



THE STORY OF BOXING

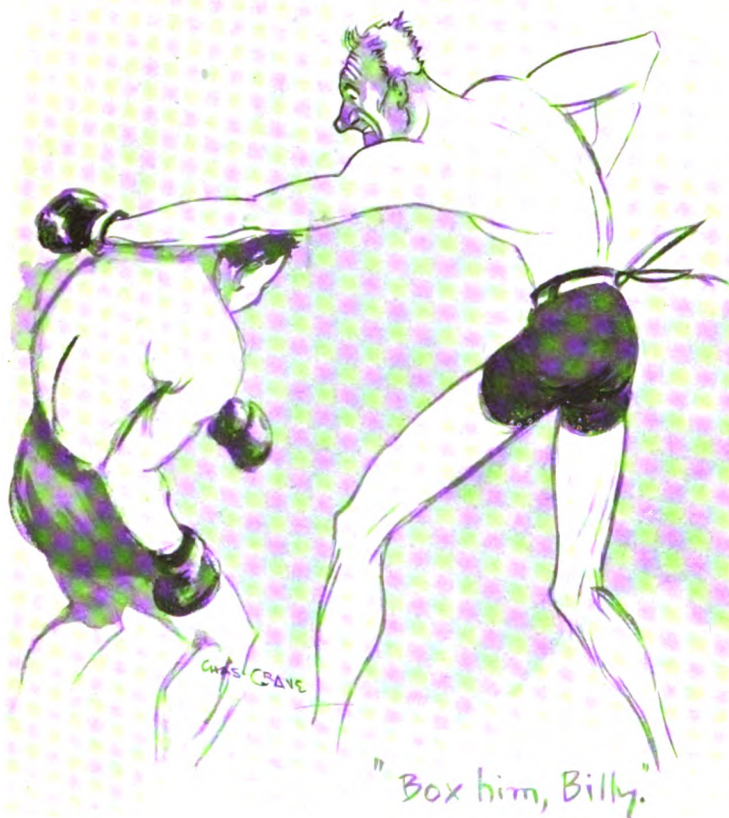
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TO THE ANTHROPO

The Bombardier.



BOMBARDIER BILLY WELLS
Specially drawn by CHARLES GRAVE, the famous *Punch* artist

THE STORY OF BOXING

BY

TREVOR C. WIGNALL

AUTHOR OF "THUS GODS ARE MADE," "JIMMY LAMBERT," ETC.

With 32 Illustrations, including two Original Cartoons by
CHARLES GRAVE

LONDON: HUTCHINSON & CO.
PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

1923

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ANNO 1900

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TO
MY FRIEND
HARRY J. PRESTON
WHO REPRESENTS
ALL THAT IS BEST
IN BOXING

AUTHOR'S NOTE

I am particularly indebted to Mr. Harry Preston, Mr. George Innes, and Mr. Charles Rose for the loan of many old books and prints ; to the Editor of " The Daily Mail " for permission to reproduce the photograph of the Carpentier-Siki contest ; to the Editor of " Sporting Life " and Mr. J. B. Melhuish for permission to republish some of the latter's sketches ; and to Mr. Charles Grave for specially drawing the caricatures of Bombardier Wells and Georges Carpentier.

LONDON, *May*, 1923.

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THE STORY OF BOXING

INTRODUCTION

THIS book, which is an attempt to tell, in the fewest possible words, the full story of boxing from the moment of its infancy to the present day, is concerned mainly with fighters. Fights figure in it, but not to the customary extent. My aim has been to give pen-pictures of the more noteworthy men who have appeared in the fistic limelight since James Figg, the cudgeller and swordsman, erected his booth at Southwark. It will be found that I have quoted freely, and, where necessary, at length. My excuse for that—if excuse be needed—is my belief that it is better and fairer to reproduce the actual sentences written in the long ago than to try to paraphrase them.

How have we progressed since Figg made championship battles popular by matching himself with Sutton, the Gravesend pipemaker ; since Broughton introduced the first set of rules ? Only tardily. Boxing to-day is as much the object of contempt of the few, as much the favoured pastime of the many, as it was when King George the Fourth (at that time Prince of Wales) offered his knee to Fox, the son of the proprietor of Covent Garden Theatre, when the latter fought Lord Barrymore on the Steyne at Brighton. It has always had opponents. Deservedly so, some might feel impelled to say, for, like racing, it has haled to its flag, and is still haling, all the riff-raff, all the flotsam and jetsam of humanity that responds so readily to any encouragement to engage in nefarious pursuits. That is boxing's cross ; it cannot rid itself of the crooks, the sharpers, the outsiders, the hangers-on. There is a section of society—a bad, unwholesome one—that uses boxing as a shield for the commission of many sins. These people will never be eliminated. One fears that they are as much a part of the “ noble art ” as are the gloves and the taut ropes.

Fortunately, there is another side to the picture. A boxing match, sufficiently advertised, will attract to it the best brains in the country. In 1922, at Olympia, London, there was a contest that was witnessed by a gathering that might easily have been mistaken for a levee at Buckingham Palace, or a "first night" audience at the opera. I have sat among men whose talents have placed them so high above their fellows that they occupy mountains inaccessible to all but themselves; literary men, artists, sculptors, business magnates, men of blue blood. They go to see boxing because its extraordinary magnetism holds them in an unbreakable grip, because they remark in it something that is very fine, very brave, very significant. They know, as do those who delve deeper, that boxing, properly conducted, is the best sport the world has ever known; and that, improperly conducted, it is the worst.

Nothing would please me more than to write here that boxing is pure, and clean, and undefiled. If I did I would be guilty of a lie. It is neither one nor the other. It retains—hugs to its heart, almost—many of the objectionable features that brought it into disrepute when it was in its swaddling clothes. It does not openly abet faked matches, but it makes very little endeavour to discourage them. Arranged contests are as common to-day as they were in that dark period when even the patrons of fighters could not be sure that they would be given a square deal. The big fights of the moment are usually straight and above board, but the less important affairs, the bouts between men who are nearing the twilight of their fighting days, or between youths whose eyes are on the stars, are more often than not combats with a predestined finish.

There have been many eras, and each has produced something new. The very latest discovery made by boxers is that professional promoters are unnecessary. Some, at least, have arrived at the conclusion that it is a profitable idea to run the fights in which they are themselves engaged as contestants. One cannot but regard this as a very unhealthy sign. For thirty-odd years boxing has been less a sport than a commercial proposition. It is difficult to find fault with that; it is the inevitable development, but if pugilists are permitted to double the rôles of fighter and promoter they will not only lay

themselves open to rumours and accusations that will be hard to refute, but they will also be driving another nail in the coffin of their trade.

But—I am anticipating the question—why should boxers be compelled to accept or secure the services of middlemen? The reply is obvious: boxing cannot afford to be more suspect than it is at the moment. Even now, after every fight, be it big or small, the air is charged with vague doubtings; what will it be like when it is whispered abroad that the winner—or the loser—of a big battle was the man behind it? Will it be easy to convince the people who make boxing possible by paying large sums to witness it that there was no faking, no pre-arrangement? Boxing is the game that, above all others, needs the appearance of straightforwardness. That is why I suggest that the fighter-promoter should be told, very plainly, that he is injuring his profession.

The biggest fight in England in 1922 was engineered and staged by one of the pugilists. I know it was a perfectly honest contest, for I took the trouble to make careful enquiries; but that, when all is said and done, is beside the point. The fact that stood out was that one of the two men in the ring was the seller of the tickets and the handler of all the money taken at the doors. The receipts were over £30,000; the expenses less than £10,000, which included the "purse." A good night's work, of course; but not a good night for boxing, if it is to be freed of suspicion.

This fight, as I have said, was straight as a die—but who can guarantee that the next will be? Fighters, if they want to keep boxing alive, should leave the promoting of contests to those who make a living by that means; if, on the other hand, they insist on meddling with the business side, they should have the fact clearly stated on their programmes and posters. Followers of boxing in England are kept far too much in the dark as it is. They are rarely given any information about the size of the purse or the takings; but it is the practice indulged in by some boxers of hiding matters which should be public property that deserves to be most strongly condemned. The secrecy itself is a bad symptom; fighting men, in general, if they are wise, will see to it that in future complaints on this score are made impossible.

There have been few epoch-making changes in the two hundred-odd years that have passed since pugilism first became a recognized trade. I do not call it a sport for reasons already given ; the only sporting boxers, employing the word as it was meant to be employed, are those amateurs who spar for the love of the thing and not for gain. Professional boxers are tradesmen. They whirl their fists to acquire the wherewithal to purchase expensive cars or else to buy coffee-stall suppers. Boxing is a magnificent and a lucrative game for the handful who rise to the position of champions, but it is a heart-breaking, soul-searing business to the vast majority who fight to keep a roof above their heads.

For every one champion there are hundreds who never get beyond a preliminary contest. These are the submerged, and their name is legion. They may be found in droves in the smaller boxing halls. Hope on, hope ever—that is their slogan. Less than one in a hundred leaps the line that divides affluence from poverty. That is one of the tragedies of boxing. A youth is caught when he is young and ambitious, and infected with a disease that remains with him to the end of his life. All boxers are optimists. Even those without a victory to their credit fondly imagine that their grey hairs will presently be darkened by the flood of success and adulation that will descend on them from the clouds. It is the hope that springs eternal that keeps them steadfast to an occupation that is cruelty personified to the majority who engage in it.

Is there any other profession that permits a man to be an idol one day and an object of scorn the next ? There is no individual on earth so precariously poised on his throne as a boxer. I never see a champion roll by in his four-seater without remembering what happened to Broughton, to Mendoza, to Mace, to almost every fighter who has held a title. Up one minute, down the next. That is the fate of the boxer. But it is the swollen-eared, deeply-marked little gallants who struggle on, and on, and on—never getting any nearer the goal that shimmers and gleams in their mind's eye—who excite my particular sympathy. What do they say to their wives when they return home with split lips and the thin end of the purse ? What do they think when they read of the triumphs of a Carpentier, of a Dempsey, of a Leonard ? I

would venture a guess. This : " Oh, well, my turn will come *some day*." If there is anything finer than the optimism of the fighter who was born into the world to be a cabman or a dock labourer—who knows it, but declines to recognize it—I have yet to hear of it.

No epoch-making changes. When the Prince of Wales walked into the ring of the National Sporting Club to shake hands with Jimmy Wilde he was merely doing what King George the Second had done before him. When, in February of this year, Mr. William Muldoon, chairman of the New York State Athletic Commission, spoke bitterly of the gigantic purses that were being offered he was simply repeating a lament of Daniel Mendoza's in 1823.

Said Mr. Muldoon : " The talk of millions and hundreds of thousands (of dollars) for a ring exhibition where the heavy-weight title is at stake is repulsive. . . . Is it the proper thing for a boxer, for forty-five minutes' work at the very most, to get more than the President of the United States receives for his four years of office ? How many hundreds of thousands of educated, well-trained men are there whose remuneration for useful endeavour is, in comparison, a mere pittance ? "

Said Mendoza : " In the time of Broughton and Slack and other members of the old school pitched battles never were fought for large sums of money, as is now the case. From two to five guineas were generally the whole amount of the stake—the honour of the victory was the sole object of these contests."

Many more examples could be given, but it is perhaps sufficient to say that everything that has happened since 1719 is religiously served up these days. Broughton, when he was matched with Slack, neglected his training. Carpentier did the same when he signed articles with Siki. Belcher dissipated his earnings as he made them. So do the boxers of the moment. I would be very hard pressed indeed if I were called on to name six who are even comparatively well off. The watchword of the champion—he has one, like his less distinguished brother—is come easy, go easy. That is why benefits are as popular and as necessary now as they were when the Fives Court was at the height of its prosperity.

The number of fighters I have known who value money, and who bank a proportion of it, could be counted on the fingers of one hand. And I am patiently waiting to meet the really humble boxer. I do not believe he exists. The nearest to humility is Bombardier Wells—an exceptional individual who is possessed of so many virtues that to point to one, and one only, smacks of meanness. It may be argued that Wells is humble because he has gone through the chastening fires. Haven't the others? No, humility and ring renown do not go together. They could not, very well, for it is half the battle in fighting to make the other fellow believe that you are the only thing of its kind ever created. But let us be fair, if only to escape the taunt that we are superior, sapient (beautiful word, and beloved by no one so much as the wise-acre) cynics. The boxer is *forced* to blow daily blasts on his own trumpet. If he did not, who would pipe them for him? Not his opponents, you may be sure. So he is not to be blamed if he allows it to be understood that the moon, and the sun, and the stars move in their orbits because he is on earth. It is expected of him that he will shout into listening ears that he is the greatest ever. Besides, that is the way to fame. A dumb boxer, or one who resembled a shrinking violet, would not last three weeks.

I am not of those who think that the old days were best, or that the quality of our boxing is infinitely less good than it was in the years that are gone. Has any age produced a cleverer, more unique pugilist than Jimmy Wilde; a more delightful exponent than Georges Carpentier; a more engaging personality than Bombardier Wells; a more finished performer than Jim Driscoll; a more powerful fighting machine than Jack Dempsey? If these men are compared with any five who preceded them (say Cribb, Sayers, Mace, Randall and Broome) it will be discovered that in the matter of ability they hold a commanding lead. Nor is there reason to be unhappy about the future. It is true that in England there are very few men of uncommon promise; but the Philippine Islands and the mountains of the Argentine are among the new places where boxers of splendid merit are being reared. Spain, too, is coming into the fold, while in Germany and Italy the cultivation of an art that was once in the safekeeping of the English

is becoming a very real business. In a year or so we may hear of Japanese and Chinese boxers.

This is not a fanciful anticipation—was not the first challenger of a champion a Venetian gondolier? Boxing is the pastime of the wide world. It appeals to the black man and the yellow man in the same way that it appeals to the white. It cannot die. Too much should not be made of the oft-repeated slur that its chief adherents are men of unsavoury reputation. A royal wedding or a big funeral attracts quite as many of the criminally-minded as a boxing contest. Boxing undoubtedly needs cleansing—but can anyone point to a trade, profession, or enterprise that is absolutely perfect? The game—to give it the best name that was ever applied to it—must live because it has the same fascination for the duke as for the dustman. It is a good game, played properly; the most spectacular, the most thrilling, the most packed-with-human-emotions game that has been given us to while away our leisure moments.

Generally speaking, it is cleaner to-day than it has been for a hundred years. Things are still being done that ought not to be done, but we are not faced with the necessity of forming Fair Play Clubs, or of organizing regiments of ex-pugilists to protect rings and spectators. But we need to be sensible. Quite recently it was solemnly suggested that the way to salvation—so far as England was concerned—was by re-introducing knuckle-fighting. I have been wondering since whether this was intended as a merry jest.

Mr. George Bernard Shaw, in a preface to "Cashel Byron's Profession," offered the opinion that bare-fist fighting lived by its blackguardism and died of its intolerable tediousness. Few will quarrel with the statement. I have seen many hundreds of contests, but the only one that gave me a shudder was a knuckle-fight I witnessed in South Africa. It was barbarous, beastly, and disgusting.

But let us examine into this proposition. How many boxers would consent to fight without gloves? Not many. Beckett might, for he has come straight to us from Moulsey (now Molesey) Hurst. We will suppose, then, that he is matched with Dempsey for the heavy-weight championship of the world. Here is a report of part of the proceedings:

"At the end of the thirtieth round the odds in favour of Beckett were ten to one. In the thirty-ninth there was a general cry of 'Take the game fellow (Dempsey) away,' at which he nodded and said it was 'all right.' Indeed it appeared that Beckett had not sufficient punishment about him to finish off his brave antagonist, and this opinion reduced the betting to four to one. In the forty-seventh round a tremendous swelling on Dempsey's right ear was burst by a blow, the blood rushing in torrents. Beckett fell from the force of his own blow.

"In the fifty-sixth round Beckett became groggy, while Dempsey appeared to be gaining strength. Cheered by his friends, he appeared to be himself again. In the sixtieth round Beckett's hands were nearly gone; indeed, in several instances his knuckles seemed more hurt than Dempsey's head when they came in contact. He was greatly distressed and scarcely able to hold his hands up. From this period Dempsey was booked for winning, and four to one in his favour went begging. In the sixty-sixth and last round, Beckett came up greatly distressed. Dempsey saw his condition and rushed in as Beckett fell forward, caught him a right-handed up-hit on the jaw, and then fell heavily on him.

"This was the *coup de grâce*. When Beckett was lifted on his second's knee, his head dropped, and he became perfectly insensible. It was some time before Dempsey was sufficiently recovered to quit the ring, and his second was nearly in a similar state of exhaustion. Beckett remained for some minutes incapable of motion, and was bled on the spot by a surgeon."

Exaggeration? Not in the least. Except for a substitution of names, the above is an exact copy of a report of the contest between Ned Neal and Bob Baldwin, at Ascot, on June 29, 1828, and it is not nearly so fearsome as some I might have selected. It will be said, very naturally, that neither Dempsey nor Beckett would go sixty-six rounds. That is admitted—but does anyone crave to watch a man bled on the floor of a ring, to observe cross-buttocks, to feast his eyes on gouging? I think not. Speaking for myself, I would rather see boxing barred altogether than witness a return of knuckle-fighting. But there is no occasion to be fearful. Knuckle-fighting is as dead as mutton. Let it rest.

What England requires, most of all, is a genius of the type of M. François Descamps. She has plenty of boxers, but she has no managers with skill enough to turn natural-born fighters into champions. Her men are allowed to drift, to cultivate petal-flicks that are only advantageous as point-scorers, to take long periods of rest that deaden enthusiasm. The good young Englishman is no sooner unearthed than he is counselled to be clever, to be stylish, to be fast ; but he is not told that a thump on the jaw is a thousand times more valuable than a hop-skip-and-a-jump system that is only useful when it is made permissible by an opponent similarly afflicted. Englishmen fall before Americans because they can neither deliver a blow nor digest one. Style, in boxing, is clearly of importance, but it must, of necessity, be companioned by a punch.

There is wanted, in addition, a strong, virile Board of Control. Not a somnolent body like that which sometimes sits in London, not a talkative committee like that in New York, not a comic society like that which thrones and dethrones second-rate pugilists in Paris, but a live, up-to-date, determined company of men—representative, if possible, of all the nations—who will not only request that certain very obvious things be done, but will see that they are done. Such a Board could divest boxing of the elements that manufacture its sniffers and sneerers in less than a year.

But as this suggestion was first thrown out early in 1800, I am afraid that to plead for its adoption now is much like crying for the moon.

Boxing, from what I know of it, likes to be snorted at.

CHAPTER I

THE EARLIEST FIGHTERS

Boxing is a combat depending more on strength than the exercise of the sword does ; but art will yet bear down the beam against it. A less degree of art will tell for more than a considerably greater strength. Strength is certainly what the boxer ought to set out with, but without art he will succeed but poorly. The deficiency of strength may be greatly supplied by art ; but the want of art will have but heavy and unwieldy succour from strength.—Captain Godfrey, 1742.

ALTHOUGH it is established that prize-fighting was a form of attraction at the Theatre Royal, Dorset Street, Salisbury Square, London, in 1698, the first fighter of whom there is any real record was an Oxfordshire man named James Figg. He has been rightly described as the father of pugilism.

He was born at Thame during the reign of William III, and his earliest patron was the Earl of Peterborough, who supplied him with sufficient money to open a School of Arms in Tottenham Court Road. For twenty years or more Figg, (sometimes spelled Fig) was without a rival ; he counted among his friends, Hogarth (who designed his professional card), Johnson (the first amateur boxer of note and an uncle of Dr. Samuel Johnson), Walpole (a celebrated English statesman) Swift, Pope, and many members of the Royal Family. It is even said that he dined frequently with George I.

He was so successful as a tutor that after a few years he removed to more extensive premises in Tottenham Court Road, and it was there, in 1727, that he fought Ned Sutton, the Gravesend pipemaker, for the Championship of England. This was the first of all the battles for a title. It lasted nearly an hour, and it ended in the decisive defeat of Sutton.

Figg was the recognized champion for fifteen years (1719-1734). He was a particular favourite at Southwark Fair—indeed, in the famous picture of that event, by Hogarth,

he is given much prominence—but his fame was such that his contests were very few and far between. He was a persistent challenger, but apart from his fight with Sutton he did not have any others that are worthy of remark. He has been thus described :

“ Figg was the Atlas of the Sword, and may he remain the gladiating statue ! In him strength, resolution, and unparalleled judgment conspired to form a matchless master. There was a majesty shone in his countenance and blazed in all his actions, beyond all I ever saw. His right leg bold and firm, and his left, which could hardly ever be disturbed, gave him the surprising advantage already proved, and struck his adversary with despair and panic. He had a peculiar way of stepping in a parry. He knew his arm and its just time of moving, put a firm faith in that, and never let his adversary escape his parry. He was as much a greater master than any other I ever saw, as he was a greater judge of time and distance.”

Figg's School of Arms and his Amphitheatre were the resort of the nobility, but his booth at Southwark was patronized both by the aristocrat and by the more lowly. He knew something of the sweet uses of advertisement, and a handbill which he distributed, in 1738, to make known the quality of his entertainment may here be given if only to show the kind of advertising which was popular at that period.

So far as can be traced the following is the first advertisement issued in connection with pugilism :

At

Fig's Great Til'd Booth,
on the Bowling Green, Southwark.

During the time of the Fair
(which begins on Saturday, the 18th of September)

The Town will be entertained with the manly arts of
Foil-play, Back-sword, Cudgelling and Boxing,
in which

The noted PARKS, from Coventry, and the celebrated Gentleman prize-fighter, Mr. MILLAR, will display their skill in a tilting-bout, showing the advantages of Time and Measure :

Also

Mr. JOHNSON, the great swordsman, superior to any man in the world for his unrivalled display of the hanging guard, in a grand attack of Self-defence, against the all-powerful arm of the renowned

SUTTON.

DELFORCE, the finished Cudgeller, will likewise exhibit his uncommon feats with the single-stick ; and who challenges any man in the kingdom to enter the list with him for a broken head or a belly-full !

BUCKHORSE, and several other Pugilists will show the art of Boxing

To conclude with a

GRAND PARADE by the valiant FIG, who will exhibit his knowledge in various Combats—with the Foil, Back-sword, Cudgel and Fist.

To begin each day at Twelve o'clock, and close at Ten.

VIVAT REX.

N.B.—The Booth is fitted up in a most commodious manner, for the better reception of Gentlemen, &c., &c.

It is the fashion these days to deride the writings of Pierce Egan, the author of "Boxiana ; or Sketches of Ancient and Modern Pugilism." He is accused of exaggeration, of inventing both fights and fighters, and of allowing partiality to get the better of his judgment. Egan, however, did for boxing what no man has done since, and his opinions, especially of those men with whom he came in contact, are worthy of consideration.

Egan was always much concerned with the antiquity of boxing, but even he was forced to confess that he was unable to trace its origin. He remarks in his second volume that Erix, the Sicilian, a son of Venus, used the caestus with such success that he vanquished every opponent, but that at length, having challenged Hercules, he was killed by the latter in a desperate combat. Another whom he selects as a kind of prize-fighter was Pollux, the twin brother of Castor. Egan, in all his books, was at pains to prove that fist-fighting was popular with the Greeks and the Romans, but it is sufficient for our purpose to observe that in very dim ages, wrestling

and boxing—this particularly in the time of King Alfred—formed part of the manual exercises of the soldiery.

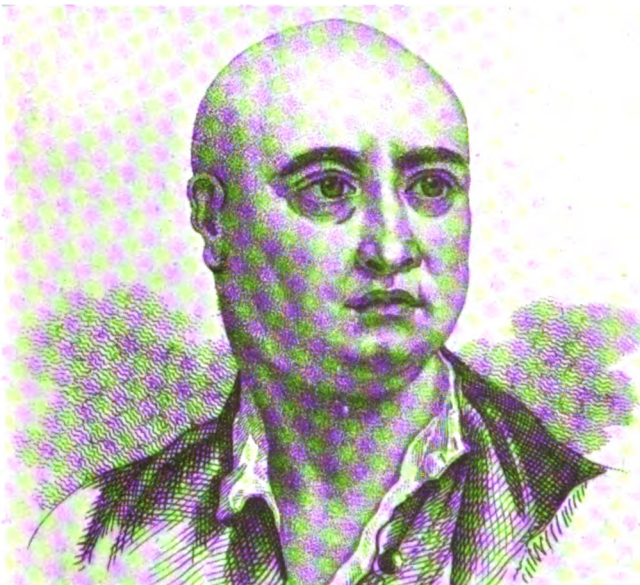
King Richard III seems to have been the first monarch who actively practised boxing. It is recorded of him by one historian that "he was uncommonly expert, either on foot or horseback, in displaying a variety of manly feats, such as drawing the bow, raising the sling, or throwing the javelin; but he was also particularly distinguished with a clenched fist when opposed to an antagonist, by the extreme potency of his arm."

This suggests that King Richard boxed with frequency, but it is unfortunate that no record has been kept of his opponents. For very many hundreds of years fighting was a feature of rustic games, but it was left to Figg, as has been said, to place the business of boxing on something like a footing.

He was long before Egan's time, but the latter's commentary on this quite exceptional individual is worth giving. Egan says :

"Fig at this period (1719) was a distinguished personage in the history of pugilism, by reference being made to him upon all fighting occasions; and was considered to possess good judgment. He might be looked upon as the champion of his day, but Fig was more indebted to strength and courage for the success in the battles which he gained than from the effects of genius; in fact, he was extremely illiterate, and it might be said that he boxed his way through life. If Fig's method of fighting was subject to the criticism of the present day (1812), he would be denominated more of a slaughterer than that of a neat, finished pugilist. His antagonists were punished severely in their conflicts with him, particularly those who stood up to receive his blows; in making matches, his advice was always consulted, as he possessed the character of an honest fellow—and was looked up to as a leading fighter among the most distinguished of the fancy.

"It appears that Fig was more distinguished as a fencer and cudgeller than as a pugilist; and notwithstanding the former acquirements gave him a decidedly superior advantage over the other boxers of that day by his thorough acquaintance with time and measure, yet his favourite practices were the sword and stick, and in the use of which he particularly



JAMES FIGG
The First Heavy-weight Champion of England

excelled. His reputation rapidly increasing, as a scientific man in those pursuits, he was induced to open an Academy (perhaps better known as Fig's Amphitheatre) for teaching the use of the small and back-sword, cudgelling and pugilism ; and which place soon became of considerable notoriety, by proving a great attraction to the sporting men of the period, in making and settling matches in the various bouts that were displayed."

It will be observed that Egan is not altogether warm in his praise of Figg. Long before his time, however, there lived a man named Captain Godfrey. It was he who wrote the first book on boxing, which he called "A Treatise upon the Useful Science of Defence." It was published in 1747. Godfrey apparently knew Figg well, and in speaking of his own accomplishments as a boxer, he wrote :

"I have purchased my knowledge with many a broken head and bruise in every part of me. I chose to go mostly to Fig, and exercise with him ; partly, as I knew him to be the ablest master, and partly, as he was of a rugged temper, and would spare no man, high or low, who took up a stick against him. I bore his rough treatment with determined patience, and followed him so long that Fig, at last, finding he could not have the beating of me at so cheap a rate as usual, did not show such fondness for my company. This is well-known by gentlemen of distinguished rank who used to be pleased in setting us together."

There are not many stories about Figg, but one of the best turns on a challenge that was thrown out to him by a Venetian gondolier. The latter's name was Tito Alberto di Carini. He was a man of enormous strength, and one of his chief boasts was that he could smash the jaw-bone of any man who had the temerity to oppose him. Figg was very little different from the champions of the present day, for when the Venetian's challenge was issued he poured upon it all the contempt he could command. In so doing, Figg set an example which has been closely followed by almost every champion who has succeeded him. After considerable argument, he was induced to find a man to meet the Venetian, but in agreeing he made this illuminating statement :

"I don't know, d'ye see, as how that 'ere's truth about his

breaking so many of his countrymen's jaw-bones with his fists; howsomdever, that's no matter, he can't break Bob Whittaker's jaw-bone, if he had a sledge-hammer in his hand. And if Bob must knock under, why, before this outlandish waterman shall rule the roost, I'll give him a Fig to chew, which, perhaps, he'll find some trouble in swallowing."

The Bob Whittaker referred to was an intimate of Figg's and a boxer of some renown. He was particularly celebrated for his throwing, and also for his skill in dropping his full weight on his fallen antagonist.

Figg's Amphitheatre was the scene of this battle, and it is enlightening to be informed that the company present "was by far the most splendid and the politest ever seen."

There are those who complain that the boxing reports of the present day are lacking in descriptive and flowery touches. These grumblers should have lived when Whittaker fought the Venetian, for this is what they would have read:

"The stage was ordered to be cleared, when an awful silence prevailed in the anxiety manifested for the set-to. The Venetian mounted with smiles of confidence, and was greeted welcome by loud plaudits from his countrymen and partisans and instantly began to strip. His giant-like arms claimed universal astonishment, and his size in general struck terror, and even Captain Godfrey observed, 'that his heart yearned for his countryman.'

