catcher Archer's foot, hit the stand and then bounced into the roosters' row. Downey scored on the mad toss and then for some reason turned and went back toward third base. Griff charged O'Day like an infuriated bull. "Why did you send Downey back to third?" he demanded. O'Day simply stared at him in open mouthed wonder, while Griff frothed a little more. "I didn't send him back to third," O'Day said finally, "and I guess you had better chase yourself from the lot for getting too prominent without cause." Griff sadly walked from the field mildly irritated and wondering why the dickens Downey had gone to third anyhow.

WHY THE PHILLIES SLUMPED

Rumors Say Manager Doolin and President Fogel Have Had Run-in.

Unless President Fogel permits Manager Doolin to manage the Phillies without interference the club is likely to slide to the bottom of the heap. It is learned from a reliable source that the slump of the Phillies during the past few weeks is due to a row between Fogel and Doolin. The president of the club is accusing some of the players of doing too much joy riding and has charged Manager Doolin with having been looking at the moon through a wineglass. Fogel wants the men fined for the most trivial offense, but Doolin refuses to sanction fines. The result is that the players do not know just where they are and are not putting their heart in the work. Unless Mr. Fogel refrains from interfering with the active playing department there is likely to be mutiny. Manager Doolin says the men are behaving themselves and he will not stand for any interference.

First Round Unlucky One For Murphy.

Tommy Murphy was knocked out twice during his career and, strange to relate, in about the same time on each occasion. At Philadelphia Oct. 18, 1905, Terry McGovern tumbled over the former Harlemitte in the first round with one clean punch. Recently in New York "Knockout" Brown felled Murphy to sleep in exactly forty seconds and with five punches.

FORD'S CURVE COLLECTION.

New York American's Star Pitcher Has Fourteen Ways of Using Delivery.

Russell Ford, the famous New York pitcher, throws fourteen different kinds of balls to batters, as follows:

- No. 1 Spitter—Breaks straight down either slow or fast.
- No. 2 Spitter—Breaks "in" for right hand batters.
- No. 3 Spitter—Breaks "out" for left hand batters.

Wagner's hard hitting prowess is further shown by the way his curving fly balls carry when there is any sort of solidity to the hit. A three-quarter impact, the ball being struck below the middle, would be an ordinary outfield fly and a sure out if made by anybody putting less force in the blow than does the burly Teuton. Wagner, however, does not always take a long swing. He can shift his style and chop a ball, but he generally gets force and therefore makes more hits off balls hit on the handle than most players—that is, a ball hit on the handle by him is more likely to go safe than if made by a less robust slammer. Ty Cobb of Detroit hugs the plate fairly close and stoops just a trifle. He doesn't take a big swing at the ball, but puts all his strength into the effort. Like all good hitters, he uses his shoulders in the swing and never pulls away from the plate. Cobb's great speed helps his batting average wonderfully. It's not so much in the hits he beats out, but simply because when he's at the plate the opposing team is all on edge, knowing that the ball must be handled fast and clean in order to get the southerner. The result is that Cobb gets a hit on many a ball that would have been handled perfectly had not the opposition been overanxious. There is no player more graceful at the plate than "Wahoo Sam" Crawford, Cobb's side partner. His is an air of confidence from the time he leaves the bench until he assumes his position at the plate. Crawford uses a big, heavy bat, which he polses on his shoulder in such a manner that it always makes the opposing pitcher feel better when he is out of the way. Unlike Cobb, he stands at the plate with his feet wide apart instead of close together. Crawford takes a mighty swing at the ball and generally hits it on a line and far away. It's not exaggerating in the least to say that Crawford goes out on more hard hit balls than any other player in the major leagues. With men on the bases Crawford is very dangerous. Lajoie of Cleveland hits the ball as hard as Crawford; but, unlike the Tiger slugger, he doesn't take a big swing. Lajoie doesn't swing at the ball like Crawford or chop at it like Keeler; he's just the happy medium of these two styles. Into his swing he puts all the strength of his powerful physique, and his drives generally cling close to the ground or go to the outfield on a dead line. One of the hardest hitters in the National league is Sherwood Magee of the Philadelphia. His bat comes around with a powerful sweep, but with his body under control. He is a useful distance hitter and makes the ball travel even when his bat gets only a slice of it.

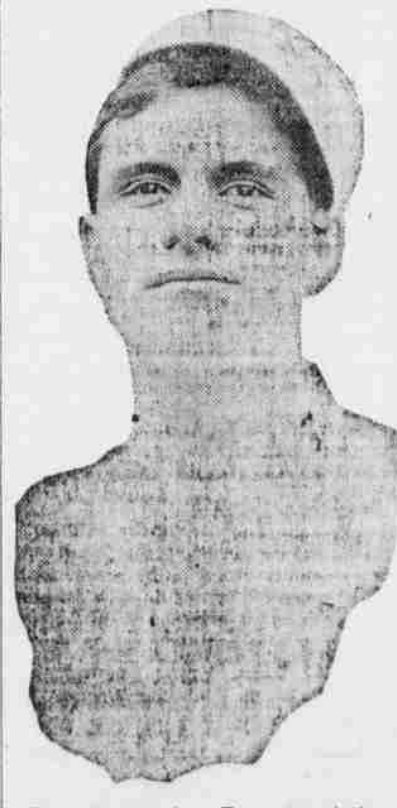


Photo by American Press Association. RUSSELL FORD, NEW YORK AMERICAN'S GREAT SPITBALL PITCHER.

