

Blackshirt Black Sheep

THE CHINK IN FUNICULI'S ARMOUR

(Continued from page 14).

than this, the boy was mixing with his fellows and becoming their leader in such innocent Italian games as "Chase the Ethiopian" and "Bait the British." Previously, whenever he had been forced to take part in these childish pastimes, Pietro had had to be the Ethiopian or the British; but now he was so enthusiastic and his playing so realistic that several of the smaller, weaker boys were seriously injured. But this was excused by the authorities as pure Fascist zeal.

Each day, Pietro ate 10,000 yards of spaghetti; each day he hurled himself recklessly through blazing hoops, and over bayonets fixed to the top of poles. There wasn't a war tank in the village; but Pietro found the water tank quite suitable for practice purposes.

THE years passed. Pietro married a sturdy peasant wench from the Apennines and raised a family of sturdy little apendices.

By this time, his fame had spread far outside the village of Funicula. At last it reached the ears of Mussolini himself.

"Get me this Funiculi of Funicula," said Il Duce, to his athletic secretary. "Take him in hand, give him the works. I have an idea that he may be the man I am looking for to rule Italy when I am gone. But there will be strong opposition. Many other athletic young men are fired with the ambition to perform in my circus. In three years' time I shall hold a grand test, at which all the trainees shall compete. . . . A few may become high Fascist directors, a few may be suitable as branch managers—but only one will be chosen to succeed the world's greatest showman . . ."

THREE years later. The second March on Rome is taking place. From far-flung provinces they come: from the depths of the Pontine Marshes and the heights of the perpendicular Apennines, the flower of Fascist youth is converging on the Eternal City, with hearts pounding bravely beneath their spotlessly-clean black shirts.

Under a forest of outstretched hands and protruding jaws, Mussolini arrives at the Circus, takes his place on a dais in the centre of the ring—and the tests begin.

FROM the very first, Pietro Funiculi showed his prowess, his undeniable claim to be a super-Fascist. Nonchalantly trilling the battle-song of the Funiculi of Funicula, he leapt from the springboard through a series of blazing hoops, before the fiery terror of which even hardened Fascist directors shrank back appalled. Like one of Rome's sacred geese in flight, he soared over forests of upturned bayonets. Having vaulted over six war tanks one on top of the other he cleared the Dome of St. Peter's as an encore.

When the Ethiopians were turned into the arena, Pietro resembled a knife cutting through cheese. He was knee-deep in liquidated Abyssinians

before the other contestants had even started.

Even General Franco, Mussolini's guest-of-honour, was appalled when, in the bombing tests, Pietro Funiculi demonstrated how he would have won the Spanish War.

Harder tests of Fascist skill followed, such as grinding the axes, bundling the fasces, and revolving on the Rome-Berlin axis. Still Pietro remained unchallenged. He revolved so fast on his axis that Mussolini himself became giddy.

"This, indeed, is a MAN," breathed Mussolini in awestruck accents. "No one else seems so fitted to lead the Italian nation to its high destiny. But first I must put him to the supreme test of Fascism."

With jaw stuck out so far that he almost overbalanced, Pietro was conducted to the dais.

"You have done well, Pietro mio," boomed Mussolini. "There is just one question for you to answer. Consider well before you speak. You see this shirt I am wearing. It is a white one, is it not?"

Pietro did not hesitate a moment. Really this was too easy. Clearly and confidently his reply rang out:

"Oh, no, Duce! That shirt of yours is not white. It must be clear to all men that it is black."

There followed a moment of hushed silence. Then Mussolini was seen to shake his head sadly. And sadly came his verdict:

"Take him away. He has failed in the supreme test. A man who is not prepared to swear that black is white could never be a dictator!"

Toured With Lily Langtry

A Melbourne violinist who toured America in 1916 with Lily Langtry when the famous actress and Edwardian beauty made her final public appearance, is Cecil Parkes, leader of the instrumental trio of that name, and "The Strad Players." Both these ensembles are heard often in broadcasts from 3LO, and their energetic leader is kept busy writing special arrangements in what time he has free from the strenuous round of conducting the Athenaeum Theatre Orchestra daily.

Also members of the Langtry company were Lynne Fontaine and Alfred Lunt, who appear in "The Guardsman," and Genevieve Tobin and her sister, Vivienne. Lily Langtry was appearing in one-act Barrie plays throughout the States, and Mr. Parkes was presenting the first half of the programme with a singer and a pianist. At that time Miss Langtry was in her seventies, yet looked a well-preserved woman of 50. Mr. Parkes recalls how, no matter what the circumstances, she never failed to walk three miles each morning, and he attributes her splendid poise and freshness to this fact. She never used make-up, even on the stage.

7 INCHES OFF HIS WAISTLINE

26 Pounds Of Fat Gone, Too

Reducing At 80 Years Of Age

Apparently one is never too old to reduce. Here writes a man of 80 who has just rid himself of 1st. 12lb. of unwanted fat:—

"You may be interested to hear that after taking Kruschen Salts daily, and following, but only to a certain extent, advice about suitable food, I have reduced my weight from 14st. 2lb. to 12st. 5lb., and my waist from 44 inches to 37 inches. Not only that, but I have the very satisfactory feeling of being well and fit, which at my age (80 years) is something to be thankful and grateful for. You are at liberty to publish this, but only if you put my initials."—G.B.H.

Overweight arises frequently because the system is loaded with unexpelled waste, like a furnace choked with ashes and soot. Allowed to accumulate, this waste matter is turned into layer after layer of fat.

The six salts in Kruschen assist the internal organs to throw off each day the wastage and poisons that encumber the system. Then, little by little, that ugly fat goes—slowly, yes—but surely.

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