"Bob appeared, cool and steady, in a few seconds afterwards, and was cheered with huzzas. He eyed the gondolier with firmness, and, quite undismayed, threw off his clothes in an instant, when the attack commenced. The Venetian pitched himself forward with his right leg and his arm full extended, and before Whittaker was aware of his design he received a blow on the side of the head, so powerful in its effect as to capsize him over the stage, which was remarkable for its height.

"Whittaker's fall was desperate indeed as he dashed completely against the ground; which circumstance would not have taken place but for the grandeur of the audience, whose prices for admission were so high on that day as to exclude the common people, who generally sat on the ground, and

formed a line round the stage. It was then all clear, and Bob had nothing to stop him but the bottom.

"The bets ran high, and the foreigners vociferated loudly indeed in behalf of the Venetian, and flattered themselves that Whittaker would scarcely be able to come again from the desperate blow and fall that he had received, and sported their cash freely in laying the odds thick against him. But Bob was not to be told out so soon, and jumped upon the stage like a game-cock to renew the attack. Sparring now was all at an end, and Whittaker found out that something must be done to render the Venetian's long arm useless, or he must lose the fight.

"So, without further ceremony, he made a little stoop, ran boldly in beyond the heavy mallet, and, with one English peg in the stomach (quite a new thing to foreigners) brought him on his breech. The tables were then turned, the sporting men laughing heartily, and the foreigners a little chop-fallen. The Venetian shewed symptoms of uneasiness—was quite sick—and his wind being touched, he was scarcely to his time. Bob now punished him in fine style, drove the Venetian all over the stage, and soon gave him a leveller.

"The odds shifted fast in favour of Whittaker, and the foreigners displayed some terrible long faces. The gondolier was completely puzzled, and in the course of a few rounds, the conceit was so taken out of him that he lost all guard of his person, and was compelled to give in, to the no small chagrin of the foreigners, who were properly cleaned out on this occasion. The Venetian had the mortification to retire in disgrace, after his vain boasting, and with a good milling; or, as Captain Godfrey concludes—'the blow in the stomach carried too much of the English rudeness for him to bear,' and finding himself so unmannerly used, he scorned to have any more doings with his slovenly fist."

That was boxing when boxing was young. It could not have provided a very edifying spectacle, but it gave the versatile Figg an opportunity of proving that he was a first-class showman. At the conclusion of the proceedings he made this quaint speech:

"Gentlemen, perhaps as how you may think that I have picked out the best man in London to beat this 'ere foreigner.

but if you will come this day se'nnight, I'll produce a man that shall beat Bob Whittaker by fair hitting in ten minutes."

Figg was as good as his word. He matched Whittaker with a fighter named Nat Peartree, and the contest lasted six minutes. Whittaker, blinded by the blows he received, gave in with these words :

" Dam'me, I am not beat, but what signifies when I cannot see my man ? "

Frank Moran, in October of 1922, two hundred years later, might well have said the same thing when his eyes were closed by the punches of Joe Beckett, the heavy-weight champion of Great Britain. History is for ever repeating itself.

It was Figg who, in the last years of his life (he died in 1734)—what an inventor he was !—introduced challenges. In those days, as at the moment, no attempt was made to hide lights under bushels. A man was either the greatest in the world, or he was nothing at all. Challenges were about on a par with display bills and advertisements. In 1742, for example, William Willis, a noted fighter of the period, sent to the " Daily Advertiser " this remarkable message :

" Whereas I, William Willis, commonly known by the name of the Fighting Quaker, have fought Mr. Smallwood about twelve months since, and held him the tightest to it, and bruised and battered him more than anyone he ever encountered, though I had the misfortune to be beat by an accidental fall ; the said Smallwood, flushed with the success blind Fortune gave him, and the weak attempts of a few Irishmen and boys, that have of late fought him for a minute or two, makes him think himself unconquerable.

" To convince him of the falsity of which, I invite him to fight me for One Hundred Pounds, at the time and place mentioned (The Great Booth, Tottenham Court) when, I doubt not, I shall prove the truth of what I have asserted, by pegs, darts, hard blows, falls, and cross buttocks."

This reads more like a proclamation than a challenge ; but Mr. Smallwood, not to be outdone, replied a little more briefly, but with no less spirit :

" I, Thomas Smallwood, known for my intrepid bravery and manhood on and off the stage, accept the challenge of this puffing Quaker, and will show him that he is led by a false

spirit, that means him no other good, than that he should be chastised for offering to take upon him the arm of the flesh."

It is satisfactory to learn that the intrepid Smallwood won with such ease that the Quaker was never heard of again. One other example might be given before this subject is dismissed. This time the challenge is even bolder. It reads :

"Whereas I, John Francis, commonly known by the name of the Jumping Soldier, who have always had the reputation of a good fellow, and have fought several bruisers in the street, etc. ; nor am I ashamed to mount the stage when my manhood is called in question by an Irish braggadocio, whom I fought some time ago, in a by-battle, for twelve minutes, and though I had not the success due to my courage and ability in the art of boxing, I now invite him to fight me for Two Guineas at the time and place mentioned (George Taylor's booth, Tottenham Court Road) where, I doubt not, I shall give him the truth of a good beating."

The Irish braggadocio's answer was as follows :

"I, Patrick Henley, known to everyone for the truth of a good fellow, who never refused anyone, on or off the stage, and fight as often for the diversion of gentlemen as money, do accept the challenge of this Jumping Jack ; and shall, if he don't take care, give him one of my bothering blows, which will convince him of his ignorance in the art of boxing."

All this for two guineas ! It needs to be remembered, however, that the usual purse at this period was rarely more than five pounds. There were sometimes side stakes, but in a general sense the purses were ridiculously small. The very largest that Figg or Whittaker or any of their contemporaries received would not, these days, tempt a novice into a tenth-rate bout at a tenth-rate hall.

Figg was succeeded by George Taylor. He, like his predecessor, gained his experience at Southwark and Moorfields, where boxing booths were the features of the fairs. He was known as George the Barber, and he really commenced his professional career with a contest against Jack Broughton, who defeated him with some ease. This was in 1740, but for six years previously Taylor had managed what was known as the Great Booth. It was situated in Tottenham Court Road, and

was, to all intents and purposes, the National Sporting Club of its time. Taylor was not a particularly good or clever pugilist, but he contrived to defeat such giants of the period as Prince Boswell, and the even more noted Jack Slack.

It will be found that the list of world's heavy-weight champions contains the names of Pipes and Greeting. Neither of these was of the same calibre as Figg. Pipes, in particular, was a man of small stature, and his chief claim to fame rests on the prominence that was given him by Captain Godfrey. He was a powerful hitter, and his principal blow was a right swing. He was uncommonly quick in delivering his punches, but his strength was so poor, and he was so addicted to loose living, that his reign was a comparatively short one.

Greeting (or Greeting, as he is sometimes called) was Pipes' strongest rival. He was a better-built man than Pipes, and it seems fairly safe to assume that he was the first boxer to realize that a blow to the mark—or solar plexus, as later it came to be known—was as damaging as one delivered to the face. Unlike Pipes, he shot in his punches straight from the shoulder, but despite that he was twice beaten by the latter. When Taylor came to the front he made the mistake of matching himself with a man who was an extremely able fighter—Jack Broughton. He was very soundly whipped, but that he was one of Egan's favourites is evidenced by this statement :

“He was rated as a strong, able pugilist, possessing the most extraordinary skill ; and aided by his knowledge of the back and small sword, and a remarkable judgment in the cross-buttock fall, was considered to be able to contend for victory with anyone. With these pretensions he considered himself as a proper person to succeed the late Fig in his Amphitheatre, and lost no time in becoming its proprietor. Which circumstance he soon made known by public advertisements of the performances which were to take place under his management of the theatre ; and inviting the most celebrated men in the different branches of self-defence to display their skill. It was no uncommon thing for the receipts of the house, at that time, to produce from one hundred pounds to one hundred and fifty pounds.”

Taylor was as much concerned with discovering pugilists as he was with fighting them. One of his finds was a certain

Boswell. This individual would not come into this story at all but for the fact that he caused Captain Godfrey to make a pronouncement that must be regarded as the hardest judgment ever passed on a boxer. Said Godfrey :

" Praise be to Boswell's power of fighting, his excellent choice of time and measure, his superior judgment, despatching forth his executing arm ; but fye upon his dastard heart, that mars it all ! As I knew that fellow's abilities, and his worm-dread soul, I never saw him beat but I wished him to be beaten. Though I am charmed with the idea of his power and manner of fighting, I am sick of the thoughts of his nurse-wanting courage. Farewell to him, with this fair acknowledgment, that, if he had a true English bottom (the best fighting epithet for a man of spirit) he would carry all before him, and be a match for even Broughton himself."

One wonders what a present-day heavy-weight would say if a statement of a similar kind were made about him in the columns of the " Daily Mail." The average fighter of the moment is the personification of touchiness ; had he lived when Captain Godfrey was in his hey-day, he would have died of a broken heart in a week.

Taylor became champion of England at the expense of Boswell, whom he fought in his Great Booth ; but he was hard put to it to retain his title, for among those hot on his track were George Stevenson, Dick Harris, Smallwood, Dimmock, Willis, and many others. The chief character of the period, however, seems to have been the quaintly named Buckhorse.

His real name was John Smith, and he was born in that part of London known as Lewknors Lane—" a place (as one chronicler puts it) notorious in the extreme for the eccentricity of characters it contained."

Buckhorse, in appearance, was singularly unsightly, but he was undoubtedly a fighter of considerable skill. He was the first musical boxer ; it was his habit, on occasions, to strike his cheeks with the fingers of his hands, and so produce a variety of popular tunes. It was with the aid of this peculiar trait, added to the selling of switches for a halfpenny apiece, that he made a living in his boyhood. He is represented as a most impetuous character, but there seems to be no doubt

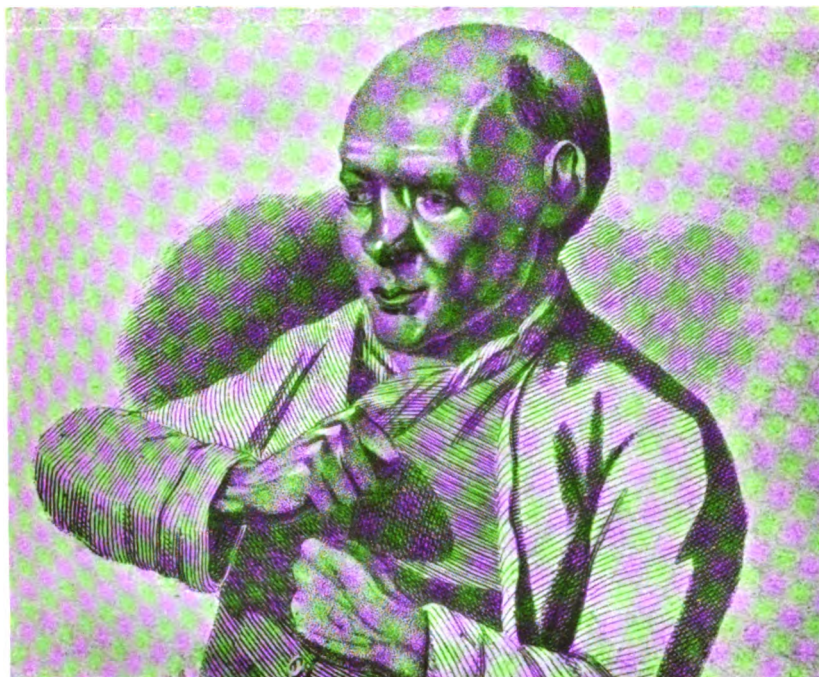
that he ranked high both for courage and skill. He depended more on strength than on science, but there never was a time when it seemed likely that he would acquire the championship.

Before passing on to Broughton—rightly described as the father of scientific boxing—it would be as well to touch on some of the precepts laid down to guide boxers in the years between 1720 and 1740. All the authorities were agreed that the most hurtful blow was the one delivered beneath the ear. The punch between the eyebrows was another vastly in favour, whilst the blow to the stomach came third in the list because it was believed to damage the diaphragm and the lungs. The punch to the point of the jaw—which ends most fights these days—does not appear to have been practised. One is led to suppose that its value had not been discovered. There are many who believe that the solar plexus punch was first employed in a championship contest by Robert Fitzsimmons. This, however, is incorrect—Figg, Taylor, Smallwood and others won many of their fights by striking their opponents on the mark.

One book, written in 1730, counselled boxers to avoid eating on the day of a contest, so as to be better prepared for punishment aimed at the stomach. This, it may be said, is not the method in favour now. Quite a number of present-day pugilists, after weighing in, proceed to devour a meal big enough for a family. This is especially the case when the poundage of the fighter is below that of a middle-weight.

Two hundred years ago there was no recognized system of training. Dumb-bells and punching bags and medicine balls had not been thought of. Men did not go into special quarters for long preparations, nor, for that matter, did they take much care of themselves before a fight. Perhaps there was no need; but one traces that these men of a former day were very heavy drinkers. The majority died of inebriety. To-day most champion boxers are abstainers from alcohol and tobacco.

Dempsey has always been a teetotaller and nothing would induce him to accept a cigarette. Carpentier, when in training, confines himself to two cigarettes per day up to the last week, when he stops smoking altogether. He drinks but one glass of light wine, usually at dinner. The same is true of almost all the leading men. They have found that alcohol



JOHN SMITH ("BUCKHORSE")

and nicotine are bad for the system. There have, of course, been exceptions. Tommy Burns was never happy without a cigar, while I remember one American light-weight, named Harry Stone, who invariably took the ring pulling at a huge black cigar.

The first man to see that there was value in training was Broughton. Prior to his time the rationale recommended and practised by the trainers of the old school was as follows: Three doses of salts, three sweats, three vomits for three weeks, with food three-parts dressed. The very thought of such a system is enough to produce a shiver. Yet it appears to have served its purpose.

CHAPTER II

BROUGHTON, SLACK, AND THE FIRST FRENCHMAN

To trace the origin of this gymnastic exercise will necessarily oblige us to date it from the days of Nimrod, the son of Cush, who was said to be not only a mighty hunter, but dexterous in the sleight of manhood, insomuch that he was by the voice of the people proclaimed their chief leader (or prince) for his victorious arm in overcoming the son of Canaan, whereby he established his throne in Shinar ; Sidon, his competitor, being obliged to move from thence, with all his household ; and in this contest neither champion was allowed any weapon, but were by efforts of strength and prowess in manly exercises adjudged by an umpire to which the victory was given.—“ The Art of Boxing, 1789.”

JACK BROUGHTON has been well called “ the father of the Science of the Art of Self-Defence.” He was the champion of England for eighteen years, and it is likely that more ink has been spilled on him than on any other boxer the world has known. The first to sing his praises was Captain Godfrey, who composed this panegyric :

“ Advance, brave Broughton ! Thee I pronounce Captain of the Boxers. As far as I can look back, I think I ought to open the characters with him. I know none so fit, so able to lead the van. This is giving him the living preference to the rest, but, I hope, I have not given any cause to say, that there has appeared in any of my characters, a partial tincture.

“ I have thoroughly consulted nothing but my unbiassed mind, and my heart has known no call but merit. Wherever I have praised I have no desire of pleasing ; wherever decryd, no fear of offending—Broughton, by his manly merit, has bid the highest, therefore has my heart. I really think all will poll with me, who poll with the same principle. Surely there is some standing reason for this preference ; what can be stronger than to say, that for seventeen or eighteen years, he has fought every able boxer that appeared against him, and has never yet been beat.

"This being the case we can venture to conclude from it. But not to build alone on this, let us examine further into his merits. What is it that he wants? Has he not all that others want, and all the best can have? Strength equal to what is human, skill and judgment equal to what can be acquired, undebauched wind, and the bottom spirit never to pronounce the word enough. He fights the stick as well as most men, and understands a good deal of the small sword. This practice has given him the distinction of time and measure beyond the rest.

"He stops as regularly as the swordsman, and carries his blows truly in the line; he steps not back, distrusting of himself, to stop a blow, with an arm unaided by his body, producing but a kind of fly-flap blows, such as pastry-cooks use to beat those insects from their tarts and cheese-cakes—No, Broughton steps boldly and firmly in, bids a welcome to the coming blow, receives it with his guardian arm, then, with a general summons of his swelling muscles, and his firm body seconding his arm, and supplying it with all its weight, pours the pile-driving force upon his man."

Broughton was a powerful fighter, although his weight and height were not exceptional. He stood five feet eleven inches, and his weight at his best was hardly more than thirteen stone. He was extremely popular, and it was at the suggestion of his friends that he built a boxing hall in Hanway Yard, Oxford Street, London. Its interior resembled the Royal Albert Hall, for there was a big stage and also boxes, a pit, and a gallery. When it was thrown open to the public in March, 1743, it was thus advertised :

AT BROUGHTON'S NEW AMPHITHEATRE,
Oxford Road.

The back of the late Mr. Fig's,
On Tuesday next, the 13th instant,
Will be exhibited

The True Art of Boxing

By the Eight Famed Following Men, viz :

Abraham Evans		Belas		Roger		Robert Spikes, and
Sweep		Glover		Allen		Harry Gray, the clogmaker

The above Eight men are to be brought on the stage, and to be matched according to the approbation of the gentlemen who shall be pleased to honour them with their company.

N.B.—There will be a battle royal between the

Noted BUCKHORSE

and seven or eight more ; after which there will be several by-battles by others.

Gentlemen are therefore desired to come by times. The doors will open at nine ; the champions mount at eleven ; and no person is to pay more than a shilling.

Broughton's Amphitheatre quickly commanded attention. The battles, frequent though they were, were regularly advertised in the "Daily Advertiser," but it was not long before Broughton discovered that if his hall was to retain its popularity, rules and regulations would be needed. It may be remarked in passing that the advent of Broughton as a promoter was a death-blow to his old antagonist, George Taylor. He struggled on with his booth for a few years, and then gave a clear field to his rival. On August 10, 1743, Broughton produced the code of rules on which have been based all those that have followed. This code, with others, will be found at the end of this volume.

Broughton, towards the end of his life, was one of the Yeomen of the Guard. His patron, for something like ten years, was the Duke of Cumberland, who attended all his battles. They were fairly numerous, but only five seem to have been for the championship. He defeated Pipes, Taylor, Stevenson, and James, and was finally dethroned by Slack. In several particulars Broughton was very like Georges Carpentier. He rose to the full height of his glory in the hall which he built, and it was there, too, that he experienced his downfall. When Carpentier fought Siki in Paris in September, 1922, the contest was staged (largely at his request) at the Velodrome Buffalo, where, a few months before, he had dug the first sod. His fall was at least as great as that suffered by Broughton, and it had this curious resemblance—Carpentier had not thought it worth while to go into training for what was the most important bout of his career. In other ways Broughton

may well be compared with Carpentier. He was, for example, continually introducing new methods. It has been written of him that he generally exhibited something new at every performance, and that other pugilists, who had witnessed his contests, and afterwards entered the lists with him expecting to find that he would fight upon the old suit, were most terribly deceived.

Some of his battles were ferocious affairs. He defeated Greeting and Taylor with ease, but George Stevenson, known as The Coachman, stood up to him for forty minutes. It was after this match that Broughton discovered that if he was to remain champion he would have to train for his contests. He fought, as has been said, with fair frequency, and was not beaten until April 10, 1750, when he was overcome by a Bristol butcher named Jack Slack, who, incidentally, was the grandfather of the Belchers.

This fight would probably not have taken place but for the fact that Broughton and Slack had a quarrel at Hounslow Races. Broughton was unquestionably conscious of his own importance, and was sensitive to any hurt, whether fancied or real. Slack, in passing Broughton, said something which grievously offended the champion. He threatened to horse-whip Slack, and the butcher, indignant, immediately and publicly challenged Broughton to fight him in the ring. There is nothing clearer than that Broughton viewed the offer as many another fighter has done. He greeted it with a sniff, which only goes to show that fighting men do not change overmuch with the passing of years. When it became known, however, that there was a possibility that Slack's challenge would be accepted, there was an immediate outcry for the match to be made. It is even suggested that the Duke of Cumberland compelled Broughton to accept. In any case, after much argument, it was finally agreed that Slack should be given an opportunity of fighting for the title.

Broughton must have felt enormously sure of himself. He did not this time go into training, and there is evidence that he could not be made to understand that Slack was in earnest. The night before the day fixed for the contest, apprehensive lest Slack would back out of the fight, Broughton presented him with ten guineas, so as to make it quite certain that he



JOHN BROUGHTON

The Inventor of Boxing Gloves and the originator of the first code
of Rules

would not break his engagement. One writer, speaking of the affair, said :

“ Two stars of our time, Kean and Power, could not have attracted together a greater assemblage of the patrons of true courage ; the Amphitheatre was overflowing with company to excess, and hundreds were refused admission. The Royal Duke appeared in his box, surrounded by several noblemen, and betted, it is said, the odds to a great extent on Broughton. Indeed great odds were on the champion throughout the sporting world.”

Slack was comparatively unknown to Londoners, but in the provinces (and particularly in and around Bristol) he was looked upon as a boxer of some skill. It was not considered, however, that he had the ghost of a chance with Broughton, so that the offers of ten to one in favour of the champion were not excessive. Broughton's fall was tremendous. He fought cleverly and well for two minutes, and Slack was knocked all over the stage. Then, in a most unexpected manner, the butcher suddenly jumped in and dealt Broughton a terrific blow between the eyes. Here is a report of what followed :

“ Broughton appeared like one stupid, and it was two or three minutes before this circumstance was discovered by the spectators, whose attentions were attracted by the strange and unusual manner in which Broughton appeared to feel for, instead of boldly facing and attacking his man. At length, his patron, the Duke of Cumberland, earnestly exclaimed : ‘ What are you about, Broughton ? You can't fight, you're beat ! ’

“ To which Broughton instantly replied : ‘ I can't see my man, your Highness. I am blind, but not beat. Only let me be placed before my antagonist and he shall not gain the day yet.’

“ Broughton's situation was truly distressing—the audience were disgusted—and Slack, following up this singular advantage, obtained a victory in fourteen minutes. The faces in the Amphitheatre, upon this occasion, are better imagined than described, but suffice to say they were all manner of colours and lengths. Ten to one had been laid pretty thick, and the favourite had lost.

“ The above Royal Duke lost several thousands, and the

knowing ones were completely done up. The door money produced nearly one hundred and fifty pounds, besides a great number of tickets at a guinea and a half each. As the conqueror was to have the produce of the house, it is supposed that Slack got near six hundred pounds."

This fight finished Broughton. He never fought again. He was thrown over in the most complete fashion by the Duke of Cumberland (who publicly declared that he had been sold) and a little later Broughton's Amphitheatre was closed by what in effect was an Act of Parliament. Broughton flickered out as many a boxer has done since. He was an idol one moment, and an object of derision the next. He appears, however, to have been very unfairly treated. The best authorities are emphatic in saying that the battle was a fair one, but it is permissible to suppose that the immense sums lost by the Duke and his friends compelled them to vent their spleen on Broughton when it would have been more gracious of them to have accorded him sympathy in his moment of defeat. Nevertheless, it is established beyond question that he set an example which has since been followed by boxers all over the world. He did not take the trouble to train, he was over-confident, and he made the error of posing and play-acting when he should have concentrated the whole of his attention on fighting. He could have won in the first minute ; but he was himself beaten by the first punch that was crashed between his eyes. Even this, however, was a fight between an old style and a new. Broughton had settled into a groove, while Slack had cultivated a system which was novel enough to worry the old champion. The new tactics of his opponent surprised and perplexed him, and, as was so truly said at the time, he was conquered before he had time to rally or recover his strength.

This event did much harm to boxing. Rumours got abroad that the fight was a fake, and, as though by general agreement, the gentry turned their backs on pugilism. Broughton was given plenty of time to regret the mistake he had made, for he lived to a ripe old age. He died in his eighty-fourth year.

Jack Slack remained champion for ten years. He was a man of great strength and undoubted courage, but he was



JOHN SLACK
Conqueror of Broughton, and Champion of England, 1750

very short of stature—he stood five feet eight and a half inches, while his weight was well under fourteen stone. He is fully entitled to be described as a scientific boxer. His stance was upright ; his right arm, crossed over his stomach, protected the mark, whilst his left hand was held on a level with his mouth. His favourite punch was a back-handed blow which usually connected with the face of his opponent. His fights for the championship were few and far between ; according to the records he fought six times. His debut was disastrous, for he was beaten by George Taylor. Then came his fight with Broughton (which gave him his notoriety, and cost the Duke of Cumberland over ten thousand pounds), but he did not again fight for four years, when he met the first Frenchman who ever fought in England—Pettit. This contest was for ten guineas, and it lasted twenty-five minutes, Pettit being very severely whipped. A year later, Slack defeated Cornelius Harris in twenty minutes, and four years after that he conquered Moreton in thirty-five minutes. His career was ended when he was himself vanquished by Bill Stevens, a pugilist of no particular eminence.

The encounter with Pettit was a somewhat extraordinary one, as will be seen from this report :

“ The battle proved as singular a conflict as ever took place in the annals of pugilism. Monsieur, on the first set-to, darted with uncommon fury at Slack, and seized him by the throat, and, for half a minute, held him tight against the rails, till Slack was nearly choked and black in the face ; and it was with some difficulty that Slack released himself from this unpleasant situation.

“ The next ten minutes, the Frenchman appeared like a blacksmith hammering away at Slack and driving him all over the stage with uncommon impetuosity, till at length Slack closed upon Pettit and gave him three desperate falls ; but during which period, he canted Slack twice off the stage.”

The end was ludicrous. Slack got in a heavy blow under the Frenchman’s ribs, and the latter, panic-stricken, immediately bolted out of the ring, “ never stopping to look back after his opponent.”

Soon after Slack’s fight with Harris, the Duke of Cumberland became his patron, and one of the first things he did was to

back him for one hundred pounds against Bill Stevens, a nailer, who was under the patronage of the Duke of York. This was again an unlucky occasion for the Duke. The contest took place on a stage erected on the tennis court at James Street, Haymarket, London, and to the general astonishment Slack was most soundly beaten.

Stevens did not prove a popular champion. His honesty was suspect, and after he had stage-managed an obvious fake at the Haymarket with George Meggs, he was practically driven out of the ring. He allowed Meggs to win, after seventeen minutes. Meggs thereupon called himself the champion, but it is clear that he was of very poor quality. So, for that matter, were Darts, Lyons, and Sellers. The former was a bargeman, Lyons a butcher, whilst the latter was a West Country farm hand. It should be recollected that although there were many pugilists in the country between 1750 and 1780, the ring itself was under a cloud. Meggs, Darts, Lyons, and Sellers were all recognized as champions, but it was not until Mendoza the Jew appeared that prize-fighting again won the support of those in high places.

CHAPTER III

MENDOZA, THE JEW

The first principle in boxing, to be established, is to be perfectly master of the equilibrium of the body, so as to be able to change from a right to a left-handed position, to advance or retreat striking or parrying; and to throw the body either backward or forward without difficulty or embarrassment. The second principle to be established is the position of the body, which should be in an inclining posture or diagonal line, so as to place the pit of your stomach out of your adversary's reach; both knees must be bent, the left leg advanced, and the arms directly before your throat or chin.—Daniel Mendoza, 1816.

FOR more than thirty years, boxing in England was about as brutal a sport as can well be imagined. It would appear that Broughton's rules were only observed in certain parts of London; in the North Country it was the custom to fight under what were known as "up and down" conditions. One writer, in calling upon the authorities to prosecute all those guilty of "sheer barbarity," remarked that every advantage was admissible where brute strength or accidental casualties placed a combatant in the power of his antagonist. The practices employed were those of uncivilized periods—gouging (i.e., forcing out the eyes of an antagonist with a thumb or finger) was resorted to whenever the opportunity occurred. Another method adopted was that known as purring, which meant that it was allowable to kick a man with nailed shoes as he lay on the ground. Blows beneath the waist-band were regarded as perfectly legitimate, and there were many horrible scenes when fighters seized opponents when they were on their knees and punished them until life was extinct. In Lancashire the contests were so bad as to call for the condemnation of even those who patronized them. The "up and down" system was invariably employed, and it meant that when a man was down he was beaten and battered until he was incapable of motion.

Deaths were, of course, very frequent. It has to be said to the credit of Broughton that he used every endeavour to regulate the many fights that were staged in all parts of the country. He was ever ready to demonstrate that science was not foreign to boxing. He also introduced gloves, or muffers, as they were then called. These, however, were only supposed to be used in sparring matches or mock contests. In introducing his new invention, Broughton thus advertised it in an issue of the "Daily Advertiser" in 1747.