- Fast Curve—Starts straight, but curves near plate.
- Slow Curve—Much like Joe McGinnity's "Old Sal."
- Slider—Gildes fast, with little rotation.
- Crossfire—Same as Cy Young's "one best bet."
- Inshoot—Approaches batter shooting inward.
- Fast Ball—Thrown straight with terrific force.
- Slow Ball—Mixed in with other deliveries.
- Dope Ball—Served slow to batter without rotating.
- Drop Ball—Not unlike Mathewson's fadeaway.
- Raise Ball—Thrown underhand with great speed.
- Hop Ball—Breaks up and jumps near plate.

STYLES OF SOME OF STAR BATTERS

Not All Hard Hitters Prove to Be Good Swatters.

CRAWFORD HAS MIGHTY SWING

Slugging Detroit Outfielder Hits Ball Harder Than Any of His Fellow Players—Wagner Shifts His Style. Methods of Cobb and Lajoie.

By TOMMY CLARK.

There are good hitters and hard hitters in baseball. Sometimes the words are synonymous; sometimes they are not. The good hitter is not necessarily a hard hitter, hard hitting being used in the sense of driving the ball away from the bat hard—hitting it with great force. There are good hitters who do not send the ball away hard, but who are proficient with the club because they are skillful and make many hits. The hard hitter, however, is likely to be a good hitter, because the forcible impact of the bat against the ball often drives the ball with such speed that it gets by the infielders.

Little men produce their share of hard hitters. As with big men, it may be because of a hard swing or may be because of an accurate swing that meets the ball squarely and thus makes every ounce of exerted muscle tell.

Willie Keeler, the ex-big leaguer and now a member of the Toronto team of the Eastern league, is an example of a player who is a good hitter rather than a hard hitter. He beats out a good many infield grounders with his speed in getting to first base, and he taps many safe hits to unguarded spots. Fred Tenney of the Boston is another who makes fewer long hits "in between," just over the infielders and just inside the outfielders. George Stone, formerly of the St. Louis Americans and now a member of the Milwaukee team, is a ferocious hitter. He swings hard, and when he meets the ball flush it fairly home.

"Old Honus" Wagner of the Pittsburghs is a fine batsman and one of those free hitters who connect with any kind of a ball. He is another of whom it may be said that he sometimes hits a ball too hard for distance. This naturally robs it of some of its speed and converts into a one base hit what would have been a two bagger or better had the ball gone up a trifle as it left the bat. But the Dutchman lands so hard that what would be an out for a ball struck with less force, but in precisely the same way, becomes a base hit with him.

Wagner's hard hitting prowess is further shown by the way his curving fly balls carry when there is any sort of solidity to the hit. A three-quarter impact, the ball being struck below the middle, would be an ordinary outfield fly and a sure out if made by anybody putting less force in the blow than does the burly Teuton. Wagner, however, does not always take a long swing. He can shift his style and chop a ball, but he generally gets force and therefore makes more hits off balls hit on the handle than most players—that is, a ball hit on the handle by him is more likely to go safe than if made by a less robust slammer.

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TIM HURST TELLS OF HARDEST DECISION HE EVER MADE.

I asked Tim Hurst what was the closest and hardest decision he ever made. "It was in Baltimore," he said. "McGraw was on first, Jennings on second and Stenzel at the bat. They started a double steal. Jennings as he passed Long hit him, and Long tripped him, after which Jennings went on and jumped into Collins. Tenney tried to hold McGraw, but he broke away, reached second and kicked the ball out of Lowe's hands. Stenzel swung his bat and hit Robinson on the hand, trying to keep him from throwing. Bobby tripped me and poked me in the back to keep me from seeing, and Stenzel spiked my foot." "How did you decide it?" I inquired. "I called it a foul ball, sent the runners back and kicked Stenzel on the shin," said Tim. —Hugh Fullerton in June American.

COULON TO FIGHT ABROAD.

Bantamweight Champion Will Go to England to Exhibit His Skill.

As soon as Johnny Coulon, the bantamweight champion, has turned the majority of the fight emporiums in this country upside down and shaken all the shekels that he can into his capacious coffers and his given all the aspiring youths a chance to exchange punches with him he will quit this country for the time being and continue his get-rich-quick search on the other side.

His father-manager has announced that he will take Johnny to Europe when things begin to slow up here and during the "off" season will grab some of the European currency. He says that the fight followers in England are anxious to see the little fellow in action.

The trip to Europe has a twofold purpose. Money is not the only object. "Pop" Coulon has conceived the idea that Johnny may pick up five or six pounds while on the ocean and when he returns to his native heath again be heavy enough to challenge Abe Attell for the featherweight championship.

Choosing a Puppy.

In order to make choice of a puppy from among a number of others it is best to leave the choice to the mother herself. In carrying them back to their bed the first the mother takes up will always be the best.

Isaak Walton.

Isaak Walton's treatise on the art of angling was published in 1655. That patient fisherman died in 1683 at the advanced age of ninety years.

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