"Mr. Broughton proposes, with proper assistance, to open an Academy in the Haymarket for the instruction of those who are willing to be initiated in the mystery of boxing, where the whole theory and practice of that truly British art, with all the various stops, blows, cross-buttocks, etc., incident to combatants, will be fully taught and explained; and that persons of quality and distinction may not be debarred from entering into a Course of these Lectures, they will be given with the utmost tenderness and regard to the delicacy of the frame and constitution of the pupil; for which reason, muffers are provided, that will effectually secure them from the inconvenience of black eyes, broken jaws, and bloody noses."

That Broughton's rules were not over-popular with prize-fighters and many of their supporters is evidenced when it is related that fatalities after a while failed to cause surprise. The law, however, was severely down on all who concerned themselves with these affairs. On July 28, 1829, a man named Davies fought another named Winkworth at Hampstead. The stakes were five pounds a side, and the battle lasted fifty-eight rounds. There were no restricted rounds in those days; the round ended when one of the contestants fell or was knocked down. This bout occupied one hour and five minutes, and it was fatal to Winkworth. Davies was arrested, tried, and sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment. His seconds, Flinn and Driscoll, were transported for life.

Another man, named Simon Byrne, was continually in trouble. On June 2, 1830, at Selcey Forest, Northamptonshire, he fought M'Kay for two hundred pounds a side. The fight lasted fifty-three minutes, and at its conclusion, M'Kay collapsed and died. Byrne was tried for manslaughter at the subsequent Buckinghamshire Assizes, and was acquitted.

Three years later he was matched with Deaf Burke, and was himself killed. At the inquest held the following day, a verdict of "Manslaughter against Deaf Burke, principal in the first degree, and against Thomas Spring, James Ward, Richard Curtis, and Thomas Gaynor, as seconds; and also against the Umpire or Umpires, Referee or Referees, and the Timekeeper, all then and there aiding and abetting, whose names are unknown to us, as principals in the second degree," was returned. All these men surrendered, but when tried at the Assizes at Hereford were acquitted.

Only one other instance need be given. A prominent boxer, named Owen Swift, was on July 10, 1834, sentenced to six months' imprisonment in Winchester Castle for taking part in a fight which was fatal to his opponent, A. Noon. In 1838 he again had the misfortune to kill a man named Phelps, otherwise known as Brighton Bill. To escape consequences, Swift fled to France, where he had two fights. The first was against another Englishman named Jack Adams, and was decided on the Bois de Boulogne. The second took place at Villiers, but it resulted in the arrest of Swift, who, on the 5th of June, 1839, was sentenced by the Paris Tribunal of Correction to thirteen months' imprisonment. Swift, however, returned to England before the decision was made known. He was tried at the Hertford Assizes for the manslaughter of Brighton Bill, and was this time acquitted.

Disputes and riots were of frequent occurrence, and it was no uncommon thing for the police or magistrates to interfere. In the main, the verdicts given against fighters who had been found guilty of killing an opponent were manslaughter, but on more than one occasion they were found guilty of murder. Those who did not flee the country—and this, it would seem, was their first thought—were either sentenced to short terms of imprisonment, bound over to keep the peace, or discharged. The fighters themselves were fairly leniently treated, but their seconds were always given extremely hard punishment. There was, indeed, one period when it was taken for granted that any arrested second was in imminent danger of being transported for the rest of his life.

One of the first indictments for riot and assault was that at Bedford Assizes in 1841. The two pugilists concerned were

Dick Cain, of Leicester, and E. Adams, of Nottingham, but indicted with them were Lord Chetwynd, R. Maley, Deaf Burke, Owen Swift, Mark Cross, Joseph Goodwyn, Thomas Brown, George Durham, Edward Dawkes, and James Walters. The indictment was removed at the instance of Lord Chetwynd by certiorari to the Court of Queen's Bench, but although Cain and Adams and the others pleaded guilty no sentence was passed. Fighting had become such a hole-and-corner affair that it had of necessity to be conducted with the utmost secrecy. This cannot be regarded as remarkable, for it was unquestionably a very unsavoury business.

Daniel Mendoza was the first Jewish boxer to win a championship. He seems to have been a very remarkable character, for he spent one-third of his life fighting, one-third of it writing letters to his chief rival, Humphreys, or to the Press, and the remaining third of it in prison. With his advent, however, came what is best described as the second era.

Mendoza was born at Aldgate, London, on the 5th July, 1764. His parents were poor Jews. In turn, he became a glass cutter, a labourer in a tea warehouse, an assistant to a greengrocer, and an actor. He was sixteen when he had his first fight, and it is curious to find that in this contest—which was little more than a street brawl—his second was Richard Humphreys, who, in the days that followed, was his principal rival.

Mendoza was a direct descendant of Broughton in that he blended science with strength. It was the fashion in his day to describe him as a genius, but if that is exaggeration it is still perfectly clear that Mendoza entered the profession of pugilism in a way that no other man had done. As one writer says, "He studied the art of self-defence with the perseverance of an enthusiast, and at length reached a degree of perfection which placed him above all his rivals. As a professor he was known in almost every town in the kingdom."

His record is a very long one; his first recorded battle was against a man named Harry the Coalheaver, whom he defeated after one hundred and eighteen rounds, but it is moderately certain that prior to this contest Mendoza fought on at least thirty or forty occasions. Among his opponents were Martin

(the Bath butcher), Dennis (the groom), Bryan (the watch-spring maker), Nelson, Matthews, and Tyne.

It was after he had fought Nelson that he commenced his long altercation with Humphreys. He has himself recorded the incident in these words :

“ I felt so little injury from these conflicts as to be enabled to shew my activity in some other way to my friends, and actually ran races against several horses to Croydon, in many of which I was the victor, notwithstanding that it rained fast at the time, and the ground was consequently very slippery.

“ Some time after this I happened to meet Mr. Humphreys at the Roe Buck, in Duke Street, Aldgate ; when his behaviour to me was rude and contemptuous and he seemed very desirous of provoking me to strike him ; for after using very scurrilous and abusive language, he seized me furiously by the collar, and tore my shirt with great violence. I, of course, felt much surprised and irritated at his behaviour, but knowing him to be a great favourite of this house, was unwilling to resent the affront at this time, and therefore, suppressing my indignation as much as possible, contented myself with telling him that though I did not choose to resent the insult just then, he might be assured I should not readily forget it, and that I doubted not, the time would come, when it would be in my power to requite him.

“ It seems natural to expect that the success which I had already met with, and the patronage and support which were now most liberally offered me, would have induced me to relinquish all intention of pursuing any trade or business and would have caused me to cultivate more eagerly than ever the art of pugilism, and follow the same as a profession. Such, however, was not the case ; true it is, I felt ardently attached to the practice of this manly art, and was always ready and willing to indulge anyone with a trial of skill, who fancied himself my superior in that way, but still I felt repugnance at making this my profession, and therefore now determined, not to seek for fresh contests, but apply myself to some business, whence I might derive a regular and creditable subsistence.

“ After considering, therefore, fully on the subject, it occurred to me, that, having gained some slight knowledge of

the business of a biscuit maker, a little time would suffice to perfect me in this trade, or at least to gain such a knowledge of it as would enable me to follow it as an employment."

This excellent determination was broken after a few weeks, Mendoza again agreeing to fight Martin, the Bath butcher. The contest was originally arranged to take place at Shepherd's Bush, but it was attended by such a vast concourse of people that the Tenth Regiment of Dragoons was sent for, and they, by order of the magistrates, destroyed the stage and dispersed the gathering. Mendoza was obliged to make his escape on horseback. He fought Martin, however, at Barnet, two weeks later, and defeated him in twenty-six minutes. The aftermath of this battle was quaint in the extreme. Mendoza was conducted back to London in triumph. The first part of the procession was formed by a number of gentlemen on horseback, next came carriages of various descriptions, while behind followed an enormous crowd of cheering people.

This was Mendoza's first stage battle. He himself said that "the great personage who patronized me on this occasion, and who had generously given me fifty pounds before the battle, made me several presents afterwards, amounting together to near five hundred pounds, and several gentlemen who had won money on the contest, were also pleased to reward my exertions in a very liberal manner, by which means, I suddenly came into the possession of wealth far beyond what I expected to be master of, having received altogether considerably more than one thousand pounds."

The ring, thanks in the main to Mendoza, was again coming into its own. He had so completely established his reputation that following the example set by others he opened a School of Boxing in Capel Court, behind the Royal Exchange, London. The breach with Humphreys, who had once been his intimate friend, was gradually widening, and it was not lessened to any extent by a series of happenings that occurred at Capel Court. Humphreys went so far as to get Mendoza arrested for a debt of twenty guineas, but this sum was quickly made up for him by the members of Lloyds, who collected in the course of two hours a sum of one hundred and forty-five guineas.

On his marriage, Mendoza promised his wife to retire from the ring, but he had reckoned without Humphreys. They

met one day at Epping ; there was a heated quarrel, which resulted in both adjourning to the yard of a public-house. A ring was formed by the bystanders, but the fight had not proceeded many minutes when " peace officers " interposed and stopped it.

There was now only one thing for it—a real fight. This was accordingly arranged to take place at Odiham, in Hampshire, on the 9th January, 1788. A year before this, it may be said, the ring had really returned to its old position ; Royalty had again accorded it its patronage, and men of the highest rank in the kingdom not only frequented the schools of the teachers, but encouraged and were present at those fights which became the rage, and which, on occasion, were attended by thousands and tens of thousands. The bout between Humphreys and Martin at Newmarket created phenomenal interest, and among those present were the Prince of Wales, the Duke of York, the Duke of Orleans, and the majority of the nobility. The price of admission was one guinea, and it was calculated that something like forty thousand pounds was wagered on the event. The match between Mendoza and Humphreys was for four hundred guineas, and according to the articles it was to be decided on a twenty-four feet stage in a paddock at Odiham. Here is a summary of what happened :

" The interest excited was beyond all precedent, and the assemblage in point of rank and influence, was little short (barring the ladies) of the splendid display at the late tournament at Eglinton Castle. The fight lasted twenty-eight minutes and fifty-four seconds, and was characterized by a degree of skill and dexterity, accompanied by a severity of punishment, which was never before witnessed. The fluctuations were numerous, each in turn becoming the favourite, till at last Mendoza received a kidney hit on the loins, followed up by a forcible delivery on the neck ; he fell with his leg under him, which was sprained, and was unable to come again, thus giving the victory to Humphreys. It was extremely difficult to determine which was the neatest pugilist of the fight, so much of science, elegance, activity, and bottom were displayed on both sides."

The result went very much against the grain of Mendoza,

and accusations that he had "crossed his supporters" worried him to such an extent that he sent a letter to the Press giving his own views. This note, showing as it does the kind of correspondence that was favoured in 1788, is well worth giving. Said Mendoza to the printer of "The World":

"Sir:—Understanding, with no little degree of anxiety, that some gentlemen have disputed the propriety of my conduct on Wednesday last in the battle between Mr. Humphreys and myself, I am induced to exhibit the following facts, on the proof of which I will hazard every credit due from a generous public whom I never have, nor ever will deceive. At ten minutes after one o'clock, I set-to with Mr. Humphreys, and for twenty minutes I had most evidently the superiority, finding I could stop most of his blows with ease, and though frequently closed by Mr. Humphreys (a mode of fighting I could wish to avoid) I found an ability to throw him. My strength and spirits were superior to my adversary's, till the last fall but two, when I fell directly on my head, and by the force pitched quite over. I then found myself hurt in the loins, indeed so much that it was with extreme difficulty I could stand upright, and by the last fall I received, was rendered wholly incapable of standing; indeed, I was scarcely able to breathe, and it was with great difficulty that I could sit on the knee of my second. When Johnson asked me if I had done I could only answer him by a sign. By this untoward accident alone, I lost the battle on which my warmest hopes were fixed. To my friends and patrons on that occasion, I owe much; to the liberal opinion of the public I owe still more, the confidence of which I have never betrayed. With this assurance, I shall only add that if the world is desirous of renewing the conflict, and should Mr. Humphreys be willing, I shall be more than happy to engage him."

The controversy raged for several months, but it did not differ in essentials from the kind of wordy newspaper argument which is indulged in by boxers to-day. Towards the end of the year, Mendoza's school at Capel Court was seized by two City Marshals. "This circumstance," wrote Mendoza, "destroyed one great source of my subsistence and rendered me the more uneasy, as there appeared no just reason for such an act of severity. The exhibition of sparring could not be



DANIEL MENDOZA

The First Jewish Boxer of note, and Champion of England, 1792

proved to be productive of personal injury to any man, for it displayed all the art of boxing without any of its danger. It could not be objected to as encouraging idleness, without subjecting plays, concerts, and all other public amusements to a similar charge. The fault with which I was chiefly taxed was that of sparring, and suffering others to spar on a public stage ; but as both Mr. Humphreys and myself had, previous to this, exhibited at Covent Garden Theatre, if this was an illegal act, why was neither of us taken into custody when we entered the theatre for such a purpose ? ”

It seems that the Lord Mayor (Mr. John Boydell) had refused Mendoza permission to receive money for publicly exhibiting the art of self-defence. The Jew therefore fell back on strategy. He again opened his rooms, employed a man who was a Freeman of the City and instructed him to sell portraits of himself (Mendoza) at half a crown each. The assistant was also directed to invite the purchasers into the exhibition room, and to mention at the same time that no money was demanded for seeing the performance.

Mendoza's second battle with Humphreys was decided at Stilton, in Huntingdonshire, on the 6th May, 1789. Six months earlier, however, the articles had been drawn up at the White Hart Tavern, Abchurch Lane, London. It was a curious document. The men agreed to fight upon the turf in a space of forty-eight feet square. The second clause was that if either man fell without receiving a blow he was to lose the battle, unless such a fall was deemed, by the Umpires, accidental. Each party was called upon to deposit in the hands of a stake-holder the sum of twenty pounds, the whole of which was to be given to the winner. One extraordinary clause was that if the ring was broken in upon, the man who left the field before the battle was decided by the Umpires was to be adjudged the loser.

Whilst he was training for this bout, Mendoza opened a new Academy at the Lyceum, in the Strand. He had a most successful time, for his subscribers were very numerous. His chief patron was Sir Thomas A. Price, who is sometimes described as Sir Thomas Apreece, and sometimes as Sir Thomas

Ap Rhys. It was at this gentleman's house at Upminster, in Essex, that Mendoza concluded his preparations for his second contest with Humphreys. No better account of the battle has been given than that which was dictated by Mendoza himself. It read :

"The public curiosity was excited in the highest degree. Sporting men and amateurs repaired from all parts of the country, and our Amphitheatre was, in a short space of time, completely filled with spectators, ardently waiting to see the result of this contest ; and notwithstanding the immense number present, the most perfect order and regularity prevailed, with the exception of one instance—a Mr. Fewterell who had endeavoured to gain a sight of the exhibition free of expense, actually climbed over the enclosure, though it was furnished with iron spikes to prevent such attempts. Upon this occasion, Johnson and Ford were Mr. Humphreys' seconds, and Brown and Ryan were mine. Mr. Coombes and Sir Thomas A. Price were Umpires ; the former being nominated on the part of my antagonist, and the latter chosen by me.

"Soon after one o'clock, Mr. Humphreys and myself entered the enclosure, accompanied by our respective seconds and Umpires, and in a few minutes set-to ; when both the seconds immediately retired to the boxes, assigned for that purpose, on each side of the ring, conformable to the agreement between us. Having fought for the space of forty minutes, my antagonist seemed quite exhausted, and I was evidently gaining considerable advantage over him ; when, either from weakness or otherwise, he fell without a blow. This circumstance excited considerable tumult. The spectators very loudly expressed their indignation and required that the contest should be decided in my favour. My opponent's friends, however, would not so easily yield the matter, and on the Umpires being called on for their decision, they were compelled to solicit the aid of a third person, Mr. Harvey Aston, who, after the subject had been discussed a considerable time, gave it as his opinion that as the fall appeared unavoidable, no advantage ought to be taken of the circumstance, but that we should set-to again and decide the contest.

"Though an interval of twenty minutes had elapsed, during this dispute, to the benefit of my antagonist more than myself

(for he was so completely overpowered when he fell, that he would not have been able to continue the contest many minutes longer, had we not been interrupted), I felt in high spirits, and was gratified with the idea of gaining a victory, which I considered would reflect the higher honour on me, on account of my not taking the advantage over him, which it was generally considered I was entitled to. We accordingly set-to again, and having fought for ten minutes more my opponent fell again without a blow; but now his friends offered no further observation in his defence, and the battle was unanimously given in my favour.

"The conduct of my opponent in falling twice without a blow excited general surprise and dissatisfaction. On referring to the correspondence that took place between us after our first contest, it will be seen that it was his proposal that I should be bound to stand up like a man; and he even professed to impute my motive for objecting at first to be bound to this condition, to cowardice, and a disposition to shift from and evade his blows: what then must have been the feelings of the public, when they beheld him adopt the very conduct himself, he pretended to apprehend his antagonist would be guilty of?"

This second battle was attended by three thousand spectators, and as the price of admission was fixed at half a guinea, Mendoza reaped what he must have regarded as a rich reward. It is difficult to understand why Humphreys was denominated the "Gentleman Boxer." He was probably graceful enough in action, but his conduct outside the ring was not such as entitled him to the name he gained. Mendoza was his pupil, and it was perhaps this circumstance which led him to believe that he was the Jew's superior. Humphreys, naturally, was considerably upset by his defeat, but what bothered him most of all was the certainty that he had assisted Mendoza to become a popular hero. On leaving the ringside Mendoza was greeted with the loudest applause, and shouts of "Mendoza for ever" echoed in his ears until he reached the tavern where he and his party dined.

Within a few days Humphreys commenced to pester Mendoza for another contest. In one of his letters he attributed his defeat to an attack of rheumatism. It was quickly settled

that the third meeting should take place in September, 1790. Immediately afterwards, Mendoza was engaged by the proprietors of a Manchester theatre—Messrs. Banks & Connor—to give exhibitions for three nights at twenty-five guineas per night. It is a point worthy of mention that the receipts for these nights established a record.

The third fight took place at Doncaster. The public curiosity was as great as on the two former occasions, and more than five hundred spectators travelled from London to witness the affair. The ring, pitched in the yard of an inn, was bounded on one side by the backs of houses, and on the other by a strong paling, behind which ran a river. Many attempts were made by the rougher element to gain admission, and two vessels dropped anchor in the river directly opposite the scene of action. The sails of the vessels were at once furled and slung at different distances across the mainmast, so that they served as seats for those who had the courage to use them for that purpose. On this occasion Ward and Jackson seconded Humphreys, and Johnson and Butcher were in Mendoza's corner. There were two umpires and a referee—strange, this, for at the National Sporting Club now it is also the custom to have judges and a referee. Colonel Hamilton and Sir Thomas A. Price were the umpires, while Mr. Harvey Aston acted as third man.

Mendoza was much the heavier ; Humphreys had gone in for a new system of training which had reduced him very considerably. The odds in favour of Mendoza were five to one, but Humphreys seems to have commenced the battle as Carpentier did when he met Beckett and Bombardier Wells ; that is to say, he charged out of his corner and threw in punches before his opponent was properly upright. "The onset of my opponent," remarked Mendoza, "was bold, rapid, and vigorous, but in the course of twenty minutes he became very much fatigued and the odds were greatly against him ; at length, after maintaining the contest for an hour and thirty minutes, during which time we fought seventy-two rounds, he was completely exhausted, and giving in, the victory was declared in my favour."

That was the end of Humphreys. A few weeks later he retired from the ring and became a coal merchant. Mendoza wrote to the newspapers and declared that he would never again fight a pitched battle. This, of course, started yet another controversy, for the newspapers of the period which devoted space to sport contained little else but the challenges of boxers and the accounts of their contests. Mendoza became the leading tutor, but the popularity of prize-fighting was so great that exhibitions were also constantly given in the theatres.

At the end of 1790, Mendoza made his first tour of Great Britain. Presents of all kinds were showered on him, and he was particularly proud of a gold medal that was awarded him by the Gymnastic Society of Edinburgh. On his return to London, he again opened his school at the Lyceum, and it was there that he encountered Hooper the Tinman. Hooper appears to have been somewhat of a braggart; his challenge to Mendoza was issued when the latter was lunching with some of his subscribers. There was no preliminary to this fight, for Mendoza immediately set about the intruder and levelled him with a succession of powerful punches. Mendoza soon forgot his promise to relinquish what he called pitched battles, and when he was challenged by Ward he agreed to meet him for the best purse that was put up. Ward was a pugilist of some note, but Mendoza was so sure of himself that he declared himself ready to fight Ward at any time and at any place. The contest was, however, prevented from being decided at the time and place first intended in consequence of the following notice being published in the newspapers :

Margate, *June 11, 1791.*

Whereas a boxing match between Mendoza and Ward has been announced in several public papers for next Wednesday, the 15th instant, I am directed by the Mayor of Dover (under whose jurisdiction this place is) to take the necessary steps to prevent the same; this is therefore to give notice, that the said meetings, or any other of the kind, will not be suffered to take place within this parish.

FRANCIS COBB,
Deputy.

The contest was next fixed for Hounslow, but was again stopped by a magistrate, who attended with a company of soldiers and read the Riot Act. It is stated that the magistrate declared his intention of waiting no longer than one hour before employing the assistance of the military. He accordingly took out his watch and observed the time very minutely, but when next he searched for it he found that it had been stolen. Failing to borrow a watch and failing also to ascertain the time from the onlookers, he at length retired from the scene in disgust. In the end, after more disappointments, the bout was decided at Swithin Bottom, near Croydon. Mendoza was the conqueror after twenty-six minutes. He only received one blow, which, however, was sufficiently hard to put him down for several seconds.

About now Mendoza's health began to fail. He was sent to Windsor, and there met the King. Mendoza describes the incident in these words :

" This happened one evening on the Terrace, where I was walking. I was suddenly surprised at being accosted by a nobleman, who, in a very abrupt manner, mentioned his intention of introducing me to His Majesty. He had scarcely spoken when the King, attended by some lords in waiting, approached the spot, upon which I was introduced, and had the honour of a long conversation with His Majesty, who made many ingenious remarks on the pugilistic art, such as might naturally be expected to be made by a person of so comprehensive a mind, and such transcendent ability as that illustrious personage is generally believed to possess. Before I quitted the Terrace, the Princess Royal (now Queen of Wirtemberg) brought one of the younger branches of the Royal Family to me, and asked my permission (which I, of course, readily granted) for this young gentleman to strike me a blow, in order that he might have to boast at a subsequent opportunity of having, at an early period of his life, struck a professed pugilist on Windsor Terrace."

By this time Mendoza had cultivated expensive tastes. He fought Ward for the second time so as to provide money for his family, but although he won in seventeen minutes, the purse which he gained was so small as to be of little value to him. After this battle he compounded with his creditors and

again decided to retire from pugilism. His progress down the hill, after that, became a speedy one. In 1793 he was a prisoner within the rules of the King's Bench. This, it appears, was a device to escape his many creditors; when he was set free he commenced business in the oil trade. Within a few months he was on his beam-ends and returned to fighting. Then he became a recruiting sergeant in the service of the Fifeshire Regiment of Fencibles. He left them to join the Aberdeenshire Fencibles, of which he was the sergeant-major. This was in 1795, and it was because of his straitened circumstances that he was induced to match himself with Jackson, who defeated him with considerable ease.

"This," said Mendoza, "is the only instance of my losing a battle where I did not afterwards defeat my antagonist; and my being vanquished on this occasion cannot, surely, be regarded as a circumstance reflecting disgrace on me, when it is considered that I had to contend with an antagonist who was not only my superior in strength and size, but who was likewise always ranked as a first-rate pugilist, and is at this time looked upon by many as superior to any man of the present day."

Mendoza's next post was that of a sheriff's officer. He did not hold this long, for he objected to arresting his friends. In company with a Mr. Barrett, a comedian, he conceived the idea of touring the West Country of England. He was, however, still spending very much more than he earned, but it is interesting to find that his exhibition consisted of impersonations of such well-known boxers as Broughton, Johnson, Perrins, Humphreys, and Ward. The tour lasted nearly eight months, but when Mendoza returned to London he was about as impecunious as ever. A poster, which was exhibited at Stafford, gives a fair indication of his performance. It read as follows:

THEATRE, STAFFORD. FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY.

Messrs. Stretton and Mendoza, who have had the honour of performing before Their Majesties, under the sanction of the Reverend the Vice-Chancellors of Oxford and Cambridge, and most of the nobility in this Kingdom, present most dutiful respects to the Ladies and Gentlemen of Stafford, its Vicinity, and Publick in general, and having

procured copies from the original manuscript of Mr. Dibdin's celebrated Entertainments, thus humbly invite them to a Performance entirely *nouvelle*, which they offer for their amusement, and which they hope will prove a source of entertainment to that publick, whose patronage and support it will be ever their highest ambition to merit.

On Monday evening, January 28th, 1799, will be presented a Selection of the most admired Songs and Recitations written, composed, and performed by Mr. Dibdin at Sans Souci, Leicester Place, London ; taken from Christmas Gambols, Castles in the Air, and the General Election.

Between the parts,

Mr. Mendoza, the celebrated pugilist, will display his scientific knowledge of Self-defence against a practised pupil, by which he has foiled many an opponent.

End of part 1st,

Mr. Mendoza will exhibit and lecture upon the scientific skill and method of fighting of those pugilists, Big Ben, Johnson, Broughton and Perrins.

End of part 2nd,

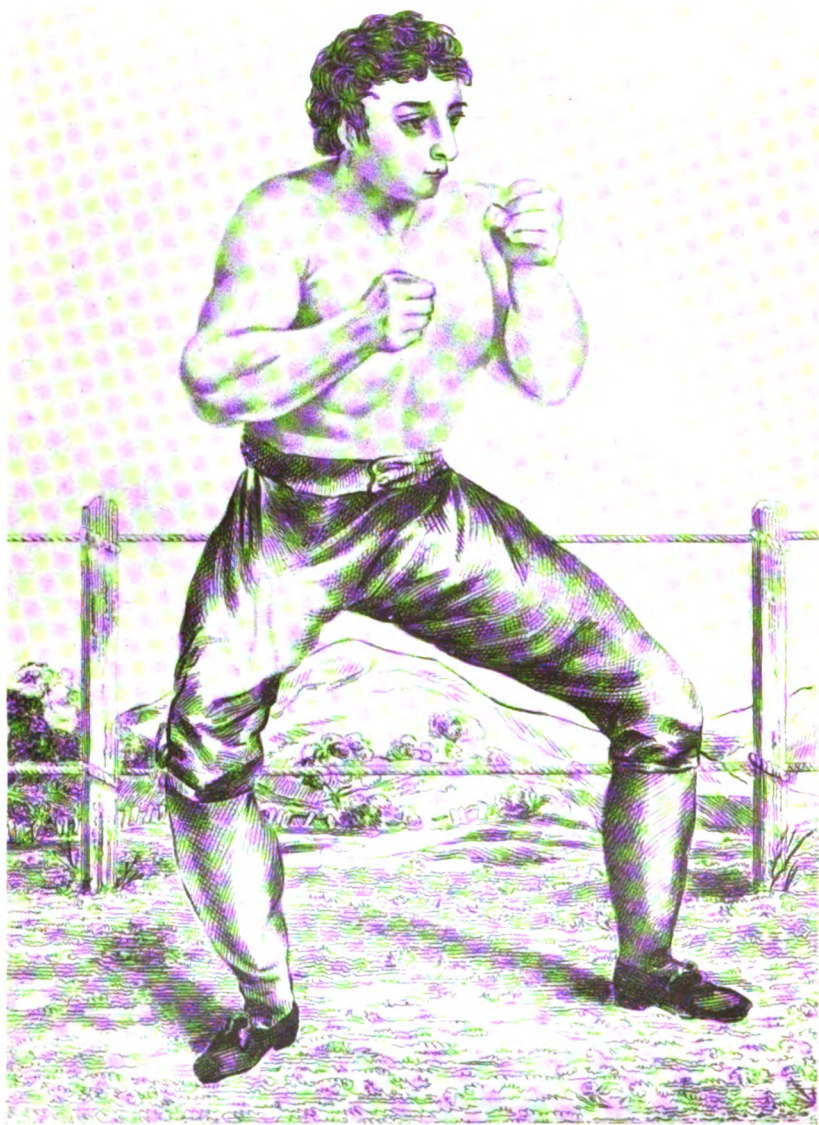
will be displayed others equally skilful in the science, etc., Humphreys, Ward, Wood, and George the Brewer.

The ladies are respectfully informed, there is neither violence or indecency in this spectacle, that can offend the most delicate of their sex ; as an affirmation of which Mr. Mendoza has, by repeated desire, performed before Their Majesties and the Royal Family.

The whole to conclude with Mr. Mendoza's own original attitude.

Admittance : Boxes and pit, 2s. ; Gallery, 1s. To begin precisely at 7 o'clock.

In September, 1799, Mendoza contracted a debt with a wine merchant at Hull, which landed him in Carlisle Prison. He seems to have been the first boxer to become a freemason, for he states that had it not been for the seasonable relief afforded him by the Union and Harmony Lodges, of which he had been for many years a member, he would have found himself in a very distressed situation indeed. The relief was only of a temporary nature, and he was soon back in Carlisle Prison, where he remained for six months. Again in London, he



RICHARD HUMPHREYS
The First Fighter to be called " Gentleman "

agreed to fight the elder Belcher, but the moment this became known he was arrested and taken from Bethnal Green to Bow Street, where he was informed by the presiding magistrate, Sir Richard Ford, that he would be required to give security to keep the peace. This Mendoza did, which terminated all prospect of a contest between Belcher and himself.

He was still very desirous of becoming a business man, but failing to secure an oil concern which he coveted, he took a public house in the Whitechapel Road, but he had hardly settled down when his creditors again appeared and clapped him into prison. "Finding it in vain," wrote Mendoza, "to attempt continuing business, I surrendered upon one of the actions brought against me, and once more became an inmate of the King's Bench Prison, where I remained till October, 1805, when I was discharged by means of the Act of Parliament then passed for the relief of insolvent debtors."

But his fighting days were not over. On the 21st March, 1806, at Grinstead Green, he fought a man called Lee for one hour and forty-seven minutes. There were in all fifty-two rounds, and the bout ended in Mendoza's favour. He had, at this time, fought thirty-three pitched battles, and was, of course, getting on in years. When Lee asked for a second meeting, Mendoza had the good sense to refuse. But it was not long before he was prevailed upon to oppose men who were considerably his superior in strength, skill, and size. Always in a state of chronic hard-upness, he was a fighter to the end of his days. He died on September 3, 1836, in a small house at Horseshoe Alley, Petticoat Lane, London, at the age of 73.

CHAPTER IV

JACKSON, THE FIRST OF THE "GENTLEMEN";
THE BELCHERS; AND PEARCE, THE "GAME CHICKEN."

*"Stay, traveller," the Roman records said,
To mark the classic dust beneath it laid:
"Stay, traveller," this brief memorial cries,
And read the record with attentive eyes.
Hast thou a lion's heart, a giant's strength?
Exult not, for these gifts must yield at length.
Do health and symmetry adorn thy frame?
The mouldering bones below possessed the same.
Does love, does friendship, every step attend?
This man ne'er made a foe, ne'er lost a friend.*

Inscription on the tomb of John Jackson
at Brompton Cemetery.

KING GEORGE IV was very partial to boxing. When Prince of Wales he was the spectator of a fight on a stage on Brighton Downs between Tom Tyne, a quite noteworthy boxer, and a publican whose name is not recorded. The latter was killed by a blow on the temple, dying almost immediately. At the subsequent inquest it was proved that he had been drinking to excess, a few days previous to the battle, at the election at Covent Garden, and that too much blood had settled in his head. The Prince was so much affected by the sight that he declared that he would never witness another fight. Nevertheless, it is apparent that he considered boxing to be a manly sport, which did not deserve to be destroyed. He settled a small pension on the wife of the man who was killed, and although he did not visit any other contests, he made it a rule to have the accounts of them read to him by one of his attendants. The Duke of Wellington was another whose favour was given to fighting. On one occasion, at Ascot Races, he subscribed a twenty-pound note towards a battle between Young Dutch Sam and Carroll. Lord Byron's

interest is even better known. As someone once said of him, he viewed boxing as a national propensity and a stimulus to true courage. King William IV was a particularly strong supporter of the prize-ring. He was often in attendance at Moulsey Hurst, where many big battles were staged. His constant companion was Lord Adolphus FitzClarence.

After Mendoza, the next star to shine was John Jackson—always described by the old writers as *Mr.* Jackson. His greatest contest was with the Jew, from whom he wrested the championship, but extended reference to it was omitted in the last chapter so that it could be given prominence here. It is a somewhat singular fact that in the "*Memoirs of Daniel Mendoza*," published in 1816, little mention is made of the fight. It would, therefore, seem that Mendoza was much more concerned with his triumphs than he was with his defeats.

Jackson was born in London, in 1768, and was the son of a builder, whose chief claim to fame was that he constructed the arch which was thrown over the old Fleet Ditch. Jackson's uncles were farmers and tenants of the Duke of Bedford and the Marquis of Hertford.

"Nature," said one writer, "had bestowed upon him all those athletic requisites which constitute the beau ideal of perfect manhood. There was a happy combination of muscular development, with proportionate symmetry in his frame (his height was five feet eleven inches, and his weight fourteen stone), which rendered him a fitting model for the sculptor, and excited the admiration of all those by whom these qualities were appreciated. At the age of nineteen he became a frequenter of the sparring schools, and displayed such talents as proved that he was destined to eclipse the more favoured of his contemporaries; added to which, possessing as he did the *suaviter in modo* as well as the *fortiter in re*, he soon found patrons of the highest grade."

Jackson was better entitled to be called "gentleman" than any boxer who preceded him. There came a time when he occupied a high position in society, and even when one discounts the exaggeration of those who wrote about him when he was in his prime, it yet seems clear that he was a favourite, both

with the aristocrats and with the more humble. His influence was enormous, and it is doubtful whether any other boxer, either before his time or since, had more friends.

Jackson brought in the third era of boxing. His first public contest was at Swithin Bottom, Surrey, on the 9th June, 1788. He was then under the patronage of Mr. Harvey Aston. His opponent was Fewterell, of Birmingham, whom he defeated after sixty-seven minutes of very hard fighting. Nearly a year elapsed, and then he again appeared in a contest with George Inglestone, who was everywhere known as "George the Brewer." This was a battle for fifty guineas, and it was decided at Ingatestone, Essex. It was an unfortunate occasion for Jackson, for in the fifth round, when victory was within his grasp, he slipped down on the stage, dislocated his ankle, and broke a small bone in his leg. It was raining hard at the time, but Jackson made an offer to finish the fight if he were permitted to remain seated in his chair. This, of course, was not allowed. His third and last fight was against Mendoza, which took place at Hornchurch, in Essex, on April 15, 1795. It was for two hundred guineas a side, and was not of long duration. It lasted exactly ten minutes and a half, left Jackson an easy winner, and Mendoza in a state of dreadful exhaustion. This gave Jackson the limelight he had for some time been seeking, but it is peculiar to observe that although he enjoyed a prominence which was denied other men who were quite his equal, he retired from the ring almost as soon as he took to it. He was a man of extraordinary strength, and was probably one of the swiftest short-distance runners of his time. He was also an extremely skilful exponent of the standing jump. His muscular strength was such that he was able to lift ten hundredweight and a quarter, while he found it possible to write his name on a sheet of paper with an eighty-four pound weight attached to his little finger.

He retired from the ring so as to become a teacher, and his rooms in Bond Street were for years the resort of the élite of the fashionable world. It was no uncommon thing to see gathered there men who had distinguished themselves in Parliament, at the Bar, and in the Field, while it is recorded

that noblemen and gentlemen of the highest rank looked upon it as an honour to don the gloves with Jackson.

Pierce Egan, as might be expected, went into ecstasies over him. In his little-known "Every Gentleman's Manual," he thus speaks of him: "The Jackson! the idol of the P.R. from the very highest to the lowest supporters and admirers of the art of Self-Defence. Viewed as a teacher of the above art, his qualifications are so rare as to be pronounced above all praise. His gentlemanly but firm conduct, the urbanity of his manners, his great knowledge of society, and always acting upon that superior acquirement in the most impartial manner, has placed him in that peculiar position which no other man can, or will ever arrive at, in the pugilistic sporting world. The man who can please the most aristocratic and fastidious class of society by his intellectual qualities, and observation and experience with human nature, and at the same time and in the same breath, could awe and subdue the most determined and violent fellows, which were to be met with on many public occasions in sporting affairs, must be a man to be picked out of ten thousand. . . .

"I never saw any teacher of the art of self-defence appear so well fortified against any attack as Mr. Jackson; his front appeared like a castle with a cannon at every point of it, ready to assail an enemy. He always stood on the defensive before his pupils, and he told them to hit at him on any part of his face, body, or where their eyes suggested and not to care about his person. He then gently stopped their efforts and pointed out their mistakes. He managed his instructions with so much address that his pupils listened to him with rapture and attention. He was an immense hard-hitter.

"It is rather singular to state, but true, and to prove the advantages of temperance, he has not varied in his weight, for the last fifteen or twenty years of his life, two ounces. No person is more attentive to religious duties than Mr. Jackson, and for the last fifty years of his life he has not neglected to attend Divine Worship every Sunday."

It is not easy to understand how Jackson came to be regarded with such reverence. He may have been all that his worshippers claimed for him, but how he can be estimated on three fights passes comprehension. He certainly defeated Mendoza

with ease, but he never met anyone else who was of particular reputation. He appears to have gained most of his notoriety from the fact that he was a clever tutor. Perhaps, too, he was a cut above the other pugilists of his day. That he was able to converse with the rich and the poor is demonstrated by everything that has been written about him; but it is nonsense to suggest—as has been done on more than one occasion—that he was the greatest pugilist who ever lived. It would be equally absurd to attempt to compare him with fighters who followed; but one doubts very much whether he would have stood up for many minutes against such men as Fitzsimmons, Corbett, or Dempsey.

But he was clearly a very able teacher. Himself an intelligent man, he had worked out the groundwork of attack and defence, and it was his habit to explain these not by showing results, but by taking a pupil personally in hand and guiding him through the many stages until he began to show proficiency. His main argument was that personal confidence and contempt of danger were the first and best qualities of the fighting man. He was the first to show that a hit was never effective unless distance had been properly judged. He was also the first to give attention to foot-work, which was a branch of the science which had been sadly neglected prior to his arrival. His own pose was somewhat similar to that adopted by the boxers of the present day. He stood with his body a little bent, his head and shoulders forward, his legs straight and his hands well up. His chief precept was this: "The head is the fulcrum from which all men ought to act. Here the general issues his orders; here the pros and the cons are scanned, and the order to hit or to stop, to step forward or step back, is issued with firmness, and must be obeyed with precision. The limbs must all be ready for the call, and he who takes advantage at the right time is sure to bear off the prize."

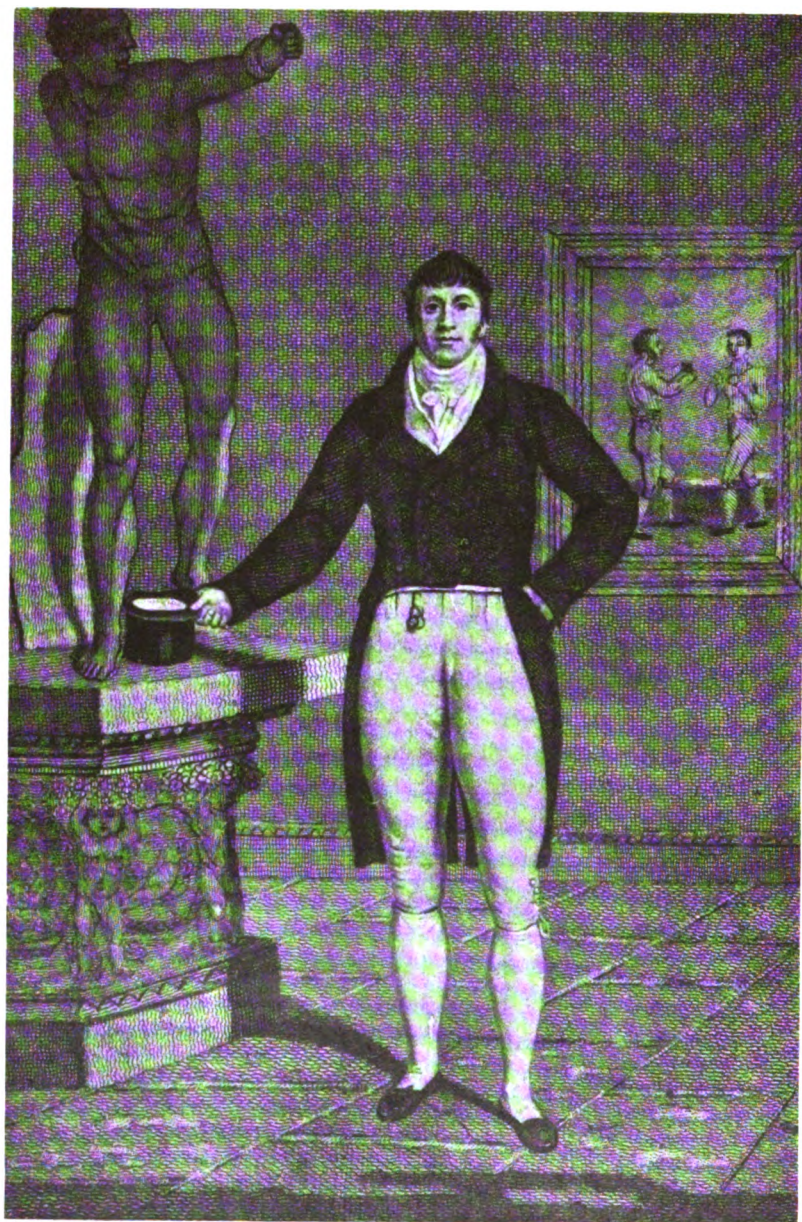
Jackson was a two-handed fighter. The men who preceded him were content to deliver punches with their right hands, but Jackson soon saw that ambidexterity was a very decided asset. What he would have done had he given up teaching and gone back to fighting may be left to the imagination. It is possible that he might have beaten everyone; on the other

hand, the clever and finished boxer is not always a certain winner against a real slugger.

It has been noted that the majority of pugilists in these early days were heavy drinkers and loose livers. Jackson was an exception. It is not claimed for him that he was either an abstainer or a non-smoker, but there is no evidence that he indulged in the excesses that were the common practice of practically all the other men of his generation. It is possible that the proudest day of his life arrived when he was selected as a sort of page to King George IV at the latter's coronation in July, 1821. The circumstances were rather peculiar. Jackson was not exactly an intimate of the King's, but he was always kindly greeted when His Majesty happened to meet him. A month or so before the coronation, apprehension was felt lest the friends of Queen Caroline would organize a demonstration that would mar the proceedings. To put a stop to any such possibility, and also to control the vast number of people who were expected to attend the ceremony, it was decided that a number of prize-fighters should be selected to guard the avenues leading to the interior of Westminster Hall. The arrangements were made by Lord Gwydyr, the Great Chamberlain, and after consultation with Jackson the following were chosen to form the guard: Jackson, Cribb, Spring, Tom Belcher, Carter, Richmond, Ben Burns, Harmer, Lee, Tom Owen, Joshua Hudson, Tom Oliver, Holt, Crawley, Curtis, Medley, Purcell, Samson, and Eales.

The men were dressed as pages and were stationed at the many entrances. Jackson, Cribb, and Spring, who were far in advance of their companions in the matter of prominence, were given stations at the great door of the hall, and it is a matter of history that when the King appeared he nodded to Jackson as he passed into the building. Letters of thanks were afterwards addressed individually to each fighter, and still later Lord Gwydyr presented the men with one of his coronation medals, which he had received from the hands of the King. He made the request that it be raffled for. When this was done it was found that it had been won by Tom Belcher.

Jackson's fight with Mendoza was made noteworthy by an incident that does not say much for his sportsmanship. The



JOHN JACKSON
Champion of England, 1795

Jew was immensely proud of his long hair. It was apparently longer than ever when he stood up to face Jackson. In the fifth round, when Mendoza was being severely thrashed, Jackson leaped forward, seized his opponent by the hair, swung him off his feet, and then bashed him in the face with such ferocity that the helpless Hebrew was to all intents and purposes deprived of his wits. His supporters were frantic, but it was decided by the officials that the action was quite within the rules. Four rounds later, the Jew was again taken by the hair and this time knocked completely senseless. If anything were needed to demonstrate the brutality which characterized prize-fighting in the late years of 1700 this, of a certainty, supplies it.

Jackson remained popular with the nobility and gentry to the end of his life. He died at the age of seventy-seven, of paralysis, at his house in Grosvenor Street, Eaton Square. He left seven thousand pounds.

There were two Belchers, and both were descendants of Slack. Jem was born at Bristol, on April 15, 1781, and this is how he was described by a writer who saw him in most of his early fights :

“ He appeared in London in the P.R. as one of the new school. He was a mere boy, scarcely twenty years of age, but he put all the celebrated heroes of the old school at defiance. The quickness of his hits was unparalleled ; they were severely felt but scarcely seen. His style of fighting was quite original, and might be termed his own. There was nothing about his person that indicated superior bodily strength, but the agility he possessed astonished every beholder.”

Jem Belcher was the champion of England from 1803 to 1805, when he succumbed to Henry Pearce, otherwise known as the “ Game Chicken.” His first fight was at Bristol, in March, 1798. He defeated an opponent named Britton in thirty-three minutes. Afterwards, in quick succession, he gained conquests over Tom Jones, Jack Bartholomew, Gamble, Bourke, and Firby. The majority of these contests were decided in small country places, but in 1801 Belcher was introduced to London by Bill Warr. For two years he did very much as he liked, but then an accident befell him, when

he was at the zenith of his powers, which had much to do with his subsequent eclipse. He was very fond of racquets, and whilst playing this game one afternoon with a Mr. Stewart he was struck full in the eye by a ball. The sight of the eye was destroyed, but the circumstance did not induce Belcher to retire from the ring. He, like Mendoza, was always ready for a "mill." His fighting, during the two years that followed his mishap, was confined to exhibition bouts, but in 1805 the "Game Chicken," who was a protégé of Belcher's, journeyed to London and set sporting circles aflame by issuing challenges broadcast. Belcher seems to have been very indignant at this course of action, and his indignation was increased when Pearce, without much reason, claimed the championship. To the astonishment of all, he accepted Pearce's offer to a fight, and the contest took place at Blyth, near Doncaster, on December 6, 1805. Belcher, it should be remembered, was one-eyed, while his mode of living—he was the proprietor of a public-house called "The Jolly Butchers," in Wardour Street, London—had not improved his stamina. Belcher was still quite a young man, but when he stood up to Pearce it was immediately seen that his chances of success were very small.

Pearce was built something like Joe Beckett. He stood five feet nine and a half inches, and weighed a little less than thirteen stone. He was no boxer, but he was a fighter of tremendous strength. From beginning to end Belcher was outclassed. This fight was one of the earliest between a clever boxer and a plain slugger. After eighteen desperate rounds, Belcher, battered, bruised, bleeding, and scarcely able to lift hand or foot, gave in.

That, however, did not mark his finish. After a few months rest, his friends were foolish enough to match him with Tom Cribb, who gained the championship in 1809. Cribb was Belcher's conqueror in both the battles that were fought. In the first, Belcher was blinded by being struck over his good eye. The fight took place at Moulsey Hurst, on April 8, 1807, so that nearly two years had elapsed since Belcher's bout with Pearce. It attracted a very big gathering, and the most famous of the spectators was William IV, who was then Duke of Clarence. Cribb, although shorter by two

inches, was at least thirty pounds the heavier. In the second round he was thrown heavily, and for a moment or so it looked as though "Old Jem," as he was called (despite the fact that he was still under thirty years of age), would win. For the next two or three rounds he gave Cribb a very anxious time, but then his strength gave out, and Cribb commenced to level up matters. In one round, however, he was so near to defeat that he had to be drenched with water and massaged. It is still doubtful whether he would have succeeded if he had not had the luck to close Belcher's good eye. For nearly twenty rounds Belcher was the superior fighter, but the moment his eye went his prospects of a win were wiped out. At the end of forty-one rounds Belcher surrendered, but his last action before quitting the ring was to walk among the spectators and display his useless hands. They were in such a state that the wonder was he was able to use them at all. The second fight with Cribb was an even sterner one. It lasted forty minutes and it was again his hands and his one eye that caused Belcher to capitulate. He was full of pluck, as before, but Cribb had improved to such an extent that there was never a time when he looked like being beaten. This contest ruined Belcher. He was so certain of winning that he wagered all he possessed—including his gold watch—on the result. Broken-hearted, he fretted and fumed until his health definitely gave out. His misfortunes were added to when he was arrested for breaking the peace, and imprisoned in Horsemonger Lane for twenty-eight days. When he was released he was suffering from a very bad chill, which he made no attempt to treat.

He died at the age of thirty, and it is apparent that dissipation hastened his end. His patron, throughout his fighting life, was Lord Camelford, but at his death he was without home, friends, or money. He was the first to introduce a handkerchief into the ring. His was yellow, and was always called a "belcher."

"In his latter moments," says Pierce Egan, "he displayed much good sense, penitence, and resignation, and endeavoured to atone for those errors which he had committed, with all the firmness and piety of a good Christian. He suffered a good deal from expectoration, having an ulcer upon his liver."

Belcher was buried at Marylebone, and the inscription on his tombstone read :

In memory of
JAMES BELCHER,
late of St. Anne's Parish, Soho,
who died
the 30th July, 1811,
Aged 30.
Universally regretted by all who knew him.

*With patience to the last he did submit
And murmured not, at what the Lord thought fit ;
He, with a Christian courage, did resign
His soul to God at his appointed time.*

It was Egan, it may be said, who first gave Belcher his title of " The Napoleon of the Ring." He saw in him a resemblance to the Corsican, but it must be confessed that it is somewhat difficult to trace.

Tom Belcher was a younger brother of Jem's. He was by no means the equal of the latter, but he possessed a record which makes him out to be a finished fighter. His battles numbered thirteen. The most curious was that against Scroggins, whom he fought in the latter's own house. Tom Belcher won ten of his battles, lost two, and drew one. He was never a champion. Like his brother he became a publican when success dawned on him. He kept a house known as the Castle Tavern, which for some years was the most popular sporting resort in London. He was nearly seventy when he died.

A man about whom much has been written, and who was contemporary with the Belchers, was Shaw, the Lifeguardsman, who was killed at Waterloo. He was taught to fight by John Jackson, and according to the officers of his regiment " was a natural genius who, in his regimental exercises, evinced so much strength and vigour as to attract general attention." Although Jackson took the credit for training him it was Jem Belcher who really discovered him. He was six feet one inch in height, and weighed over fifteen stone, but the



JAMES BELCHER
Champion of England, 1800--1803

extraordinary stories told about him are so obviously exaggerated that they hardly deserve to be repeated. He first came into prominence by breaking the ribs of Captain Barclay, who was the successor to the even more famous Captain Godfrey. It was after this that Jackson took him in hand. The editor of "Fistiana," in describing this occasion, made this interesting comment :

"Shaw, on catechistical examination, told Mr. Jackson he was 'a main good 'un at the goots'; that is to say, he could plant his body blows with finishing effect. 'Ay,' said Mr. Jackson, 'when you have a yokel (an inexperienced man) to deal with; but with a master of the art you would find that game a bad one.' Shaw was incredulous; upon which Mr. Jackson put on the gloves, and called upon our hero not to mind him, but to do his worst. Shaw, having got over his *mauvaise honte*, which the presence of so many gentlemen induced, did as he was bid, and getting a little warm, tried his favourite 'hit at the goots'; but in every attempt, Mr. Jackson had him on the head with such severity, as not only to send his head back, but as altogether to set his 'blow at the goots' completely at nought. One practical illustration is worth fifty arguments. Shaw at once admitted his error; and under Mr. Jackson's tuition soon improved so much as to be considered a man of promise, with the championship in prospect."

Shaw fought but two battles in the prize-ring—the first, with a farm hand named Burrows, at Coombe Warren, in 1812, and the second with Ned Painter, at Hounslow, both of which he won. The contest with Painter was remarkable for the fact that the latter was released from prison only an hour or so before the fight. Shaw was so proud of himself that he thereupon challenged all England, making special reference to the then champion, but before any other matches could be made he left with his regiment for Waterloo. The best tribute to Shaw was paid by Sir Walter Scott in "Paul's Letters to his Kinsfolk." The statement runs :

"Amid the confusion presented by the fiercest and closest cavalry fight which has ever been seen, many individuals distinguished themselves by feats of personal strength and valour. Among these should not be forgotten Shaw, a corporal

of the Life Guards, well-known as a pugilistic champion, and equally formidable as a swordsman. He is supposed to have slain and disabled ten Frenchmen with his own hand before he was killed by a musket or pistol shot."

Had Shaw lived it is conceivable that he might have seriously inconvenienced some of the champions, for it goes without saying that he possessed many of the essentials that make the fighting man.

It has been pointed out that when Jem Belcher lost his title he made way for the "Game Chicken." There was a third Belcher, named Ned, but he was not of the class of his brothers. He fought a few unimportant battles, but he never rose above mediocrity. The "Game Chicken" is to-day almost as well known as when he lived. He was born at Bristol, in 1777, and was champion of England from 1805 until he was succeeded by Gully in 1808. His first big fight was against a man named Bourke, in 1803. He defeated him in fifteen rounds, but six months later, on Putney Common, for a purse of one hundred guineas, Bourke managed to remain on his feet for one hour and seventeen minutes.

The great sparring ground at this period was Moulsey Hurst, and it was there, in 1805, that Pearce fought Spree, for fifty guineas. His celebrated fight with Gully (sometimes spelled Gulley) took place at Hailsham, Sussex, on October 8, 1805. "The spectators," it is related, "were immense, and the Downs literally covered with equestrians and pedestrians in eager pursuit from the above fashionable watering place (Brighton) to witness the mighty conflict. On a green adjoining the above village (Lewes) a twenty-four feet rope ring was made, and at one o'clock Gully entered, with Tom Jones for his second, and Dick Whale for his bottle holder; immediately followed by the Game Chicken, attended by Clarke as his second, and Joe Ward as his bottle holder."

In the first round, as well as in the second, third and fourth, Gully was knocked down. Again in the fifth, sixth, and seventh he was levelled, and the odds on Pearce rose to ten to one. In the sixteenth round, Gully fell without a blow, but as one report puts it, "the amateurs were uncommonly interested by the reciprocal manliness displayed, and it was the general opinion that a better fight was never contested

by any pugilists. Pearce, full of gaiety and confidence, nobly opposed his adversary, while Gully, with an equal degree of valour and firmness, rallied and made several excellent hits, which were instantly returned by Pearce."

In the eighteenth round, Pearce was so badly punished that "torrents of blood poured from him," while in the twentieth round one of his eyes was so much swollen that he could scarcely see out of it. By the time the twenty-fifth round was reached, Pearce, who had lost quantities of blood, had been deprived of some of his confidence, but after the twenty-ninth he "came back" to such effect that Gully was glad of any opportunity of closing with his man. From the thirty-third round onwards, Gully was very weak and was many times knocked down. In the forty-third round "the fighters were bloody in the extreme; Gully was literally covered from the torrents which flowed down from his ears; his head was truly terrific and had a giant-like appearance from being so terribly swelled." In the forty-fourth round, Pearce managed to deliver his favourite blow—a punch to the throat—but it was not until the fifty-ninth round was reached that Gully caved in. The contest had lasted one hour and ten minutes.

Pearce is entitled to be called one of the great men of the prize-ring. It is impossible to say just how many fights he had, for prior to his arrival in London he did a lot of unimportant battling in and around his own county. His championship contests numbered six. The first two, as has been said, were against Bourke, his third against Spree, his fourth against Gully, and his last against his old friend Jem Belcher, which was for five hundred guineas and lasted thirty-five minutes. One of the most extraordinary things about the fighters of the old days was that they fell easy victims to drunkenness and high living. It is conceivable that their readiness to take over the management of public-houses had something to do with this; it has been shown, indeed, that practically every well-known pugilist from the time of Broughton became a boniface the moment he gathered round him a few friends. Pearce's undoing was made possible by the praise that was lavished on him when he toured the country immediately after his contest with Belcher. He was an illiterate man, and it was not long before he was drunk more

often than sober. In a very few months he got rid of the few pounds he had accumulated. When he returned to London, in 1809, he was dying on his feet, for consumption and other maladies had gripped him. So sad was his state that a benefit was given him at the Fives Court.

"He was now the miserable victim of a consumption," said one writer, "and in the last stage of that afflicting disease, and scarcely able to walk to the court to thank his friends. He died on April 30, 1809, and his last wish was that he should be buried by the side of another pugilist, named Bill Warr, in St. James' Cemetery." At his death, Pearce was only thirty-one years of age.

His nickname is one of the most curious in the annals of prize-fighting. There are those who believe that he gained it by his supposed resemblance to a gamecock, but it is more sensible to assume that the title was bestowed on him by reason of the fact that he always signed himself "Hen" Pearce. Practically every pugilist of his day, however, was known by a nickname, and it might be found appropriate if some examples of these quaint appellations are here given.

Harry Holt, for instance, was known as "The Interesting Pugilist"; Ned Brown was "The Sprig of Myrtle"; Molineaux, "The Black Diamond"; Jack Randall, "The Nonpareil"; Dick Curtis, "The Pet of the Fancy"; Dutch Sam, "The Phenomenon"; Jack Martin, "The Master of the Rolls"; William Hooper, "The Tinman"; Bill Neat, "The Bristol Butcher"; Tom Gaynor, "The Bath Carpenter"; Tom Cannon, "The Windsor Bargeman"; Tom Oliver, "The Battersea Gardener"; Cyrus Davis, "The Gay Bristol Boy"; Jack Cooper, "The Tremendous Gipsy"; Stephen Oliver, "Death"; Harry Jones, "The Sailor Boy"; Alec Reid, "The Chelsea Snob"; Matt Robinson, "The Yorkshire Bully"; Deaf Burke, "Jack in the Water"; Ned O'Neale, "The Streatham Youth"; Peter Crawley, "Young Rump Steak"; Bishop Sharpe, "The Woolwich Hero"; Ned Turner, "The Hardy Welshman"; Tom Hickman, "The Gas-light Man"; Bill Stevens, "The Nailer"; John Symons, "The Old Ruffian"; Henry Abrahams, "Little Puss"; Charles Grantham, "The Gible Pie"; Tom Reynolds, "The Tight Irish Boy"; and Jack Strong, "Cabbage."



HENRY PEARCE (The Game Chicken)
Champion of England, 1805.

There are two other boxers—John L. Sullivan, the American, and Jimmy Wilde, the Welshman—who have also been known by many and absurd titles. Sullivan, in his prime, was called "The Boston Hercules," "Knight of the Fives," "The Boston Miracle," "King of the Ring," "The Prince of Pugilists," "Boston's Philanthropic Prize-fighter," "Trip-Hammer Jack," "Spartacus Sullivan," "Monarch of the Prize-ring," "The Hurricane Hitter," "The Mighty Hero of Biceps," "His Fistic Highness," "The Champion of Champions," "Boston's Pet," "The Cultured Slugger," "Sullivan the Great," "Monarch of Fistiana," "The Champion Pounder," "Prize-fighting Cæsar," "The Goliath of the Ring," and "America's Invincible Champion."

Wilde was not flattered quite to the same extent, but there was a time when he was known as "The Phenomenal Celt," "The Pride of the Principality," "The World's Wonder," "The Freak of Nature," and "The Tetrarch of the Ring."

The Game Chicken went unconquered to his grave. He is one of the few champions who was never beaten. A second-class fighter named Flowers boasted that he had knocked-out the Game Chicken, but it is difficult to find confirmation of this statement. When Pearce died his place was taken by a man named John Gully, who stands out as one of the most exceptional individuals the business of fighting has known.

CHAPTER V

JOHN GULLY, M.P. ; " SIR " DANIEL DONNELLY ; AND
TOM CRIBB, THE FIRST FIGHTER TO BE PROPERLY TRAINED

The superiority of character in the mailclad knights over the shirtless pugilists was owing to situation only ; their souls were wrought of the same stuff. But the fighting men are generally of low origin, and so, naturally enough, are the majority of those who take an interest in their feats, and are imbued with an ardent love of the pugnacious art ; but even supposing they were its sole admirers, is this a reason for suppressing it ?—" Fistianas," 1843.

THERE is no better way of giving an indication of Gully's prowess as a fighter than by printing his record. It is, like Jackson's, one of the shortest in history.

October the 8th, 1805. Beaten in fifty-nine rounds by Henry Pearce, the Game Chicken.

October the 14th, 1807. Defeated Gregson, of Lancashire, in thirty-six rounds, at Newmarket, for a purse of two hundred guineas.

May the 10th, 1808. Defeated Gregson, at Market Street, Herts., in twenty-eight rounds, for a purse of two hundred guineas.

Although Gully was generally recognized as the champion, he himself declined to accept the honour. His last fight with Gregson seems to have sickened him of a profession which he had only entered for the want of something else to do. It is not to be wondered at that he became tired of fighting, for his bout with the Lancashire man was one of the most dreadful that had so far taken place. In case it is supposed that this is over-emphasis, let a report of the thirty-sixth round be given.

" For the last ten rounds it could scarcely be called fighting. Nature was completely exhausted in both their frames, and

it were the desperate efforts of the mind, seen struggling for victory—their brave hearts endeavouring to protract the scene, reluctant to pronounce the word ‘enough.’ In strict honour and justice, it might now fairly be observed that victory hung upon mere chance, more than to any other cause—from the helpless state of the combatants, that the betting became even. Knocking down seemed out of the question for the last seven or eight rounds, and they fell continually together from their feebleness. It has been remarked that it is impossible to witness any battle, however perfect strangers the combatants may be, but that the spectator naturally feels a sort of preference for one more than another of the pugilists—and here, in this state of the contest, putting interest out of the question, it would have been impossible to have made choice from anything like superiority ; but, if there was a favourite, Gully, perhaps, had the balance. At meeting in this last round no drunken men staggered more, or appeared incapable to stand steady, than both the combatants did ; at length, Gully rallied all his strength and spirits, and, though feeble the attempt, it was of sufficient consequence to knock down Gregson and to prevent him rising to his time. It was a proud moment for Gully, who, like a tired horse that is worn out from a long journey, on finding that he is near home sets off at a trot—so it operated with Gully, who endeavoured to make a jump of it, to show how much he valued the victory. Gregson suffered most terribly indeed, and lay on the ground for some minutes totally incapable of moving or speaking.”

Needless to say, Gully quitted the ring to manage a public-house. It was known as The Plough and was situated in Carey Street, Lincoln’s Inn Fields, London. Before taking to the ring he was a master butcher.

It was after he retired that he commenced to make history. He appears to have been the first fighter to realize the value of money. His predecessors were never happy unless they were spending all their earnings ; Gully was miserable when he was not banking something every week. It is questionable whether he would have taken to fighting had it not been for a certain Mr. Fletcher Reid, who persuaded him to adopt pugilism as a business after witnessing a contest in which Gully



JOHN GULLY

Elected Member of Parliament for Pontefract, 1832

figured as a sort of amateur. It was Mr. Reid who interfered in the famous fight with Pearce ; when that was over, the Game Chicken walked up to Gully, shook him by the hand, and said : " You're a damned good fellow, and I'm hard put to it to stand. You are the only man who ever stood up to me."

Soon after commencing as a tavern-keeper, Gully became a bookmaker. He was obviously a very knowledgeable person, for we are told that he turned his thoughts towards the movements of the Turf with a most scrutinizing inquiry as to the breed of racers, the achievements of the winning and favourite horses, and the capabilities of the jockeys. " His word upon the Turf," exclaimed one writer, " is good to any amount. His calculations upon the odds is rapid in the extreme, and it is asserted that the first accountants in this respect could not get the better of him, either on the score of quickness or in point of accuracy, in placing the odds upon the various horses."

Gully was not much of a fighter, but he was most certainly a favourite of fortune. He is stated to have won forty thousand pounds on two sporting events and he celebrated this very notable achievement by purchasing two parks ; the one, where he lived, was called Ackworth Park, near Pontefract, and the other, near Newmarket, which originally belonged to Sir Matthew Wood, he disposed of at a profit within a few weeks of purchasing it. He became, too, the principal proprietor of the Hetton Colliery, near Sunderland, and had many other business interests ; but the biggest moment of his life was undoubtedly reached in 1832, when he was elected to Parliament as the member for Pontefract. All sorts of quaint stories are told of this circumstance. It is said that a bet was made that Gully would not, in a year, amass a certain amount of money, win the Derby, and enter Parliament. This, however, is probably a legend, for " *Fistiana* " states : " It would be unjust not to add that he did not seek but was wooed by his constituents to accept the honour which he received, and would perhaps have declined the distinction—for he had no personal vanity to gratify—had he not been taunted by the Tory interest, and almost laughed into the contest which ended in their discomfiture."

Gully died in 1863, and left a considerable fortune, but it has been placed on record that in the last years of his life he

would have willingly given half of what he owned for the privilege of erasing from his escutcheon the fact that he had once been a prize-fighter. It is mentioned in the records that he was the champion from 1808 to 1809, but Gully himself would never allow himself to be called by that title. As a plain matter of fact, he would not deserve mention were it not that he did things that no other pugilist has done, but it is a mistake to suppose that he was the only pugilist to be elected to a legislative assembly. In America, John Morrissey, Yankee Sullivan (who was an Englishman), and Heenan were all sent to Congress. It was Gully's good fortune to live in an age when prize-fighters were the pets of the aristocrats. In his three fights he was seconded by Sir Thomas A. Price, and his chief friends were men who were much his superior in station. If he were here called the first respectable pugilist no harm would be done to his memory. He won the Derby on two occasions, sat in the first Reform Parliament for seven years, retired from the House of Commons because his interest in politics had evaporated, and is said to have refused a knighthood. Too much reliance must not be placed on the latter statement; but in this connection it is interesting to recall that there was an Irish fighter, named Dan Donnelly, who was supposed to have been knighted by George IV, when he was Prince Regent.

Donnelly was another of the extraordinary characters who was always willing to fight anybody. He was a gigantic man, and he was in his prime in 1815. Pierce Egan is the only writer who has anything to say about him, and he mentions that when Donnelly died, in 1820, he was followed to his grave by thousands of people, and that a very handsome monument was erected to his memory, on the slab of which was engraved, at each corner, the victories he had obtained in the prize-ring over George Cooper, Tom Hall, and Tom Oliver—three Englishmen. The inscription on the tombstone read:

*Underneath this pillar high
Lies Sir Daniel Donnelly.
He was a stout and hardy man,
And people called him "Buffing Dan."
Knighthood he took from George's sword,
And well he wore it, by my word!*



DANIEL DONNELLY

Said to have been Knighted by King George the Fourth

*He died at last from forty-seven
Tumblers of punch he drank one even ;
O'erthrown by punch, unharmed by fist,
He died unbeaten pugilist.
Such a buffer as Donnelly,
Ireland never again will see.*

It is not remarkable that Donnelly's life was a short one. He was a low comedian by nature, and when getting himself ready for a contest—it would be ridiculous to speak of him as doing anything in the nature of training—it was his custom to drink twenty-five tumblers of whisky per day. He was an even better racquet player than a boxer, and it was this game which indirectly caused his death. After a long afternoon on the racquets court with another man, he imbibed at a draught more than a pint of ice-cold porter and almost immediately fell in a fit of apoplexy, from which he never recovered. His tavern in Dublin was the scene of many a riotous evening. He may not have got a knighthood for his fighting—although there is every reason to believe that he did—but that he deserved one for his uncommon drinking capabilities is amply proved.

Tom Cribb, who was born at Hanham, Gloucestershire, on July 8, 1781, held the championship from 1809 till 1824. He had more contests than all the other heavy-weight pugilists of his time put together. His principal fights were as follows :

January 7, 1805. Defeated Maddox, at Highgate, London, after two hours and twelve minutes (seventy-six rounds), for a purse of twenty-five guineas.

February 15, 1805. Defeated Tom Blake, at Blackheath, London, in one hour, for a purse of forty guineas.

May 21, 1805. Defeated Ikey Pig, at Blackheath, in eleven rounds, for a purse of forty guineas.

July 20, 1805. Defeated by Nicholls, of Bristol, at Blackwater, in fifty-two rounds, for a purse of twenty pounds.

October 8, 1805. Defeated Richmond (the negro), at Hailsham, Sussex, in ninety minutes, for a purse of twenty-five guineas.

April 8, 1807. Defeated Jem Belcher, at Moulsey Hurst,

in forty-one minutes (thirty-five rounds), in a contest for two hundred pounds a side.

May 10, 1808. Defeated Horton, at Market Street, Herts., after twenty-five rounds, for a purse of one hundred guineas.

October 25, 1808. Defeated Gregson, at Moulsey Hurst, after twenty-three rounds, for a purse of five hundred guineas.

February 1, 1809. Defeated Jem Belcher, at Epsom Downs, in forty minutes (thirty-one rounds), for a purse of two hundred guineas.

December 10, 1810. Defeated Molineaux (the negro), at Cophall Common, in fifty-five minutes (thirty-nine rounds), for two hundred guineas a side.

September 28, 1811. Defeated Molineaux, at Thistleton Gap, Leicestershire, in twenty minutes (eleven rounds), for a purse of six hundred pounds.

Cribb was in his prime when the prize-ring had reached the very height of its popularity. He was a better-conducted and a much saner man than the majority of those who preceded him. In 1814, shortly before the return of Bonaparte from Elba, the Emperor of Russia, the King of Prussia, and a number of other illustrious foreigners paid a visit to the Prince Regent of England. The fame of boxing had spread to other countries, and within a day or so of their arrival the visitors asked that a demonstration be arranged in their honour. The details were left to Lord Lowther, who immediately sent for John Jackson, and it was fixed that the 15th of June, 1814, should be devoted almost exclusively to fighting. The ring was constructed in the drawing-room of Lord Lowther's house, in Pall Mall. The onlookers, in addition to the Emperor of Russia, included one of his generals—Platoff—and the more famous Blücher. The affair was so much to the liking of the very distinguished group that, after expressing their warm approbation, they voiced a wish that the exhibition should be repeated on the following Friday. On this occasion, there were present the Emperor of Russia, Blücher, the King of Prussia, the Prince Royal of Prussia, the Prince of Mecklenburg, and others of royal blood. The chief fighters were Jackson, Cribb,

Belcher, Richmond, Painter, and Oliver. Jackson, because of his excellent bearing, excited most interest, but Cribb, who was then the champion, particularly attracted the notice of Blücher, who was heard to say that if the opportunity ever arrived, he would introduce boxing to his own country.

Cribb kept a public-house called The Union Arms, in Panton Street, London, and it is fair to say that he was the first pugilist to undergo a special and rigorous preparation. Prior to his time, there was no recognized system of training, but just before his second fight with Molineaux he was taken in hand by Captain Barclay, conveyed to Scotland, and coached to such purpose that he was deprived of stones of his weight. Barclay had very definite ideas about training. He saw at once that Cribb's liking for an easy life had made him gross and short of breath. Cribb, as a matter of fact, was unable to walk more than a few miles. The day after his arrival at Ury, in Scotland, he was heavily dosed with medicine and for two weeks was permitted to stroll about as he pleased. At the beginning of the third week he was induced to look upon his daily walks with more seriousness. These were at first confined to ten or twelve miles per day, but were quickly increased to twenty; in addition, Cribb—who did not take too kindly to this regime—was compelled to run a quarter of a mile every morning and every evening. In five weeks his weight dropped from sixteen stone to fourteen stone eight pounds. After the fifth week he was still further reduced by a process of sweating, the result being that in less than two months his fighting weight was thirteen stone three pounds.

That this sort of training would be considered absurd to-day need scarcely be emphasized. Cribb must have been a naturally strong man or he would have cracked after the first two or three weeks. Barclay, however, was a martinet, and when he returned to London he related with great pleasure that Cribb had walked to Mann Lodge, which was sixty miles from Ury, where he arrived in time for dinner on the second day. These extensive excursions certainly improved Cribb's wind: but what did him more good than anything else was the diet on which he was placed. Altogether, Cribb remained in training for eleven weeks, nine of which were spent in Ury.

When he was not engaged in walking to the Highlands, he was kept busy giving lessons in sparring at Stonehaven.

Cribb had left his native village when he was thirteen, and was first employed as a bell-hanger. Tiring of this, he became a labourer at the wharves, and an accident at one of the London docks, when he was about seventeen, nearly ended his life. In stepping from one coal barge to another, he dropped between them and was very badly crushed. A little later, while carrying a heavy package of oranges, weighing, it is said, nearly five hundred pounds, he slipped down on his back and the load landed on his chest, "the which occasioned him to spit blood for several days."

Cribb fell into boxing accidentally, but it did not take him long to demonstrate that he was an exceptionally fine performer. His speciality was what was called milling on the retreat. He was not by any means a general favourite, for the amateurs were of the opinion that his defensive qualities and his readiness to step away when he was attacked were evidences of a poor heart. That he had his full share of skill is proved when it is remarked that he was only once beaten; on that occasion he was absolutely untrained and unfit to take the ring. But he was never nearer to defeat than in his first contest with Belcher. It was a manoeuvre that saved him. Cribb had received such severe punishment that he was unable to get back to his feet in time, and Warr, his second, to gain a necessary minute, started a discussion about bets which was of such long duration that Cribb was enabled to recover. This is but a mild example of the sharp practices which were common when Cribb was at the head of his profession.

His defeat by Nicholls was about the most sensational occurrence of his career. Nicholls was only a second-rater, and it was perhaps this that induced Cribb to enter the ring more like a fat man in a circus than as a trained pugilist. Cribb was puzzled from the start, but it was not until after the eighteenth round that it became apparent that he was destined to lose. Cribb himself was little more than a novice at the time, but the fact that he was compelled to surrender was so distasteful to him that there came a time when the matter could not be mentioned in his presence. Nicholls was about

the wisest fighter of his age. By defeating Cribb, he gained a prominence he did not deserve ; realizing it, he immediately went into retirement and became a pork butcher at Bristol.

Cribb was not recognized as the champion until 1809. He had then been fighting for four years. The title really descended to him, for he did not fight for it. He acquired the honour as the result of the resignation of Gully. When he was challenged by Molineaux, the negro, England was aflame with indignation. It is very near to the truth to say that the arrival of the coloured man started the first crusade against boxing. Molineaux was not the first black to embrace pugilism ; that distinction goes to Richmond, his discoverer—but as negro boxers will be dealt with later in this book, there is no need to go deeply into the subject now. Molineaux arrived in England in 1809, and the first friend he made was Bob Gregson, who kept a coffee-house in Holborn, which afterwards became the Castle Tavern. He was absolutely unknown. He had no letters of introduction or recommendations of any kind. He was the son of slave parents, and it is believed that he was born on a cotton plantation in Virginia, from which he was legally freed. As a youth he was employed by Mr. Pinckney, who was at one time United States Ambassador in London, and it was to seek further work with his old master that Molineaux left America. Two or three months after reaching London he fell in with Bill Richmond, who was his guide, philosopher and friend to the end of his fighting life. Richmond had, of course, been rather ignominiously beaten by Cribb, and the instant he saw Molineaux he arrived at the conclusion that he had found a man of his own colour whom he could use as an instrument of revenge.

Largely through his efforts a match was made with Cribb. It roused the strongest opposition, particularly among those who were of opinion that negroes were not fit and proper persons to oppose white men. This quotation gives some idea of the interest that was manifested :

“ Even those persons who had hitherto passed over boxing in general, as beneath their notice, now seemed to take a lively interest in the issue of this fight. It appeared somewhat as a national concern, and all felt for the honour of his country, and deeply interested in the fate of their champion, Tom

Cribb. Molineaux was viewed as a truly formidable rival, and by no means deficient either in point of strength, courage, or agility, with his opponent. In height he is about five feet eight and a quarter, weighing fourteen stone two pounds; while his brave opponent stands five feet ten and a half, and in weight about fourteen stone three pounds. It appears that Cribb expected to win with ease and style; and Molineaux threatened to perform wonders, and it is stated, by the most experienced and best informed upon these subjects, that the betting upon this occasion exceeded anything of the kind that had gone before it. Considerable odds were betted that Molineaux was disposed of in fifteen minutes, and it was considered safe betting that Cribb proved the conqueror in half an hour."

Molineaux's first action on entering the ring was to throw up his hat as a token of defiance. This was the custom—almost a regulation—for many years. He did well enough for the first five or six rounds, but then the biting cold got into his system. The contest, it should be pointed out, took place in the open air at East Grinstead on an extremely cold day in December. The nineteenth round was rather horrible. "To distinguish the combatants by their features would have been utterly impossible, so dreadfully were both their faces beaten, but their difference of colour supplied this sort of defect." In this round Molineaux gripped Cribb in such a way that he was unable to hit his opponent or fall down. While his seconds were discussing whether they should separate the men, the ring was rushed by two or three hundred persons, and in the mêlée one of the negro's fingers was broken.

Despite this he continued to have the better of the exchanges, and in the twenty-third round he had gained such an advantage that odds of four to one were freely laid on him. Sir Thomas A. Price—who had become an old man, but whose interest in boxing was still so great that he was ever ready to second any champion—was so agitated that when the next round was signalled, he screamed to Cribb: "Now, Tom, now; for God's sake don't let the nigger win. Remember the honour of Old England. Go for him, Tom; go for him!"

Molineaux's fighting was furious in the extreme. He threw Cribb heavily, with the result that in the twenty-fifth round

the champion was hardly able to stand. Molineaux's left eye was closed, but he was adjudged to be the winner of the twenty-seventh, twenty-eighth, and twenty-ninth rounds. In this latter, Molineaux's right eye was damaged. It was this round indeed that really settled the fight. A few moments later the negro was attacked by a shivering fit. Prior to this he had been accused by Joe Ward, one of Cribb's seconds, of having a leaden bullet in each of his hands. This was a crafty ruse that was employed so as to give Cribb an opportunity of recovering from a very heavy fall. In the thirty-second round the coloured man was in a state of stupor. He was shaking from his head to his heels, but in the thirty-third he recovered sufficiently to bore his man down. This, however, was his final effort. From the thirty-fourth round to the thirty-ninth, he was merely a chopping-block, and in the fortieth, which was the last, he fell headlong from weakness. Three days later, Molineaux addressed the following letter to Cribb :

"Sir,—My friends think that had the weather on last Tuesday, the day upon which I contended with you, not been so unfavourable, I should have won the battle ; I therefore challenge you to a second meeting, at any place within two months, for such a sum as those gentlemen, who place confidence in me, may be pleased to arrange. As it is possible that this letter may meet the public eye, I cannot omit the opportunity of expressing a confident hope, that the circumstance of my being of a different colour to that of the people amongst whom I have sought protection, will not in any way operate to my prejudice."

As this was a challenge for the championship, Cribb was obliged to accept, but before the second contest was decided, Molineaux distinguished himself by severely beating a Lancashire pugilist named Rimmer. He was so much the superior of the Englishman that even the friends of Cribb began to feel alarmed. Rimmer was a man of some repute, but he was given such a tremendous hiding that his friends, in the fourteenth round (while the Lancashire man was on the ground), broke the ring, and chased the coloured man out of it. It is to the credit of Cribb, who was present, to say that he was one of the first to attempt to restore order. The fight ended in tumult.

It was for his second contest with Molineaux that Cribb received the special training already referred to. Meanwhile, Molineaux was being toured around the country by Richmond and Tom Belcher. He was a man of very uncertain temper, and any suggestion that he should look after himself he seems to have received with snarls. He was made much of wherever he went, and it is a fact that when he reached Thistleton Gap, on September 28, 1811, his condition was less good than it had been when he made his first essay to win the championship. Cribb's condition, on the other hand, was thought to be wonderful. All the loose flesh had gone, his ribs could be counted, his face was drawn and pale, but he was marvellously muscled. He implored Captain Barclay to give him a drink of whisky, but this, of course, was sternly refused. Molineaux was not so well looked after. Ten minutes before the bout, he devoured a whole chicken and a large apple pie, which he washed down with several pints of porter. It should not cause surprise when it is said that the contest only lasted nineteen minutes.

"The joy experienced upon this occasion by the flash side," says Pierce Egan, "cannot be described. Considering all the disadvantages under which Molineaux fought this battle, he performed wonders. It is not meant to be urged that Molineaux had not fair play throughout the fight in the ring—it is well-known that he had—but the black had to contend against a prejudiced multitude; the pugilistic honour of the country was at stake, and the attempts of Molineaux were viewed with jealousy, envy, and disgust."

The spectators numbered over twenty thousand. When the coloured man's eyes first alighted on Cribb, he was stricken with amazement. "That is not Master Cribb," he is reported to have said. "That is a strange man, whom I do not know." Molineaux commenced to fight with an impetuous charge, and for two or three rounds it looked as though Cribb's science would be overwhelmed by the negro's abnormal strength. The rapidity with which he landed his blows was extraordinary, but his favourite was a smashing punch which was whirled round from behind his back. Molineaux was the first to be knocked down, but in the second round he threw Cribb so heavily that even Captain Barclay, who had wagered nearly

twelve thousand pounds on the champion, was tempted to cover his bets. The third round was also bad for Cribb, whose right eye was completely closed. "The superiority of the Moor's strength," it is stated, "was evinced by his grasping the body of Cribb with one hand, and supporting himself by the other resting on the stage; and in this situation he threw Cribb completely over by the force of a cross-buttock."

In the next round Cribb changed his tactics. Instead of driving for his opponent's head, he went for his body. His nose and mouth were streaming with blood, his right eye was closed, his left was rapidly going out of action, but there was not a mark on the savage face of the negro. But he was clearly distressed when the fifth round was reached. What is more, he was suffering from the taunts and the curses that were being hurled at him. Maddened beyond endurance, he threw caution to the winds and fought like a maniac. In the sixth round, he was dealt so severe a blow in the pit of the stomach that "it not only appeared to roll him up, but seemed as if it had completely knocked the wind out of him, which issued so strong from his mouth like the smoke from a pipe, that he was literally gasping for breath."

The tide definitely turned in favour of Cribb in the seventh round. Molineaux had lost command of himself, and now his blows were always short. Three times, in rapid succession, he was struck on the jugular vein, while in the eighth round Cribb jockeyed him into a corner, got his head under his arm and pummelled him unmercifully. In the ninth round, Cribb smashed the coloured man's jaw with a left-handed blow. Molineaux fell as though senseless, and he was late by half a minute in returning to his feet, but Cribb was so eager that the spectators should be given full proof of his superiority that he insisted upon the battle being resumed. The moment Molineaux was back on his feet, Cribb again knocked him down. Molineaux was the receiver-general in the tenth round, and in the eleventh he was finally knocked unconscious. The victory of the Englishman was announced by Gully and Cribb, who later, to show their elation, danced a Scotch reel in the ring.

Although prize-fighting was not in favour with the authorities

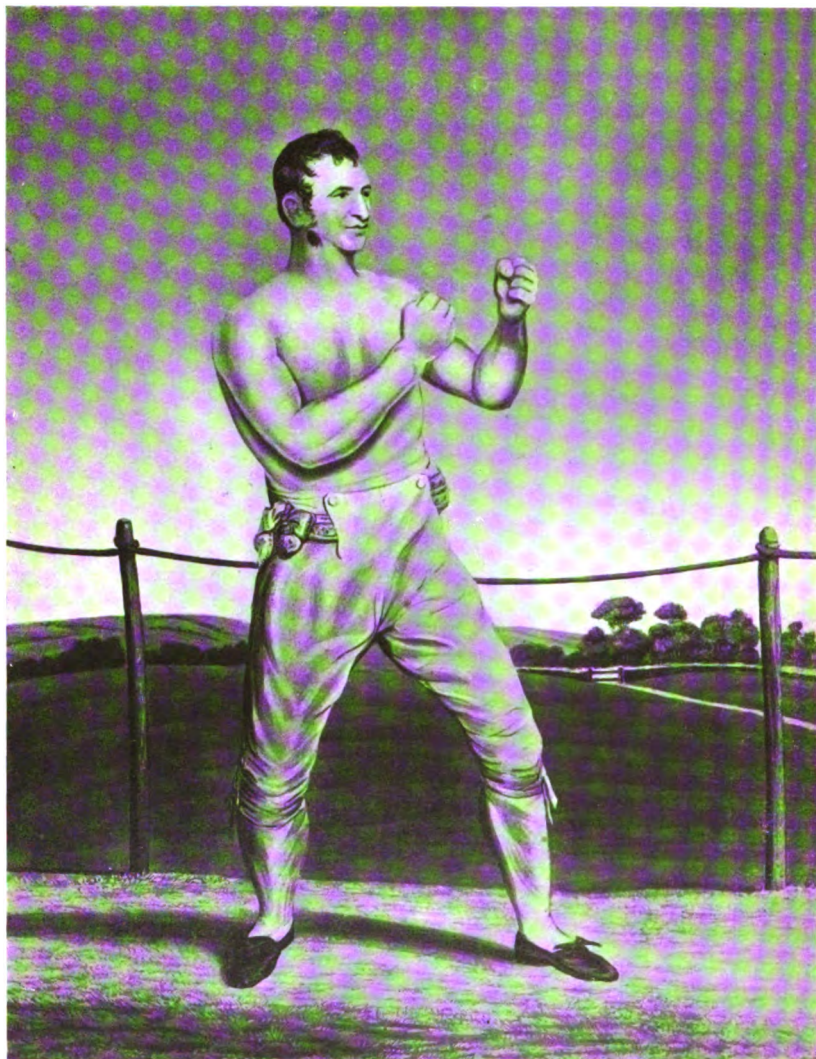
at this time, it is a point of interest that the Corporations of the principal towns made a request that the battle should not be interfered with. Among the company were the Marquis of Queensberry, Lord Yarmouth, Lord Pomfret, the Hon. Berkeley Craven, Captain Barclay, General Grosvenor, and Sir Charles Alton. As an indication of the interest felt, this paragraph might be reproduced :

“ On Saturday night an immense crowd assembled in front of Richmond’s House, the Pad and Swimmer, St. Martin’s Street, Leicester Square, to inquire the particulars, which so completely blocked up the street, that the house was shut up at an early hour ; on the next morning, they assembled and gained access, and although some additional rooms were opened, half the people could not be accommodated ; and also Bob’s Chop-house, the Castle in Holborn, was so crowded on the Sunday evening, that several peace officers were obliged to attend to preserve order.

“ On the champion’s return home in a barouche and four horses, decorated with blue ribbons, on the Monday following, accompanied by an amateur of distinction and Joe Ward, he was cheered through all the towns he passed, after the manner of an officer bearing dispatches of a victory, so much was it felt by the people of England ; and upon the approach to his house in White Lion Street, Seven Dials, the crowd had assembled in such numbers as to render it impassable, and who rewarded this Hero of the Fist with loud and animating plaudits, worthy of the Champion of England.”

All of which was probably very gratifying to Cribb, but it is noteworthy that all he gained from the contest was four hundred pounds. When Jack Dempsey defeated Georges Carpentier for the Championship of the World, at Jersey City, in 1921, his reward was more than one hundred thousand pounds. Cribb battled for nineteen minutes and ten seconds. Dempsey took even less time to knock out the Frenchman.

To celebrate his victory, Cribb was presented with a silver cup, valued at fifty guineas. So as to be in the fashion, he then purchased a licensed house on the corner of King Street and Duke Street, St. James’, London, which was called The King’s Arms. He received many cups and medals before he retired,



THOMAS CRIBB
Champion of England, 1807—1811

but the most remarkable of the gifts showered on him was another cup which had at its base this appropriate sentence : " And damn'd be him that first cries, ' hold, enough'." A coat-of-arms was also engraved upon the trophy. It was designed and executed " at the expressed wish of the higher flights of the Fancy." The crest was the Bristol arms. In the first quarter the British lion was seen looking down with stern regard on the American flag, half-mast high (in the fourth quarter) whilst a beaver, symbolic of America, hiding its head under the folds, alluded to Molineaux's defeat. In the second quarter the combatants were depicted in fighting attitude, and in the third quarter Cribb was shown in his coal-barge. The supporters represented the champion looking with an eye of commiseration on his vanquished opponent.

Cribb's last fight was a rough-and-tumble affair in a club at Oxenden Street, London, in 1820. His antagonist was a man named Carter. A year later he sent this statement to the newspapers :

A CHALLENGE TO ALL ENGLAND

THE CHAMPIONSHIP

Tom Cribb, having been called to the Bar, which now so completely occupies his time—but to be brief on the subject, he has, in consequence, entirely resigned the whole of his practice in the Ring, to Tom Spring, his adopted boy. The son, therefore, wishing to tread in the steps of his father, and not to lead a dull, inglorious life, anxiously seeking the path of glory, informs all those heroes, whom it may concern, that for three months he is open to all England, for one hundred to two hundred guineas a side.

This was the first intimation that Cribb was leaving the profession of boxing. It caused considerable surprise, although some of his intimates had been informed that he was anxious to see Spring as his successor. He actually resigned his Championship on the 18th May, 1822, on the stage at the Fives Court. He was presented with yet another belt to commemorate his career. Eighteen years later he was given a farewell benefit under the auspices of the Pugilistic Association at the National Baths, Westminster Bridge Road, London. He was not exactly in straitened circumstances, but his

public-house had not prospered, and he had also lost money as a coal merchant. His younger brother, George, was also a pugilist, but he was not of much account, for he was defeated in all his fights. Tom Cribb died in 1848 at the age of sixty-seven. He was buried at Woolwich Churchyard, where his monument is still one of the landmarks.

CHAPTER VI

TOM SPRING ; AND OTHERS LESS WELL KNOWN

Let no one sneer at the bruisers of England. What were the gladiators of Rome or the bull-fighters of Spain in its palmiest days compared to England's bruisers ? Some of them have been as noble, kindly men as the world ever produced. Can the rolls of English aristocracy exhibit names belonging to more noble, more heroic men than those who were called respectively—Pearce, Cribb, and Spring ?

—George Borrow, in "The Romany Rye."

BEFORE dealing with Tom Spring, it would be well briefly to note the careers of some of the men who were prominent between the years 1810 and 1820. They were a very numerous company. Among those who enjoyed considerable notoriety were George Cooper, Jack Carter, Cyrus Davis, Ned Davis (who was one of the first Welshmen to take to the ring), Bill Eales, Fuller, Tom Hickman, Harry Harmer, Henry Holt, Josh Hudson, Jack Martin, Bill Neat, Tom Owen, Tom Oliver, Ned Painter, Bill Perdue, Jack Randall, Tom Shelton, Jack Scroggins, Philip Sampson, Ned Turner (perhaps the best of the early Welshmen) and Jack Teasdale.

The principal Sunday paper of the period was the "Weekly Dispatch." It devoted much space to boxing, and so that an example may be given of the challenges issued at that time, the following from its pages may be quoted. It is from Neat to Cribb, and reads :

"W. Neat thinks it proper to do away with any misconception which might have been entertained in consequence of Mr. T. Cribb's receiving the forfeit on a late occasion, to state that the gentleman who put down the deposit of ten pounds at Mr. T. Belcher's for him (Neat) to fight Mr. Cribb, did it without his being consulted ; and the reason why the match was not made good was, Mr. T. Cribb's refusing to meet him half-way, which was his (Neat's) determination after his battle with Mr. Oliver ; he then stated ' that he would fight

any man attached to the London ring, meeting him half-way.' W. Neat certainly would give Mr. T. Cribb the preference, but supposing he is afraid of taking cold, coming so far, will accept the invitation of Mr. Shelton, who has kindly consented to accommodate him. Mr. T. Belcher will be empowered to do the needful on the part of W. Neat."

Cribb's age then was forty, but it must not be imagined that he was considered elderly. There were many men who fought when they were nearing sixty years of age; Mendoza, indeed, had one of his hardest battles when he was fifty-seven. It was the custom to advertise fights and benefits in a most elaborate way. When a new resort was opened at the Royal Tennis Court, Great Windmill Street, Haymarket, London, a performance was made known in this fashion:

ELECTION OF THE FANCY

CY. DAVIS

Respectfully solicits the votes and interests of

The Amateurs at the

ROYAL TENNIS COURT

Great Windmill Street, Haymarket,

On Thursday, March 16, 1820,

Being the day fixed for his election.

NEAT AND CABBAGE

two candidates from Bristol, also offer their services to the Public on this occasion, and a warm contest is expected. In consequence of these well-known Metropolitan Heroes of the Ring, Messrs. Cribb, Belcher, Harmer, Oliver, Randall, Richmond, Eales, Turner, Martin, Reynolds, Sutton, etc., being likewise determined to put in their claims for the attention of the Sporting World,

The polling will commence at 2 o'clock

And Plumpers will be the Order of the Day.

The Talents of the various Candidates are of the most striking description; their Arguments will be perfectly demonstrative; the advantages of a good Constitution clearly shown; and the essential services portrayed, in defending it from all Attacks.

The State of the Poll will be declared at 5 o'clock.

The access to the Hustings will be rendered pleasant and easy to the voters; and Qualification Tickets, at 3/- each, to be had at the bar.

The Royal Tennis Court seems to have been the chief rival of the Fives Court, in Leicester Fields. When Abraham Belasco took his benefit at the latter place, in 1821, he asked for patronage by making this quaint declaration :

"The out-and-outers on the fighting list have promised to lend him a hand upon this occasion. The Game Cock wants no spurs to do Abraham a service. The big and little coves are all ready to set to, and on which occasion all the first-rate pugilists of the day will exhibit in a variety of scientific combats. Belasco will exert himself, therefore, to produce lots of amusement. Caper Sauce, and bunches of Fives, may be had gratis. Claret, free of expense ; and nothing charged for electricity. The fancy may depend, it will be nothing else but a gay day's play, and tickets may be had by only asking for them ! Then all of you come, for Belasco will be very glad to see the whole of the amateurs, at the Fives Court, on Tuesday next."

Boxing, of course, had many opponents, and it was probably this circumstance that led the Society for Mutual Improvement (which held its meetings at 52, Great Marlborough Street, London) to discuss this interesting question :

"Ought the Magistracy of England to be considered worthy of censure for a negligent execution of the Laws against Pugilistic Combats, or of approbation for their prudence in not too violently opposing Public taste, and winking at what affords much amusement and keeps up the spirit and courage of the Country ? "

The chairman, in opening the debate, was careful to point out that the science of self-defence had become a fashionable branch of education. The sons of the nobility and the gentry universally acquired it. He went on to say that the youths at Eton, Westminster, and other public schools qualified themselves not only in Latin and Greek but also in what he was pleased to term "Gymnastic Exercises." From the highest personage in the Kingdom to the lowest, it had the patronage and admiration of "all that was courageous and manly amongst Englishmen." The daily public papers constantly detailed every information on the subject—of the men in preparation, the time of action, the state of the bets, and other particulars, whilst the bulletin of the battle itself, and

of the conduct of the warriors equalled, in length and accuracy, the Gazette of the Battle of Waterloo. One Sunday paper (meaning the "Weekly Dispatch") bestowed great attention on this important subject, and made sporting intelligence the leading feature of attraction.

"There is something fair and honourable in an appeal to pugilistic strength and science," continued the chairman. "It is done openly, not in secret; it is in the presence of umpires to see justice done; no foul blow must be struck; a man is not to be struck when he is falling; he is helped up and time is given him to recover, and when he allows himself to be pronounced vanquished, his person is secure against all further violence. Voltaire was much delighted with the sight of a pugilistic combat in London, and in his work describes it as a decisive proof of the love of justice and fair play in the British populace.

"I shall say nothing respecting regular combats for money by professional prize-fighters, except that men have a right to gain their living by contributing to the public gratification. Persons who do not like the amusement need not attend. If unpleasant accidents sometimes happen, so is the case with every other trade that can be mentioned. That is a consideration for the pugilists themselves, and no man has a right to interfere with their liberty of choice. Such exhibitions keep up the national spirit and afford infinite amusement both to the spectators and to those who read the details in the public prints; they could not be suppressed without a system of espionage, such an exertion of the police as would amount to absolute despotism. Upon the whole, my opinion is, that the magistrates do well in pursuing their present course, in so far discouraging such sport as to prevent its being an annoyance to the public, but not too violently opposing public taste by attempting a total suppression."

There were many speeches in opposition to this view. The chief argument was that boxing was brutal and cruel, that it had a tendency to harden the hearts and feelings of the spectators, that none but the lowest orders of society attended such exhibitions, and that prize-fights were not only the means of collecting numerous blackguards together, but that they did much to encourage a spirit of gambling and ferocity of

disposition. When a vote was taken, there was a big majority in favour of the sentiments expressed by the chairman. This meeting was held in April, 1820, and it is recorded that "many elegant females were present."

Jack Randall, who was known as "The Prime Irish Lad," "The Phenomenon," "The Nonpareil," and "The Out-and-Outer," was one of the cleverest and most successful boxers of his day. He was little more than a light-weight, but he was so highly considered by his friends that it was once seriously suggested that he should fight Cribb for the heavy-weight championship. He was never defeated. He had, in all, fourteen contests, which brought him in the rich reward of twelve hundred pounds. Before he retired, which was when he was the landlord of The Hole in the Wall, Chancery Lane, London, he offered to fight any man in the world for five hundred pounds a side. The challenge was not accepted. He was one of the few men who fought a battle "for love." His opponent, on this occasion, was Jem Hood, whom he defeated in four rounds, at Battersea Fields, on October 4, 1819.

Randall was born in 1794, and at his heaviest he only weighed ten stone four pounds. Many authorities considered him to be the greatest little man of his time; he died at the age of thirty-four of alcoholism. Just before he passed, his medical attendant, Dr. Latham, read him a severe lecture. "Blows," said the doctor, holding up a small wine-glass to illustrate his remarks, "have never hurt you, Randall, numerous as your contests have been, but this little glass has punished you severely in the extreme, and if you do not beware, in time it will prove your overthrow." It is superfluous to mention that the advice was lost on the boxer. Randall continued to drink very heavily, and when he was midway in his career it was observed that dissipation was rapidly undermining his fine constitution.

He appears, however, to have paid attention to training, and so far as can be discovered the only man who ever looked like beating him was Ned Turner. His first contest was for two pounds, and was against a man named Leonard. It lasted forty-five minutes, and was decided at Bloomsbury

Fields in 1809. Randall's next fight was again for two pounds, but his third and fourth were for five guineas each. The largest amount he ever received was three hundred guineas. That was when he fought Martin, at Crawley Downs, in 1821. It only lasted one round of eight and a half minutes. When he met Turner, at Crawley Hurst, on December 5, 1818, the purse was one hundred pounds. The men fought for two hours nineteen minutes and ten seconds, or thirty-four rounds. The articles signed were as follows :

"Articles of Agreement, October 13, 1818, entered into at Mr. Franklin's, The Lion and Goat, Lower Grosvenor Street, Grosvenor Square, between John Randall and Edward Turner, to fight for the sum of one hundred pounds a side, on Tuesday, the 1st of December. The above battle to be a fair, stand-up fight. Half-minute time, in a twenty-four foot ring. The place to be named by Mr. Jackson, but the distance from London not to be less than twenty-five, nor to exceed thirty miles. Randall, on the one side, to choose his own umpire, as to a time-keeper, and Turner also to appoint a time-keeper on his part ; but, to prevent any dispute, Mr. Jackson to appoint a third umpire, as a referee, whose decision shall be final. The whole of the above stakes to be made good on Tuesday, the 10th of November, at Mr. Franklin's, between the hours of seven and nine in the evening ; but if either Randall or Turner wish to increase the sum to two hundred pounds a side, this latter sum to be made good on Tuesday, the 24th of November. Mr. Jackson to hold the stakes, or any person whom he may appoint. A deposit of twenty pounds a side to be placed in the hands of Mr. Franklin ; but if the whole of the stakes of one hundred pounds a side are not made good on the 10th November, the above deposit to be forfeited accordingly."

Both men went into training at Hampstead Heath, and both were entertained to dinner a night or so before the contest. The death of the Queen stopped the match on the appointed date, but four days later the men faced each other at Crawley Hurst, in Sussex. The betting was five to four on Turner. No pugilistic contest since the days of Humphreys and Mendoza excited anything like the same interest. The weather was extremely bad, but that did not prevent a great crowd from

assembling. It was stated, ten minutes before the bout, that a sum of thirty thousand pounds had been wagered on the result.

Randall stood five feet six inches in height, Turner was five feet seven inches, but the weights were almost exactly alike. The first round was merely an exhibition of dodging, and the absence of action so angered Cribb that he called out, "Five minutes gone and no blow!" The same caution was displayed in the second and third rounds. The latter occupied thirteen minutes, but the betting by that time had veered round in favour of Randall. Turner must have been the Driscoll of his day; he was so extraordinarily evasive that it was not until the sixth round that Randall was able to hit him. From the seventh round to the twenty-fourth the exchanges were mainly in favour of Randall. Two hours had now elapsed, but Turner was still strong, for in the twenty-fourth round he lifted Randall and threw him heavily. Randall scored his second knock-down blow in the twenty-sixth, and in the thirty-first the Welshman's condition was so bad that he was implored by the spectators to accept defeat. Turner was eventually floored for the last time in the thirty-fourth round. His state by then requires no description.

Pierce Egan had this to say of Randall:

"It is a positive fact that Randall never received instructions from any pugilist whatever, and it is owing to his natural mode of fighting that he has gained all his conquests. It is true that Turner never decidedly took the lead in any one round, but he appeared conspicuous in many of them; and while Randall was fibbing his nob, he, in turn, was endeavouring to knock the wind out of his opponent. In short, Randall is nothing but an out-and-outer, and Turner is an out-and-outer too, and although defeated, he raised himself in the estimation of the sporting world. He is deficient in nothing else as a pugilist, but in being a hard hitter. That is a physical defect, and it cannot be placed to his account as a fault. The judgment of Randall is excellent, and there is not a move upon the board but what he is up to. The interest excited in the Metropolis on the above night upon this event, to those persons out of the ring, may appear like a romance. Hundreds were waiting at the turnpike gates, along the road, to learn who had won."

Although it is mentioned by some historians that Randall's arms were not free of bruises for three weeks after the contest, it is also stated that two nights later he gave an exhibition of very hefty sparring at The Three Compasses, in Holborn, where Gregson was holding a benefit. Randall had three more fights before he died, but none was of the same severity as the one with Turner.

Turner was a London Welshman. He was born in 1791, and his first fight was against Balche, at Bermondsey, in 1810. It was for one pound a side and it lasted fifty minutes. He once signed articles to fight Tom Belcher, but as everybody was inebriated on this occasion the match fell through. His career was nothing like so successful as Randall's, for he was beaten by Martin, Cyrus Davis, and Inglis. His greatest contests, apart from the one with Randall, were his three with Scroggins. The first ended in a draw; the second in a win for Turner (after seventy-two minutes' fighting); while the third, which was for one hundred and fifty pounds, went ninety-nine rounds before victory was gained by the Welshman.

He had the misfortune to kill a man named Curtis, and was, as a consequence, sentenced to two months' imprisonment in Newgate. Baron Graham, in his charge to the jury, observed that "the prisoner had cautiously and humanely avoided using to the extent he might have done the decided advantage and superiority which he had over the deceased. There was nothing in his conduct like deliberate cruelty or a desire to injure his adversary, further than to shew the result occasioned by the efforts to shew himself the better man."

Turner was a left-handed exponent and fought right foot foremost. He is deserving of favourable mention because he does not appear ever to have kept a public-house. He died at the age of thirty-five.

Bob Gregson, born at Heskin, Lancashire, on July 21, 1778, was usually styled the Poet Laureate of the ring. He must have been a better versifier than he was a fighter, for he lost all his big battles. He was beaten by Gully on two occasions, and by, among others, George Head. He was considered to be the handsomest man who had ever appeared in the prize-ring. He stood six feet one and a half inches in height, and weighed nearly sixteen stone. It was he who turned Bob's

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TO VIND
ANTHONY



NED TURNER
The First Welsh Fighter to become prominent

Chop-house into a sporting hostelry, and for very many years afterwards it was known as The Castle Tavern. He was particularly celebrated in Lancashire, where he fought many hard battles while he was filling the situation of captain of the Liverpool-Wigan Packet. His first fight with Gully was a very unfortunate occasion for him, for he was thoroughly beaten after thirty-six rounds. He came very near to defeating Cribb, however, and there was one period in this fight when odds of ten to one were laid on him. His courage was high, but he seems to have lacked science in a very marked degree. He wrote considerable verse, the value of which may be judged from the following example. It was written to celebrate the victory of Tom Cribb over Molineaux :

You gentlemen of fortune attend unto my ditty.

A few lines I have penn'd upon this great fight,
In the centre of England the noble place is pitch'd on
For the VALOUR OF THIS COUNTRY, or America's delight ;

The sturdy Black doth swear
The moment he gets there,
The planks the stage is built on, he'll make them blaze and smoke.
Then Crib, with smiling face,
Says, these boards I'll ne'er disgrace,
They're relations of mine, they're old English Oak.

Brave Molineaux replied, I've never been denied

To fight the foes of Britons on such planks as those ;
If relationship you claim, bye and bye you'll know my name,
I'm the Moorish milling blade that can drub my foes.

Then Crib replied with haste,
You, slave, I will not baste,
As your master us'd to cane you, 'twill bring things to your mind ;
If from bondage you've got clear
To impose on Britons here,
You'd better stopp'd with Christophe, you'll quickly find.

The garden of freedom is the British land we live in,
And welcomes every slave from his banished isle,
Allows them to impose on a nation good and generous,
To incumber and pollute our native soil.

But John Bull cries out aloud,
We're neither poor nor proud,
But open to all nations, let them come from where they will :
The British lads that's here
Quite strangers are to fear,
Here's TOM CRIB, with bumpers round, for he can them mill !

This tribute to Gregson may be considered of greater worth than his attempts to write verse : " No pugilist had to contend against severer disappointments than Gregson, nor has any boxer whatever experienced more chilling and overwhelming defeats. In himself, Bob made a bold stand to obtain the honours of the championship, and it was so nice a point that it was the toss-up of a halfpenny whether it was decided for Lancashire or Bristol. His name will long live enrolled among the records of the brave." He died at Liverpool in November, 1824, at the age of fifty-four.

George Cooper, a twelve-stone Staffordshire man, was a pupil of Richmond's. He was one of the earliest to demonstrate the uses of what is now known as the one-two punch. He fought eleven battles in England, Scotland, and Ireland, and won six. Those he defeated were Lancaster, Jay, Molineaux, Robertson, Kendrick, and Shelton. He was conquered by Oliver, Donnelly, Hickman (twice), and Baldwin. He was a somewhat delicate man, and was even more successful as a publican than he was as a pugilist.

He was also an enterprising kind of fellow. In 1818, in company with Gregson and Carter (as is more fully related in another chapter) he journeyed to France, and after a number of exhibitions there went to Aix-la-Chapelle and arranged a tournament, at which were present Prince Charles of Prussia, the Prince de Salm, Prince Metternich, and a large number of Russian and Prussian general officers. Cooper also took his troupe of boxers to Cambrai, Valenciennes, and finally to Paris. He died near Stafford in 1834.

Jack Carter was another of the Lancashire school. He called himself the champion of England for a few months, but his claims were not regarded with very much seriousness. He was a fairly well-built man, for he stood five feet eleven and a half inches in height, and weighed fourteen stone. His greatest battle was against Oliver, at Longtown, near Gretna Green, and it was his success on this occasion which prompted him to claim the championship. He had thirteen fights and lost eight. He was beaten seven times in succession, and among his conquerors were Molineaux, Richmond, Spring, Cribb, Jem Ward, and Deaf Burke. He stood up against Spring for nearly two hours, but when he was out of the ring

he was really little more than a mountebank. But he was by way of being a swift runner and pedestrian. In 1810 he ran a mile in five minutes and twenty seconds, while at a Manchester fair he was matched against a donkey and won by several yards. Out of fourteen races and walking matches he was successful in twelve. His end was painful. He died in poverty in 1844.

Bill Neat was introduced to the ring by Tom Belcher. He was a native of Bristol. He was thirty years of age when he made his debut. His opponent was Oliver, but Neat was fortunate in that he had as his advisers and seconds such notabilities as Cribb, Gully, Belcher, and Captain Barclay. He won after one hour and thirty-one minutes of very heavy slugging. His contest with Spring brought him into disfavour, for after thirty-seven minutes he shook hands with his antagonist, complained of a broken arm, and left the ring. He thereupon returned to Bristol and resumed his occupation as a master butcher.

Tom Hickman (better known as the Gaslight Man), was born at Dudley, Worcestershire, on January 28, 1785. He was not a particularly skilful fighter, but he was the next best thing to being impervious to punishment. His confidence in himself was remarkable; it was his habit, indeed, to say that he could beat any man living without stripping. He weighed eleven stone ten pounds, and stood five feet nine and a half inches. A born boaster, he was laughed at when he was matched with Peter Crawley, at Moulsey Hurst, in 1819. He won in thirteen and a half minutes. Cooper, whom he fought a little later, he defeated in fourteen and a half minutes. He did not once use his left hand, and he was so proud of himself that he declared himself invulnerable. So as to test this assertion he was again sent against Cooper, and this time, to the astonishment of the sporting world, he levelled his opponent in three minutes. The majority of Hickman's battles were exceedingly short. Three of the chief only occupied thirty-one minutes in all. This is all the more extraordinary when it is remembered that almost every fight in the early years of 1800 lasted at least an hour.

There was one that was started at two o'clock in the afternoon and which was not finished until twenty minutes past

nine at night. Hickman lost his head completely after his fight with Oliver, and allowed himself to be talked into a contest with the much heavier Neat. The latter was three inches taller, and over thirty pounds heavier. Hickman was beaten after twenty-three and a half minutes. He was killed when returning from a fight between Josh Hudson and Shelton, his chaise overturning. He was thrown beneath the wheels of a wagon, and his head was so badly crushed that he died almost at once. He was then twenty-seven years of age.

Bill Eales, who on his first appearance was called a second Tom Belcher, was too delicate and too light to stand the strain of prize-fighting. He was less than eleven stone, and only had three fights. In the second of these he was beaten by Scroggins. The latter's real name was Palmer. He commenced his career as a pugilist after being discharged from the navy as an invalid. He weighed ten stone ten pounds. For nearly ten years he had an all-conquering career, but in 1817 he received his first check when he met Ned Turner. He fought the Welshman at the odds of two to one—that is to say, his side stake was fifty pounds while Turner's was one hundred pounds. There were so many people present at the fight, which took place at Hayes, Middlesex, that the ring was broken and the combatants separated after ten rounds.

Some time later Scroggins obtained another contest with Turner, but was this time beaten after an hour and twelve minutes. Dissatisfied, he called for a third meeting, but Turner once more whipped him after one hour and thirty-one minutes. "He was the Grimaldi of the P.R.," says a writer, "so full of antics and fun was he. His appearance, when in the ring, was truly singular, not unlike the stump of a tree. His frame was round and hardy; and his mug almost defying the force of blows and opposition. Smashing was his decided forte, and defeating his adversaries off-hand always his intent. At one time his tavern, The Watermen's Arms, Stangate, Westminster, was the resort of some of the highest and lowest folk connected with the fancy, a sort of masquerade; but Scroggins had an answer for everybody, as he possessed a great deal of drollery." He had twenty-two fights, of which he lost eight. One of his conquerors was Tom Belcher. He died in London on November the 1st, 1836, aged forty-nine.

Harry Holt was called "The Orator of the Prize-ring" by reason of the frequency with which he made speeches. He had a very short career. He fought five battles and lost four. During the latter part of his life he turned newspaper man and reported the minor fights for the "Era." It might be remarked here that the first boxing reporter of whom there is any record was George Kent, a Londoner. His accounts of battles were very widely read between 1790 and 1826.

Harry Harmer, of the Bristol school, had a style of fighting that resembled that of his cousin, Jem Belcher. He was one of the first to realize that punishment could be avoided by ducking the head. He was a twelve-stone man, but only had three fights, all of which he won. He made a tour of France after beating Shelton, and gained some notoriety by sparring before the Duke of Wellington on a race-course near Montmartre. He was a great favourite at some of the Paris theatres, but just when it seemed possible that he would be given a match for the championship he was attacked by a disease of the eyes which compelled him to leave the ring.

William Fuller, a Norfolk man, was, so far as can be ascertained, the first English pugilist of note to visit America. He had three fights in England, one of which he won, another of which he lost, and the third of which he drew. When he arrived in America he published an advertisement in the newspapers which was to the effect that he had made the long journey not to engage in battles, but to give lessons. His academy was not over-popular, but he amassed a respectable fortune by securing a number of very lucrative theatrical engagements.

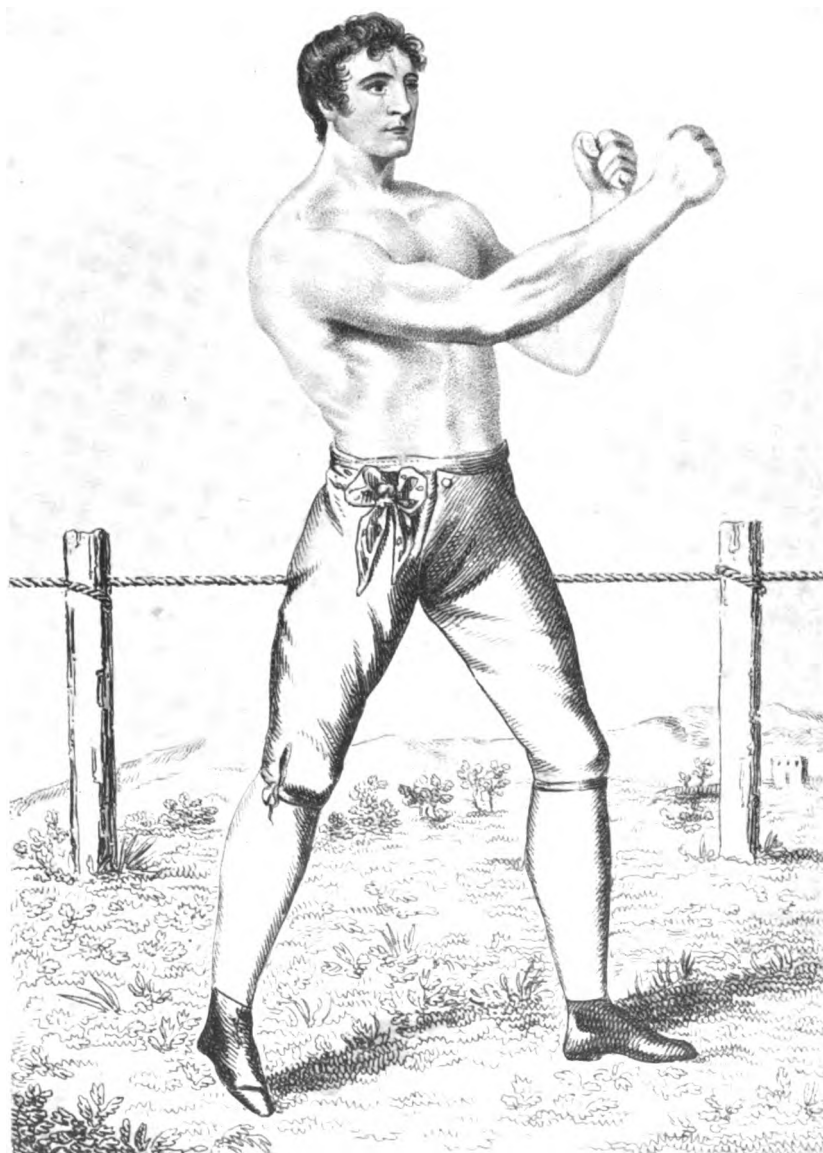
His greatest fight was with Molineaux, the negro. There were only two rounds, but they occupied one hour and eight minutes. For some time Fuller kept a subscription house at Valenciennes, in France, where he was also the clerk of the race-course. He returned to America after some years, the possessor of a considerable fortune, and it is not too much to say that he had most to do with making prize-fighting popular in the United States.

A pugilist who cannot be left out is Tom Owen. He was born at Portsea on December 21, 1768, and his first contest was against Hooper, at Harrow, near London, which he won

after fifty rounds. Following upon that he again defeated Hooper, Davis, and Mendoza, but lost to Bartholomew and Houssa. He was perhaps better known as a second than as a fighter. His battle with Mendoza was a ridiculous affair, for the Jew was a very old man, while Owen was over fifty. It lasted twelve rounds, and Mendoza was so terribly punished that the fight had to be stopped.

Those who hold the opinion that boxers are given too much prominence in the Press should be reminded that one hundred years ago it was the habit to write columns about any man who was clever with his fists. When Tom Spring, the champion of England in 1824, was at the height of his fame, the following appeared in the "Sporting Magazine":

"Spring, in his youth, that is to say, at eighteen years of age, was one of the most athletic and active young men that I suppose this country ever saw. There was a manliness, too, and a determination of purpose marked in his countenance, which ever impressed me with the idea that I was standing in the presence of a Roman gladiator, or one of those Athenian wrestlers whose countenances are so strongly featured in every classical mind. This look of resolution much increased as manhood drew on; and when I saw Spring just before he fought Langan at Worcester, I was more than ever struck with the expression of his face, although he was then by no means so handsome as in his early youth. I have seen one man who a good deal resembles him; a very great hero (and who would compare a hero with a hero!). I mean Captain Parry, of the Northern Pole reputation. In the upper part of the face, and particularly in a stern undauntedness of brow, Captain Parry is exceedingly similar to the fistic champion. Parry is no chicken in point of stature, and of a good iron frame, but he wants the symmetrical proportion of Spring's favour. I cannot help thinking but that Nature, when she moulded the two faces so much alike, also meted out to each a full measure, and brimming over, of true courage and adventure. Captain Parry's life, considering the distance in the station of each, is not more diverted from the common course generally followed by naval men than is that of Spring from the ordinary occupation and rank of the mere common run



THOMAS SPRING
Champion of England, 1819—1824

of country butcher. Indeed, perhaps Spring has, in proportion, struggled against more disadvantages, and, for him, attained a higher eminence than the bold captain."

Spring was a very well-conducted man. There was a gentleman of large fortune in Herefordshire who was so thoroughly persuaded of the kindness and carefulness of his disposition that, if Spring happened to be going to town at a convenient time, he placed his sons under Spring's especial care on their road to school. Spring, at this time, was a member of the Herefordshire Society for Educating and Supporting Orphan Children. Prior to that he had succeeded to the management of the Castle Tavern, in Holborn. He was born at Fownhope, Herefordshire, on February 22, 1795. His most noteworthy fights were as follows :

May 9, 1814. Defeated Henley, at Mordeford, in eleven rounds, for a purse of three pounds.

September 9, 1817. Defeated Stringer, in twenty-nine rounds (thirty-nine minutes), for a purse of fifty pounds, at Moulsey Hurst.

April 1, 1818. Defeated Ned Painter, in thirty-one rounds (eighty-nine minutes), for a purse of one hundred guineas, at Mickleham Downs.

May 4, 1819. Defeated Carter, in seventy-one rounds (one hundred and fifteen minutes), for a purse of one hundred and fifty pounds, at Crawley Downs.

December 21, 1819. Defeated Ben Burns, in eleven rounds (eighteen minutes), for a purse of twenty pounds, at Wimbledon, near London.

May 16, 1820. Defeated Burns, in eighteen rounds (thirty minutes), for a purse of one hundred pounds, at Epsom Downs.

June 27, 1820. Defeated Hudson, in five rounds, for a purse of twenty pounds, at Moulsey Hurst.

February 20, 1821. Defeated Tom Oliver, in twenty-five rounds (fifty-five minutes), for a purse of one hundred guineas, at Hayes, Middlesex.

May 20, 1823. Defeated Neat, in eight rounds (thirty-seven minutes), near Andover.

January 7, 1824. Defeated Jack Langan, in seventy-

seven rounds (one hundred and forty minutes), for three hundred pounds a side, at Worcester.

June 8, 1824. Defeated Jack Langan, in seventy-seven rounds (one hundred and ten minutes), for five hundred pounds a side, at Birdham Bridge, near Chichester.

Spring was only beaten once, and then by a fighter who can hardly be compared with him—Ned Painter. His real name was Winter. His height was five feet eleven and three quarter inches, and his best weight was about thirteen stone four pounds. He was, of course, discovered by Tom Cribb, but there were many others who believed with all their hearts that they were responsible for bringing Spring into the full glare of the limelight. One such was Jack Scroggins. He was practically given the championship by Cribb, who, as has already been related, called him his adopted son. The late Mr. W. Wilmott Dixson, who wrote under the *nom de plume* of "Thormanby," thus spoke of him :

"There is no name on the long roll of British boxers more worthy of honour and respect than that of Tom Spring. He was one of Nature's gentlemen—brave, honest, courteous, big-hearted—a true friend and a generous foe. Twelve great battles he fought in the prize-ring, and only once was he beaten and then by a man whom he had thrashed before, and would very likely have thrashed again had they fought out the rubber. That man was good old Ned Painter, of Norwich, afterwards Tom's dearest pal. It is a remarkable fact that Tom Spring's closest and best friends were the two men with whom he had had his hardest and most desperate fights, Ned Painter and Jack Langan. I remember being taken to Spring's house in my early youth by an enthusiastic old patron of the ring. It was on the 7th January, and I think the year was 1851.

"When my companion ordered drinks, Tom said, 'No, you drink with me to-day.' He produced some glorious Irish potheen. 'What do you think of that?' said he. 'Prime,' remarked my mentor. 'Well, it ought to be,' said Tom, 'I've had it over four years in my cellar, and it's a drop of the last that poor Jack Langan sent me. You know he always sent me a keg of the very best on every anniversary of my

first fight with him.' Langan died a wealthy man, worth thirty thousand pounds, for he had a fine business as hotel-keeper and wine merchant in Liverpool. His house was not far from the Clarence Dock, and every Irishman landing in Liverpool made a point of looking up Langan, for Jack's countrymen were proud of him, and with good reason, for a better man never trod in shoe leather.

"In those days, before reaping machines were known, the Irish harvestmen used to come over in swarms to cut the English farmers' corn, and every man of them had free quarters at Langan's for two days and two nights ; porridge and potatoes and stew, beer galore, a night-cap of potheen and a clean shakedown of straw ; the only condition John exacted was that all sickles and shillelaghs should be handed over to his keeping, so that there might be no breaking of heads under his roof."

Tom Spring, it may be stated, did not leave anything like thirty thousand pounds when he died. He undoubtedly made a fair fortune during his fighting career, but he managed to get rid of quite a portion of it before he decided to retire. During the last three or four years of his life he was constantly in financial troubles.

When Spring and Langan met for the first time, in 1824, the popularity of the ring was slowly declining. Nevertheless, the match attracted at least as much attention as any that had preceded it or that has followed it. It was, in many ways, the best and fairest struggle that had been arranged for several years. The men were practically on a level in height, weight, reach, and age. Spring was twenty-nine, and Langan twenty-five. The only real difference between them was that Spring was clean-built and a skilful athlete, while Langan, in addition to knowing no other game but boxing, was slow and ponderous in all his movements. He had the largest hands ever possessed by a pugilist. Few people expected him to win, for his record, prior to meeting Spring, was of no great account. He had defeated an Irishman named McGowan, at the Curragh, Ireland, in one hundred and seven minutes, had drawn with a novice named Pat Halton, and had also defeated another second-rater called Weeping Mat. He had had other contests in Ireland, but

they were too unimportant to give him even moderate prominence. Spring, on the other hand, had beaten so many good men that he was practically left without a rival.

The correspondence which led up to the match is so interesting that some of it calls for reproduction. The first letter from Langan was sent to the editor of "The Morning Chronicle." It read :

To Mr. Spring, Town Hall Tavern, Manchester.

Sir,—As you have taken on yourself the title of champion of England, you are, of course, open to fight any man, provided he can get backed for what is considered in the London Ring a handsome stake. I have now to inform you that some gentlemen of Manchester will back me to fight you for one hundred sovereigns a side. To any other person I might have made some kind of apology for this rough invitation, but I am confident you will take it as it is meant ; that is, in the way of business. The bearer, Mr. Reynolds, will make any appointment convenient to yourself, for putting down some money to make the match.

This letter was addressed from The Running Horses, Salford, on September 31, 1823. Langan could not have been very sure of the date, for even in 1823 September only had thirty days. Spring's reply, for some reason unknown, was printed as it was received. It is not a very pretty specimen. It ran :

Mr. Langan Ruinng Horse Salford.

To Mr. langan—Sir—haveing, some 3 months ago, recivd a challing from you in Ireland, for £100, wich, if I had thoate that som worth my notice I should have answered that without waiting for a repetecion ; and should serve this in the same way, but soposeing you do not understand what silant contempe means, therefore I wish to inform you that I do not think it worthy my notice, tho it may answor your purpase as it may please the feelings of some smoll boy to say in company—I have challinged the champion of England and he dare not fight me. This may appear very pleasing to your feelings ; if so your are very welcom to them ; but before I close I wish to inform you, that I Will meate you half way between london and Manchester,

and fight you for £500 a side and stake £100 at eney time you may think proper, and if youer friends think you can win £100 they will not hesetate to back you for £500 aside. If this wos to eney other gentleman but Mr. langen I should make some apolegy for addressing him in this monner, but I think it is not nasesory as it is in his way of Bisness.

Yours &c.,

T. WINTER—SPRING.

Langan's reply was dictated in anger. He said (the letter is again given as it was received) :

Sir,

When the brave and manly Cribb made you a present of the championship of England you promised in the Face of the world to imitate his praiseworthy conduct in the Prize-ring. But that Promise you have not fulfilled, for Cribb never Snered at a £100 customer or told him that he treated his Offer with contempt. Recollect the title you hold was but a gift for which you never fought. I would advise you to Keep this in mind, for it will check that vanity with which you are so terribly bloated, a vanity without the least foundation Except it is for beating the Grey-Headed old Stringer, or Wining the Made up Fight with Tom Oliver. Or is it your being well drubed by the One-armed Cripple Ned Painter. Out of compliment to the county we are in I will not Mention the particulars of the Great girl Fight between you and Jack Carter. With respect to Neat you rose nothing by that victory ; all you could gain by that Fight was money ; but it apears by your answer to My Challenge that Money is the God you worship. What Fame had he acquired ? He certainly managed to beat Tom Oliver, after Repeatedly giving up in the course of the Battle, and he gallantly Beat the Gas Light Man, a Man not within 3 Stone of his own weight, as is well known the Gas Man received £1,000 for Losing the Battle. Is it for beating this prince of curs who gave in without a Mark or Losing one Drop of Blood in his fight with you that you call yourself Champion. My friends in this County will back me against anyone you Ever fought in the Sum of £100 to £80. I would never have Thought

it worth my while to bring back to your Memory Days Long Past, but that you Seem to Forget yourself ; but look back Mr. Spring and you may Remember the time when you, and in your Native Country could not get Friends to back you for £50 a side. I am an Irishman, a Stranger in this Country, and the Circle of my Friends very limited ; but they have in My opinion Come handsomely Forward in Backing me for the sum I have offered. Permit me to say, that in my Opinion you Display a Great Deal of the Cur in thus naming a Sum which you must be confident I cannot Raise. But all the World must know the true Reason ; for any other pugilist that Meant Fighting would think it a good Stake. The Son of your Host has circulated a Report, that if I cannot get Backed For £500 a side, It would not Suit your purpose to Go into Training, and that you say you will Give Me a good Milling For love ; believe Me, you could not have Met a More accommodating Customer than Myself. Money with Me is the Least consideration ; only Name the Place and you will Find Me your humble servant,—You or me must be Champion and should it fall to my lot, I give you my Word I will never Refuse any Man in the World a Trial that can get backing for £100. You will oblige me by naming when you will give me this promised Drubbing, and never fear but I will attend the appointment. An answer as soon as possible will oblige.

There were many more letters, some of which were printed in the "Stockport Advertiser," but the final word was said by Spring, who, by this time, was very angry indeed. The subsequent contest was a long one, but Langan fully justified his statement that he was a fit and proper contender for the championship. Langan throughout fought with fury, but Spring's defence was too much for him, and when the Irishman fell from exhaustion it was his own impetuosity, more than the punishment he had received, that was responsible for his collapse.

It is a fact, though, that Spring was seriously inconvenienced by the state of his hands. At the close of the battle Langan complained that he had not been given fair play by the crowd. There was justice in this, for the ring had been broken at

least once. He again challenged Spring, this time for five hundred pounds a side, which sum was regarded as phenomenal. The first fight had been fought on turf, but for the second Langan stipulated that it should be contested on a raised stage. The Irishman also insisted that it should be properly protected from the crowd. This was done by surrounding the ring with farm wagons. The fight was originally arranged to take place at Warwick, but at almost the last moment the men accepted an offer made by the proprietor of the Swan Inn, Chichester, to fight at a spot selected by him. Mr. Hewlings, for this privilege, paid two hundred pounds. Thousands of people, ignorant of the change, journeyed to Warwick, and it was only when they arrived there that they discovered that the bout was taking place hundreds of miles away.

Chichester, at this time, was a very quiet and select little town, but on June 8, 1824, it was the scene of wild excitement. For twenty-four hours coaches and post-chaises kept pouring in, every inn and tavern was filled to overflowing, and as much as three guineas was charged for shakedown in barns. Mr. Hewlings had picked on a very admirable spot at Birdham Bridge, which was about three miles from the town. It was bordered by a canal and could only be approached by a draw-bridge. The stage was raised six feet from the ground, sixty large wagons were ranged round it, and only the seconds, umpires, and referees were allowed to approach within twelve feet of it. When the men appeared it was obvious that Langan had been too well trained. He weighed only twelve stone, whilst Spring, who had been prepared by Cribb, pulled down the beam at thirteen stone six pounds. He was in such magnificent condition that odds were freely laid on him.

"Thormanby's" account of the contest is about as good a descriptive record as any that has been written. Here are some sentences from it :

"To lovers of science the fight was a most fascinating spectacle. No boxer that ever breathed has surpassed or even perhaps equalled Tom Spring in the perfection of his defence. He was armed at all points, and defied his adversary to get at him. His guard was superb, and his wonderful quickness on his legs served him well in getting away. He could duck

his head, too, as quickly as a feather-weight. The beautiful precision with which he stopped Langan's terrific blows was a treat to see. Tom did not hit hard as a rule, but he hit for points, and his blows were always effective. Over and over again he would land on the same spot till a trifling bruise developed into a large lump, and a little cut was enlarged into a gaping wound. What his contemporaries called 'Spring's harlequin step' bothered Langan greatly. Tom would advance till he looked like attacking—Jack, eager to forestall him, would let out, and hey, presto! Spring was out of distance in an instant. The force of Langan's blows caused him to overreach himself, and before he could recover, Tom had neatly and dexterously planted a couple of stingers just where Jack least liked them.

"Tom's great defect lay in his hands. They were soft and puffy, and soon swelled to a great size, becoming so tender that it was agony to hit with them. But in the early part of the fight he marked Langan considerably about the face. Jack, finding all his blows stopped, and all his rushes foiled, gave up hitting almost entirely and dashed in to close and wrestle; he proved himself a good wrestler, and several times threw Spring heavily on the hard boards. Of slashing hitting there was little or none. That sort of thing didn't suit Tom's soft hands, and Langan soon grew tired of lashing out when never a blow got past Spring's guard. There was hardly a stage, I think, from start to finish, at which Tom had not the fight safe; but he never relaxed his vigilance and caution nor changed his style of fighting. He just wore his man out by his cool, imperturbable defence. He fought with his head and legs more than with his fists, for his brain was always clear, his temper calm, and his active pedestals ready to carry him quickly backwards or forwards as he wished.

"Once when Tom flung Langan with great force against one of the rails everyone thought the fight was over, for with such a crash did Jack's head come against the woodwork that it seemed impossible for any human skull to stand the shock without fracture or concussion of the brain. But though a big, ugly lump was raised along the side of the Irishman's scalp, he came up to time, and fought with desperate but unavailing gallantry for no less than forty-nine rounds.

Langan had stipulated with his backers and seconds beforehand that no attempt was to be made to stop him from continuing the fight, except with his own consent, and he held them sternly to their bond even when his case was hopeless.

"Tom could have lifted him and hurled him on the planks with stunning force in every round had he chosen, but he contented himself with just shoving his foe down with an open-handed push. At last the indomitable Jack was so weak that he stumbled and fell on his face as he was tottering to the scratch ; and there he lay senseless for a couple of minutes or more, whilst Spring was hailed the winner after a battle which had lasted an hour and fifty minutes. Spring's hands were in an awful state. His principal backer, Mr. Lawrence Sant, the Wandsworth brewer, came up to him on the stage and said : ' If ever you fight again I will never speak to you any more, Tom. I never saw such bad hands in my life.' ' Sir,' said the victorious Spring, ' I never will fight again,' and he never did."

George Borrow, as is well known, was very partial to fights and fighters. He thus immortalized Spring in "Lavengro": "Hail to thee, Tom of Bedford, or by whatever name it may please thee to be called, Spring or Winter! Hail to thee, six-foot Englishman of the brown eye, worthy to have carried his six-foot bow at Flodden, where England's Yeomen triumphed over Scotland's King, his clans and chivalry! Hail to thee, last of England's bruisers, after all the many victories which thou hath achieved—true English victories, unbought by yellow gold ; need I recount them ? Nay, nay. They are already known to fame—suffice it to say that Bristol's Bull and Ireland's champion were vanquished by thee ; and one mightier still, gold itself, thou didst overcome, for gold itself strove in vain to deaden the power of thine arm ; and thus thou didst proceed till men left off challenging thee, the unvanquishable and incorruptible. 'Tis a treat to see thee, Tom of Bedford, in thy public in Holborn way, whither thou has retired with thy well-earned bays. 'Tis Friday night, and nine by Holborn clock. There sits the yeoman at the end of the long room, surrounded by his friends ; glasses are filled and 'a song' is the cry, and a song is sung well suited to the place."

Spring, like his "father," Cribb, was given many presents and testimonials. One of the most noteworthy was a silver cup which bore the following inscription :

To THOMAS WINTER
Of Founhope, in the
County of Hereford,
This cup was presented
by his
Countrymen of the
Land of Cyder.
In token of their Esteem for the Manliness
and Science which in many severe
Contests in the Pugilistic Ring
under the name of
Spring
Raised him to the proud distinction
of the Champion of England.

Spring died on August 20, 1851, at the age of fifty-six. Langan, who was once his enemy and afterwards became his bosom friend, passed away five years earlier.

CHAPTER VII

BENDIGO : PUGILIST, HARLEQUIN, AND REVIVALIST

I was always passionately fond of fishing, at which I was considered a first-rate hand. I have also been noted for cock-fighting, badger-baiting, running, somersaulting, stone-throwing, cricketing, etc. I have lobbed a stone two hundred yards, and a cricket ball (five and three-quarter ounces) one hundred and fifteen yards. I was also matched, for a small wager, to throw half a brick over the Nottingham Trent, near the Trent Bridge, which I did (left hand), the distance being seventy-six yards. I have played and beaten at cricket, Gerland, of Leeds, one of the great All-England players at that time ; also Thomas Burton, the tutor of Burton Cricket Club. . . . I have also run second in a mile handicap at Sheffield, being beaten by Cruel. I have also succeeded in carrying off the second, third, fourth and fifth prizes at York Great All-England Fishing Match.

—William Thompson (Bendigo), 1860.

JEM WARD was the acknowledged champion from 1825 till 1833. He was lucky to hold the title at all, for one of his first contests was such an obvious fake that he was under a cloud for some years. This bout took place at Moulsey Hurst on October 22, 1822. Ward's opponent was a third-rater, named Abbott, but after playing with him for several rounds, Ward shouted, so that all at the ringside could hear, "Now, Bill, look sharp, hit me and I'll go down," and there-upon collapsed in a swoon. The swindle was so ridiculously executed that there was an immediate uproar, and a few days later an inquiry was held by the Pugilistic Society. This seems to have been the first of its kind, and it resembled, in one way, the investigation that was held in Paris in 1922 after Battling Siki had made certain accusations against Georges Carpentier. Ward was called before the Pugilistic Society, and on being taxed confessed that he had been paid one hundred pounds to lose. As a result he was expelled and debarred from fighting in any ring over which the Pugilistic Society had control. This was by no means the first boxing

fake, but it was certainly the first to be discussed by a governing body.

Ward vanished for a year and then suddenly appeared at a spot near London where a fight was in progress. It ended quickly, and the promoters, so as to give the spectators some value for their money, put up a purse of five pounds and invited anyone present to fight for it. Ned Baldwin, who was known as White-headed Bob, at once threw his hat into the ring, and it was instantaneously followed by Ward's. They battled for twenty minutes, and Ward emerged victor without a scratch. Although this was accepted as evidence of his skill, his honesty was still in doubt, and finding it impossible to get matches he joined company with two other pugilists and made a tour of the provinces. At Bath he changed his name to Sawney Wilson, and on the race-course fought a youth named Rickens. Ward won with the greatest ease.

"Thormanby," telling the story (it was related to him by Ward himself) says: "How old Jem used to laugh as he told the tale. He went into the ring just as he was, smock and all, pretended he didn't know he had to strip, and kept his corduroys and big clumsy boots on, even after he pulled off his shirt. At first the betting was five to one on the Somerset champion, and Jem has often told me that he nearly lost the fight by fooling too much, for Rickens got in an awful round-hander on the side of the head which precious nearly knocked Jem down, and if it had caught him on the side of the temple or under the ear might have knocked him out. Rickens then rushed on his fate, for, with his head still buzzing from that nasty clout, Jem thought it time to teach the big man a lesson; so, when the latter came on, Jem gave him such a left-hander on the tip of the nose as fairly astonished Rickens, but it was only a sample of what Sawney had in store for him. The spectators, to their amazement, saw their huge champion, who had never yet known defeat, hit clean off his feet by the terrific blows of this unknown North Country yokel."

Details of this fight soon travelled to London, and letters were sent to the papers saying that the time had arrived for Ward to be forgiven his sins. A special meeting of the Pugilistic Society was called, and a resolution was passed that

Ward should be given another chance. He was then matched with Josh Hudson, by whom he was beaten, but in 1824 he defeated good men in the persons of Sampson and Crawley. At this period, Tom Cannon (an ancestor of the famous jockeys) was a claimant to the championship. Jem Ward promptly challenged him, and after much bickering fought him at Warwick on July 19, 1825. The stakes were five hundred pounds a side, and Ward won after ten rounds. The bout was a very short one, for it was all over in ten minutes. The result was a tremendous surprise to Tom Spring and Cribb, who seconded Cannon, but it was generally believed that the terrific heat of the day had much to do with Cannon's downfall. He was said to be in his prime, but when it is stated that he was thirty-five years of age, doubts may fairly be cast on the assertion. Ward, a beautifully built man (he stood five feet ten, and weighed twelve stone seven pounds), was only twenty-five. In the sixth round there was nearly a double knock-out, for both men fell helplessly to the floor. In the next round the "two of them stood panting, with their mouths open, their hands at their sides, and the sweat literally running off them in streams." Cannon was so badly punished that he was insensible for half an hour and had to be bled on the spot. To the end of his life, and he lived until he was eighty-four, Ward swore that he never suffered so much as he did on that July day when he won the championship of England.

By the writers of his day, Ward was considered to be one of the most remarkable fighters the ring had ever produced. He had many detractors, and he was publicly accused of cowardice when he refused to fight Deaf Burke. But Ward was still an active pugilist when he was sixty years of age. He was also wonderfully versatile. He was a clever musician and a painter of some merit. There were exhibitions of his pictures, both in London and Liverpool, and Mr. Henry Stacey Marks, who was a Royal Academician, stated that Ward could do all that Turner could in colour and atmosphere.

"I saw ample evidences of his artistic faculty," said Mr. Marks. "His pictures are painted with great solidity, firmness, and a reckless power of hand, such as one might expect from a practised bruiser. They display his strong appreciation of colour—not true colour, perhaps, in many cases, but often

beautiful in itself—and though frequently strong and brilliant, in no one instance does it betray the slightest suspicion of vulgarity.”

Ward's favourite musical instruments were the violin and the flute. He was also something of a singer, and appeared at a large number of concerts. He was a tavern-keeper for over thirty years, and lived most of his life at Liverpool. His championship belt was presented to him in 1831. He died on the 3rd April, 1884.

No purpose is served by referring to all the men who were prominent during his reign. There were many of excellent calibre, but no one of them who seems to have been of the same class as Deaf Burke. He was not an Irishman, as his name suggests, but a Cockney. He was born in London, in 1809. Whether he was universally regarded as the champion is questionable, but the records state that he was a title-holder for six years. He started to fight when he was still a boy, and his first contest was for a purse of fourteen pounds ; it lasted fifty rounds. This was against Ned Murphy, at Whetstone, near London. Following upon that he defeated Hands the butcher, Black Sambo, Berridge, FitzMaurice, Girdler, and several others. He did not really come into his own, however, until he won a very noteworthy victory over Jack Carter at Woolwich in 1832.

The ring had by then seen its best days. One critic, speaking of many unfortunate happenings, had this to say :

“ Subsequent and previous to the coronation (1821) a vast number of important battles took place, in which men of the highest reputation were engaged and entitled themselves to, and obtained, the approval of their patrons. Unfortunately, however, cases occurred in which there was good reason to believe that temptations too strong for resistance were held out, by which some of those men who stood high in the list of prize-fighters were induced to sacrifice their own character to the desire of gain, and purposely to lose fights upon which large sums had been staked, thereby deceiving their best friends.

“ That similar practices were had recourse to, in horse-racing and other sporting events, there can be no doubt ; but the commission of fraud in one class can be no apology for following



JAMES WARD
Champion of England, 1825

the example in another. The secrets were almost invariably betrayed when the mischief was done ; and those men who for the moment received the reward of their perfidy afterwards experienced the painful consequences of their fall, and were regarded with contempt and distrust even by their seducers—to this day carrying with them the indelible mark of obloquy, which shuts them out from that sympathy always shown towards honest worth in adversity. Although these disgraceful occurrences may not have been so numerous as many are disposed to believe, yet they were sufficiently frequent, and sufficiently mortifying in their results, to create distrust and suspicion. The more distinguished patrons of the ring gradually withdrew their countenance, the subscriptions to the Pugilistic Club were discontinued, and finally the club was altogether broken up. Mr. Jackson relinquished his rooms in Bond Street in 1824, and retired into private life. The last fight in which he took an active part was that between Simon Byrne and Sandy McKay (the Irish and English champions), at Selcy Forest, near Stoney Stratford, on the 2nd June, 1830, when the latter was defeated and subsequently died.

“ It was always remarked, that after any fatal issue to a prize-fight the exhibitions in the prize-ring were to a great extent paralysed. . . . As a proof of the disinclination of juries to expose men to the lash of the law, they have almost invariably, where a doubt could be fairly created, given the prisoners the benefit of that doubt, and acquitted them—an illustration of which was not only afforded in the case of Byrne, but of Deaf Burke, who was afterwards tried for causing the death of this very Byrne, who, by a sort of retributive justice, himself fell a victim to Burke’s superior fighting qualities at No Man’s Land, Herts., on the 30th May, 1833.

“ Other instances of the like sort have occurred ; and they have been the more frequent from the very severe sentences which, where men have been found guilty, were imposed both by the judges of the land at Assizes, and by magistrates at Sessions, the jurors often declaring, on witnessing these hard visitations that, had they anticipated the sentences, they would have acquitted the offenders altogether. Sufficient reasons are here given for the fluctuations in the progress of prize-fighting ; but to these are to be added the lawless proceedings

of a certain class of depredators, who are to be found at all public assemblages, and who, upon the retirement of Mr. Jackson, and the exhaustion of the funds of the Pugilistic Club, from which certain old prize-fighters were paid for preserving order, acted without control, broke in the ring, and in the confusion robbed the bystanders with impunity. The apprehension of personal violence was thus super-added to other causes of distaste, independent of which, these outrageous doings altogether shut out from the view of distant spectators, who wisely confined themselves to their carriages or wagons, the progress of the battle, and thus the chances of witnessing the details of a fair stand-up fight became every day less to be relied upon, and the inducements to a long and expensive journey were diminished in proportion.

"It is not surprising that the combined causes thus detailed—the dishonesty of some of the pugilists themselves, the unrelenting determination of the magistrates to suppress prize-fighting, and the irregularity of the class of followers to whom we have referred—should have reduced the sports of the ring to a low ebb, and operated as a check to that hardy breed of British boxers who were, in times gone by, the pride and boast of their country. Those men who formerly distinguished themselves in the ring are either dead or have been absorbed into other walks of life. The major part who live have turned tavern-keepers and publicans, and are now enjoying the reward of their former good character in prosperous trade."

The fight alluded to between Burke and Byrne took place in 1833. It was a lamentable occasion for all concerned. The actual number of rounds was ninety-nine, and the men were fighting for three hours and six minutes. The seconds were mainly to blame for the terrible scenes, for in the nineteenth round the sponge was thrown up to announce the Irish champion's victory. Burke was insensible on the ground, and only recovered after his ear had been bitten through. From then on, the men were practically thrown at each other. In the final round, Byrne was carried to the scratch in an insensible state, and he only needed to be touched to go down for good. He died two days later.

After this, Burke made a trip to America, where, in 1837, he was matched with a fighter named O'Rourke, who had previously challenged him to a contest in Ireland. This was another lively occasion ; Burke, when on the point of winning, was attacked with revolvers and knives by the onlookers and compelled to flee from the ring. He fought once again in New York, and this time had better luck. Then he returned to England and lost his championship through fouling William Thompson, who is better known as Bendigo. He died of consumption, brought on by dissipation, in 1845—without a shilling in the world.

It is not given to many men to enjoy the renown that came the way of Thompson. A race-horse was named after him, a colonial settlement was called Bendigo, and a liqueur was also invented to do honour to his remarkable personality. Yet he was not acknowledged as a champion by some of the best authorities. "With Jem Ward," said an expert in one of the London newspapers, "the honour remained till the late defeat of Deaf Burke by Bendigo, alias Thompson, when the form of giving Bendigo a belt was gone through by Ward ; but as Bendigo was afterwards challenged to decide the right of the championship by a man of the name of Caunt, of gigantic size, with whom, after a great deal of correspondence, no match was made (and was abandoned as Bendigo sprained his knee in throwing a somersault) the championship of English boxers remained in abeyance till Nick Ward, brother to Jem Ward, threw down the gauntlet, and a match was made between him and Caunt for one hundred pounds a side. This was lost by Caunt, who struck Ward foul, but in a second match for a like sum Caunt was victorious, and proclaimed champion, a belt, by subscription, being subsequently presented to him."

It is quite likely that this was written by one who had no great liking for Thompson ; in any case, the records show that he was champion for four years—from 1845 to 1849. He was one of triplets, and those who should know best say that he owed his *sobriquet* to the circumstance that when he was very young he and his brothers were called Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. The latter name was, of course, conferred on the boy who afterwards became the fighter. When he started

his career, he advertised himself as "Abednego," but this, in course of time, became shortened to "Bednego," and was eventually transformed into "Bendigo." He was born at Nottingham, on the 11th October, 1811, and a detail that should not be lost sight of—for Thompson finished up as a revivalist—is that one of his uncles was a minister of the Gospel. He had an extraordinary mother. "His fighting instinct," says "Thormanby," "he undoubtedly derived from his mother, to whom he was passionately attached. His devotion to her, indeed, was such as sons rarely display among our undemonstrative race, and was more like the sentiment which is so strong among Frenchmen, and yet Mrs. Thompson was hardly the sort of woman to inspire affection. The rest of her family regarded her with horror and dread, for she was a coarse and violent virago—the terror of her husband and of her neighbours. But in her own savage way she loved her fighting son, and he loved her. I have heard Bendigo say that on days when he was fighting far away she would sit and watch the clock which kept ticking to her ears, 'Ben-dy— Ben-dy,' and she felt satisfied that her son was winning. 'By God!' she used to add, 'if it had ticked Ben Caunt, I'd have up and smashed its blasted face.' A terrible woman, but the only woman that Bendigo ever in his life loved."

This was his record :

July 21, 1835. Defeated Caunt, at Appleby House, in twenty-two rounds, for twenty-five pounds a side.

May 24, 1836. Defeated Brassy, at Sheffield, in fifty-two rounds, for twenty-five pounds a side.

January 24, 1837. Defeated Young Langan, at Woore, near Newcastle, in thirty-two rounds, for twenty-five pounds a side.

June 13, 1837. Defeated Bill Looney, at Chapel-en-le-Frith, in ninety-nine rounds (one hundred and forty-four minutes), for one hundred pounds a side.

April 3, 1838. Beaten by Ben Caunt. It was alleged that Bendigo went down without a blow.

February 12, 1839. Defeated Deaf Burke (who was disqualified for fouling), at Heather, Leicestershire, for side stakes of one hundred and twenty pounds a side.

1839. Presented with a championship belt by Jem Ward. September 9, 1845. Defeated Caunt (in a match advertised as for the championship), at Sutfield Green, Oxfordshire, in ninety-three rounds (one hundred and thirty minutes), for stakes of two hundred pounds a side.

As heavy-weights go, Bendigo was an undersized man. He was only a little over five feet nine inches in height, and he never weighed more than twelve stone. He was a fair athlete, and it is related that he once matched himself against the famous cricketer, George Parr, in a "single" cricket match. The contest did not materialize, for in turning one of his frequent somersaults, Bendigo injured his leg. He appears to have been as fond of acrobatics as he was of fighting, but I do not think he deserves to be compared with some of the men who lived before him. He was not always fair in his methods, and that there was a thin streak of cowardice in him is made clear by the fact that when the day was going against him he either descended to mean tactics or else caved in. When he first fought Caunt, he was absolutely unknown. The reporter of "Bell's Life" was very severe on Bendigo after this contest.

"Throughout twenty-two rounds," he remarked, "Caunt stood up with indomitable pluck and perseverance to receive a long way the lion's share of the punishment, while a shiftily opponent always avoided the return by getting down. Caunt, at last, in a rage at these tactics, which he could not counteract or endure, rushed across the ring, called on him to stand up before the call of time by the umpires, and then struck Bendigo before he rose from his second's knee. The referee and umpires having decided that this blow was foul, the stakes were awarded to Bendigo. It was the expressed opinion of the spectators that had Caunt kept his temper and husbanded his strength, the issue would have gone the other way, as he proved himself game to the backbone, while his opponent was made up of dodges from heel to headpiece."

There were three fights between Caunt and Bendigo, and the second went to the former on a foul. In this second battle the men were very unevenly matched. In the three years that had elapsed, Caunt had put on considerable weight

and height. When he entered the ring on the 3rd April, 1838, he stood six feet three inches in height, and scaled fifteen stone five pounds. Bendigo's weight was eleven stone ten pounds, so that he was giving away nearly four stone, whilst he was shorter by nearly five inches. The contest was farcical in the extreme. Caunt, clumsy beyond measure, did nothing but rush and plunge, while Bendigo was for ever ducking and dropping. In one round, Bendigo was nearly strangled; Caunt charged at him, caught him in his arms and hugged him so tightly against the ropes that the breath was practically squeezed out of him. There is a great difference of opinion as to who was winning when Bendigo was disqualified. Some of those present were of the opinion that Thompson had victory within his grasp when he slipped. Others were equally convinced that, in another round, Caunt would have reduced him to exhaustion. Bendigo asserted to the end of his life that his fall was accidental, but there were few who believed him. The fight finished in uproar, and Caunt narrowly escaped being lynched—he left the field on the back of a horse and galloped madly away to escape those who sought his blood.

The fight was a subject of discussion for several months, and the papers of the period were filled with offensive letters, some of which were written on behalf of Bendigo, and some on behalf of Caunt. Before they met again Bendigo fought Deaf Burke, who had just returned from the United States. The "Deaf 'un," at this time, was the boon companion of the Marquis of Waterford, and was rapidly drinking himself to a standstill. He was so badly punished that, to end the fight, he deliberately butted Bendigo with his head. Bendigo, it may be remarked, fought right foot foremost.

This started another long correspondence in the newspapers. The majority of the letters were written by Caunt, who, according to his own statement, was aching to have another go at Thompson. He implored Bendigo to give him another match, but the latter, in no mood to oblige, first fought Crawley and then challenged Tass Parker, who, in 1849, was regarded by some as the champion. Before the articles could be signed Bendigo was arrested at the request of his brother, John, who was a prosperous manufacturer at Nottingham. He was not

in favour of boxing, and he tried by all the means in his power to induce his younger brother to quit the ring. Bendigo was taken into custody on the very eve of the fight, and, as a consequence, his stakes were forfeited. Meanwhile Caunt had gone to America. He returned in 1842, and straightway recommenced his attacks on Bendigo. The latter was slowly recovering from the bad injury to his knee which he had suffered at the Nottingham Steeplechases, and again turned a deaf ear to Caunt's appeals. He had, indeed, given it out that he had retired from prize-fighting and was solely concerned with the management of his new public-house—The Coach and Horses, in St. Martin's Lane, London. This so dissatisfied Caunt that he taunted Bendigo beyond endurance, and articles were finally signed for another fight in September, 1845.

Caunt was now thirty-three years of age, but he was in better condition than he had ever been in his life before. When he started his training he was eighteen stone, but on the day of the fight he was a little less than fourteen stone. Bendigo, who was the older man by three years, weighed exactly twelve stone. Three rings had to be pitched before the police were got rid of. The spectators numbered twelve thousand, "a large proportion of them roughs from Nottingham, who made themselves exceedingly disagreeable to all the respectable sportsmen present." Caunt had been helped in his training by Tom Spring, and he was seconded by Young Molineaux, the negro, and Turner, who was called the "D'Orsay of the Ring." Bendigo's attendants were Jem Ward, Jem Burn, and Johnny Hannan, whilst an ancient pugilist, named Ben Butler, had charge of the bottles. After the men had tossed for corners—which Caunt won—Tom Spring produced Caunt's belt and handed it to Bendigo to show it was the genuine article. Thompson, "full of larks as in the old days before his accident, buckled the belt on in bravado and laughingly offered to bet Caunt fifty pounds that he (Ben) never wore the trophy again."

Followed the customary long dispute about the selection of a referee. Much time was wasted, but at last both sides agreed that Squire Osbaldeston (a very famous sportsman of his day) was the person best fitted for the task. "It was not, however," says a report, "without considerable reluctance

that the Squire consented to act in the face of that ugly contingent of Nottingham 'Lambs,' and it was only when it was strongly put to him that unless he accepted the office there would be no fight, that he undertook the thankless duty." Bendigo's colours were blue with white spots; Caunt's bright orange, with blue border, having the following inscription on a garter in the centre: "Caunt v. Bendigo. For £400 and the Championship of England, 9th September, 1845. May the best man win."

Caunt's appearance created the same sensation that Cribb's had done in earlier days. He had got rid of his mountains of flesh, and was a gaunt example of bone, sinew, and muscle. He was not by any means a handsome man, and his close-cropped hair and his enormous ears, "sticking out like sails," gave him a most forbidding appearance. Bendigo again fought right foot foremost, which was a style he had in common with Ned Turner, the Welshman, Jem Edwards, the Cheltenham pugilist, and the equally celebrated Bishop Sharpe. He was also the first of the crouchers. He stood with his left shoulder much higher than his right, which meant, of course, that he was made to look even shorter than he was. Compared with Caunt, who made use of every inch of his great height, he was a mere pigmy. The opening rounds were what everyone had expected; Bendigo was as slippery as an eel, while Caunt was compelled to waste his strength rushing about the ring. In the third round, he managed to grip Bendigo and throw him across the ropes, but the little man was back on his feet in a twinkling, and thoroughly annoyed Caunt by smashing him on the nose. In the fifth round it became palpable that Caunt had been unwisely trained; he had been so anxious to get rid of flesh that he had sapped his stamina. Blowing and panting, he made an attempt to seize Bendigo, but the latter, ducking skilfully, threw in a succession of terrific punches and badly bruised Caunt's face. There was nearly a tragedy in the eighth round; Caunt caught Bendigo napping, lifted him bodily, threw him across the ropes and then leaned heavily on him. But for the fact that both overbalanced it is likely that the smaller man would have been seriously injured, if not killed. "The Nottingham Lambs," says "Thormanby," "yelled and hooted and swore at Ben for his cowardly conduct,

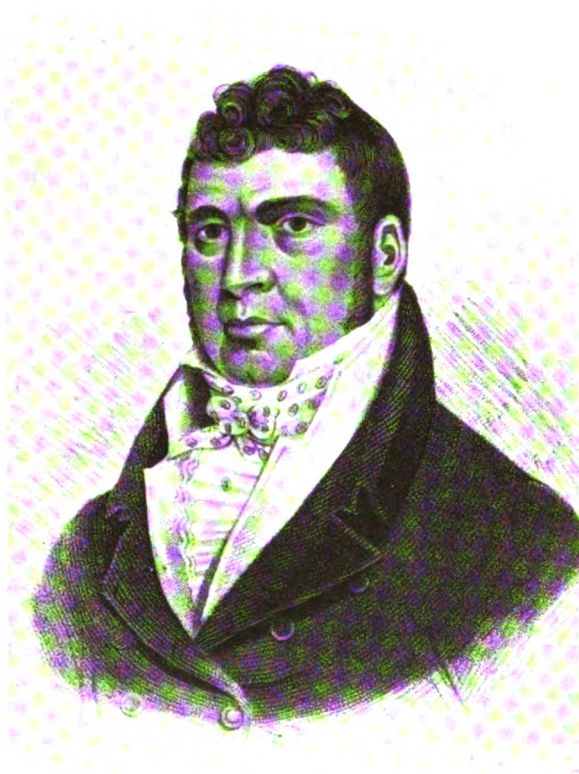
but then, what else was Ben to do? The laws of the ring allowed him to force his antagonist on the ropes and squeeze him there to his heart's content; and as he couldn't punish his wily foe in any other way, who can blame him for adopting the only course open to him?" Long before the fifteenth round was reached, Caunt's old wounds, of which he had many, had been re-opened. It is easy to believe that his face was a horrible sight, but Bendigo gave him no mercy, and continued to pound him with the utmost ferocity. In the sixteenth round, Caunt's upper lip was split in two, but previous to that Bendigo had inflicted a two-inch gash on his right cheek.

There was more than one fight. "Whenever Ben got Bendy against the cords and hugged him, the Nottingham Lambs made a rush to cut the ropes, and over and over again blows were aimed at Ben's head with bludgeons, which only missed him by a hair's breadth. The last three or four rounds were fought amid an awful uproar, and I don't think anyone saw clearly what happened. The referee, however, on being appealed to in the ninety-third round by Bendigo's seconds, declared that Caunt had deliberately gone down without a blow and had consequently lost the fight. Here are his own words: 'I saw every round distinctly and clearly, and when Caunt came up for the last round, he had evidently not recovered from the ninety-second. After the men were in position, Bendigo very soon commenced operations, and Caunt turned round directly and skulked away with his back to Bendigo and sat down on his nether end. He never knocked Bendigo down once in the fight, nor even got him against the ropes in the last round. In my opinion, Caunt got away as soon as he could from Bendigo, fell without a blow to avoid being hit out of time, and fairly lost the fight!' Such was the referee's version of the affair, and the opinion of the finest all-round sportsman in England should carry weight. Ben Caunt's version of what happened, however, threw a different complexion upon the incident."

There is so much bias in all these old reports of the past that it is not easy to form a judgment, but it seems to be generally agreed that on this occasion Caunt fought very badly. He was lacking in judgment, in effectiveness, and in skill. That both he and Bendigo were guilty of many irregu-

larities is clear. In one round, Bendigo struck Caunt beneath the belt, while in another Caunt did his very best to disable Bendigo with his knee. The conduct of the spectators was disgraceful. They perpetually interfered with the fighters, and did other things which were most decidedly to their discredit. There was born a great bitterness between Caunt and Bendigo, but years afterwards a reconciliation was effected between them, and to celebrate this a monster joint benefit was arranged at the National Baths, Westminster Road, London, on February 4, 1850. This was made memorable by a challenge that was thrown out to Bendigo by a man named Tom Paddock. Old though he was, Bendigo accepted and, to the delight of the spectators, defeated his opponent.

This was his last appearance in the ring. He returned to Nottingham, where his eccentricities made him the talk of the town. Here is one neat estimate of him : " When sober, there was not a pleasanter and more agreeable fellow than Bendigo. He was a born clown, and his acrobatic feats, even when an old man, were extraordinary. Moreover, he was a first-class fisherman and an enthusiastic gardener. But when he was drunk, he was the terror of the place. Unfortunately, it took very little liquor to make Bendy mad. His head was not strong, and the alcohol seemed to fly straight to his brain. In his cups, he would hurl the first missile that came to hand at the head of anyone whom he thought to have offended him. I have heard of his stripping a butcher's shop on one such occasion, and flinging the joints one after another at the crowd who were jeering at him. Time after time he was brought up before the magistrate and fined, and I remember how Bendy used to try and mollify one ' beak ' who, like himself, was a lover of horticulture, with a present of a beautiful bouquet of flowers when he was brought up on bail for one of his wild sprees. Yet, with all his violence and outbursts of ferocity, Bendigo had a good heart. His deep and sincere affection for his mother, terrible old Amazon as she was, I have commented upon, and a not less noteworthy and pleasing trait in his character was his extraordinary gentleness to children. Three times he saved persons from drowning, at the risk of his own life. When it was proposed to reward him for his gallantry, he scornfully refused to take a farthing."



ROBERT GREGSON
The First " Fighting Poet "

There is a common belief that Bendigo spent the last years of his life travelling up and down the country preaching the Gospel. There is an element of truth in this ; but even the late Mr. Wilmott Dixon, who was his best biographer, and who certainly would not have said one disrespectful word about him, admitted that he was a religious mountebank. "In 1870," wrote Mr. Dixon, "the revivalists, with Richard Weaver at their head, got hold of Bendigo. He was hawked about the country as a converted character, and the announcement that he was to preach and pray drew thousands. I remember seeing him in London, got up in black coat and white tie, his hair, always straight and sleek, plastered down, and a general look of Stiggins about him when he came up to figure as one of the stars at a revival meeting. It was on this occasion that the late Lord Longford, of sporting renown, met him in Oxford Street, and stopping the ex-champion, looked in amazement at his get-up, and then exclaimed : 'Hullo, Bendy, what's your game now ?' 'Truly, my lord,' replied Bendigo unctuously, 'I am now fighting Satan, and behold, Scripture says, the victory shall be mine.' 'Hope so, Bendy,' replied his lordship, drily, 'but pray fight Beelzebub more fairly than you did Ben Caunt, or else I shall change sides, and all my sympathies will go with Old Nick.' 'My lord,' answered Bendy, 'you backed me against Ben Caunt, and I won you your money, so you've no cause to complain. I beat Caunt and I mean to beat the Devil, so you had better back me again.' "

Bendigo was not always sober when he addressed temperance gatherings. On one occasion, when he was on his way to a meeting near Nottingham, he encountered an old friend whom he had not seen for several years. He did not need much inducement to take a friendly glass, despite the fact that it was his boast that he was a pledged abstainer. When he eventually arrived at the meeting he was hardly in a fit state to talk about temperance, but as usual he was penitent and was next day taken back into the fold. He died on the 23rd August, 1880, from the effects of an accident. He was then in his seventieth year. He fell down a flight of stairs in his own house, fractured three ribs, and a bony splinter perforated one of his lungs.

CHAPTER VIII

BIG LITTLE MEN

The Fives Court, before it was taken down, was well calculated for an exhibition of the gymnastic sports, and held conveniently upwards of one thousand persons. The combatants, when it was first opened to the public, used to set-to upon the ground; a stage was soon afterwards erected, about four feet from the ground, at the expense of Tom Cribb. Richmond was the first man to set-to without his clothes, which gave a better idea to the spectators of the principles of boxing. Upwards of two hundred pounds have been taken at the doors for the benefit of some of the great favourites of the P.R.

—Pierce Egan, 1845.

ALL the big men in the early years of eighteen hundred were not big in stature. There was, for example, Owen Swift, the Londoner, who is perhaps deserving of the title of the world's greatest light-weight. But even to describe him as a light-weight savours of exaggeration, for in the majority of his battles he weighed less than nine stone. He was born in 1814, fought his first battle in 1829, was arrested and tried for wilful murder in 1834, and was again—as has already been recorded—tried for manslaughter in 1839. He fought fourteen contests, won twelve, and had the misfortune to kill two of his opponents. It was he who was responsible for the adoption of a new code of rules in 1838. There is no better way of explaining this than by giving part of an article that was written at the time. It says:

“On looking back to the days when these men (Gully, Cribb, Spring, Ward, and Langan) were in their zenith, and comparing them with the race who now hold their places, it may be said the ring is in ‘its sere and yellow leaf.’ There are few great men to throw down the gauntlet, or men whose names, with few exceptions, are likely to live in story; nor are their backers of sufficient influence or with sufficient inclination, having the means, to revive that spirit which, up to the extinction of the Pugilistic Club, were so apparent.

The best men of the present day, with few exceptions, do not exceed ten stone in weight ; and these are so scattered through the country as scarcely to deserve the name of ' class.' Matches are got up by stealth, and by a combination of many backers of humble circumstances ; and although some few noblemen and gentlemen, sensible of the importance of sustaining the manly and courageous feeling of which the prize-ring was the school, remain, yet the history of the ring, we fear, is drawing to a close. This we cannot but regard as a misfortune, as we are persuaded, and experience has shown, in the absence of the examples of fair play and honourable bearing which the exhibitions in the prize-ring are calculated to display, a system of cowardly assault and treacherous revenge may be adopted, which neither the severity of punishments, nor the exhortations of the learned judges from the bench, will repress.

" We the more regret this state of things when we refer to the new rules of the ring, which were adopted after a fatal fight between Owen Swift (the most accomplished of the light-weights of the present day) and a comparative novice, called Brighton Bill, but whose real name was Phelps. This fight took place near Royston, Hertfordshire, on the 13th March, 1838 ; and from the seconds, under the old rules of Broughton, not being interdicted from carrying their men, even when exhausted, to the scratch, terminated in a total prostration of strength in the men ; for both were carried in a state of insensibility from the ground, and Phelps fell a victim to over-exertion, and an effusion of blood on the brain. Had the new rules been then in force, or antecedently, it is obvious that many lives would have been saved, and prize-fighting, if not altogether, in a great measure stripped of its objections. It is satisfactory to hear that these rules have now been universally adopted throughout the country, and that all new matches are made subject to their wholesome provisions ; and it is only to be regretted that at the moment when a new and humane mode of settling differences is about to be inculcated among the lower orders of the community, to the utter discomfiture of the knife, butting, kicking, gouging, and other barbarous practices, the conservators of the peace should display fresh vigour in suppressing such praiseworthy illustrations of a good old English feeling, and leave men to

the natural impulses of passion, rather than the regulations prescribed by experience and civilization."

Broughton's Rules, for nearly a century, were the only regulations in existence. If they are referred to it will be found that there was one objectionable clause which allowed seconds to carry their men to the scratch even though they were in a state of collapse. It was this ruling which made possible the ghastly scenes at the fight between Swift and Phelps. The latter was comparatively unknown; his only real battle had been against Tom Smith ("The East End Sailor Boy"), whom he had beaten. Phelps's reputation was confined to Brighton, but it is singular that in one rough-and-tumble he had killed an opponent named George Daniels. When he issued his challenge to Swift he was laughed at, but it so happened that Swift was in need of a match, and he at once agreed to take on the young countryman. There has probably never been a more hideous affair than this.

Phelps possessed all the physical advantages—he weighed ten stone, and stood five feet eight, while Swift was five feet six, and scaled exactly nine stone—but there was never a time during the battle when he was a match for the then light-weight champion. The first two rounds were in favour of Phelps, but that was simply because Swift was dealing leniently with him. In the fifth round, Phelps was knocked down with such terrific force that for a time it looked as though he would not get back to his feet. For fifty-odd minutes Phelps was punished unmercifully, but when he pleaded to be permitted to give in his seconds only sneered at him. Swift, too, was feeling the effects, and at one time his throat was tickled with a feather so as to make him vomit. "So the fight went on for an hour and a quarter. Two more miserable-looking objects than the combatants could not well be imagined. Swift, pale as death, sweating profusely, his knees quivering and trembling under him, scarcely able to hold up his arms, his mouth open, the left side of his head badly swollen; Phelps with both eyes almost closed, and every feature of his face knocked out of shape, blowing like a grampus, blood and sweat coursing in mingled streams down his bruised cheeks, his forehead one mass of lumps and contusions, his face of a livid, purple hue, suggestive of

apoplexy. Neither man could box any longer ; it was a mere prolonged test of human endurance, yet no attempt was made to stop the fight. Not even when Phelps was absolutely helpless and could only just stand with his legs wide apart, his eyes closed, his arms hanging by his side, and breathing like a man in a fit ; not even then would his backers allow him to be taken out of the ring."

In at least twenty of the rounds Phelps refused to go on with the fight, but each time he was picked up by his attendants and flung at his opponent. Swift pleaded with Phelps to surrender, but although the latter was perfectly willing his inhuman advisers would not hear of such a proceeding. After the eightieth round, Swift declined to strike any more blows, but when the end arrived, after eighty-five rounds, Phelps' strength was so little that he could hardly shake hands with his conqueror. He fell back senseless into his seconds' arms, and Swift, one moment later, went down in a limp heap. Both were carried away, and for some hours their condition caused the most acute anxiety. It was not until the next day that Swift was pronounced out of danger. While he was poised between life and death, Phelps was being "cupped" and bled. Leeches were applied to his head for many hours. He died without having said a single word, from the effects of the terrible bruises he had received on his forehead.

Immediately after, the Coroner's Jury returned a verdict of manslaughter against Swift and the four seconds, and Swift sought refuge in France. After hiding himself in several provincial towns for some months he eventually reached Paris, where he found Jack Adams, an Englishman, who was running a flourishing boxing academy somewhere near the Bois de Boulogne—the first of its kind that France knew. This Adams was regarded as the only fighter who possessed a chance of beating Swift. He was under the patronage of Lord Henry Seymour, who is generally spoken of as the founder of the French Jockey Club. A younger son of the third Marquis of Hertford, he was born in Paris, lived there all his life, and never once saw England. He was extremely eccentric, immensely wealthy, and although he was a fine horseman and swordsman his principal love appears to have been boxing. It was he who made the match between Swift and Adams, but

among those who contributed to the purse were Lord Petersham, the Marquis of Waterford, the Duc de Chartres, and some members of the Rothschild family.

As a preliminary, however, Swift was sent against a professor of *la savate* named Jules Michod. In the first instant the Frenchman kicked out swiftly, but the Londoner, hopping aside with great agility, struck his antagonist on the sole of the foot, and banged him against the wall. One minute later, he knocked him out with a right and left to the face. This, so far as can be traced, was the first match between an exponent of *la savate* and boxing. The contest between Swift and Adams took place on June 5, 1838. It was a new sensation, for there had never before been such a fist-fight in France, and it attracted a remarkable gathering. There was bad blood between the contestants; Swift was regarded by Adams as an interloper—he had taken from him all his aristocratic acquaintances and pupils.

There were about one hundred people present, and almost every one was a duke, an earl, a count, or a baron. The "keepers" of the Bois de Boulogne had been heavily bribed not to interfere, and a number of them, clad in their quaint uniforms, stood at the ringside and watched the fight. It was still very early in the morning when the men left their corners. Adams was nearly a stone the heavier, and for a time he used his weight to such advantage that victory for him seemed certain. In the second round, however, while falling, he was dealt a blow which was a replica of the one that was delivered on the jaw of George Cook, the Australian, by Georges Carpentier at the Albert Hall, London, in January, 1922. Adams was only an inch or so from the ground when the punch landed on his chin. He immediately sprang up and claimed a foul. The umpires thereupon went into consultation, but, failing to agree, a third person was appealed to, and he decided that as there was considerable doubt the men should fight on. This Adams refused to do, and the contest fizzled out.

After this, Swift and Adams were deadly enemies. They were perpetually brawling, and twice, on the boulevards, they whipped off their coats and fought like dogs. As a consequence, they were again matched. This time Lord Henry

Seymour found the money for Adams, while the Marquis of Waterford and Lord Curgenven backed Swift. It was some time before the contest was brought off, for the Paris newspapers were spending most of their time denouncing what they called "this brutal British pastime." The spot finally selected was a stretch of ground near a mansion that was rented by the Duke of Hamilton, and Bendigo and Deaf Burke were specially imported to act as seconds. Swift won after an hour and fifteen minutes, but he himself stated that he would have won much more quickly had it not been for the fact that throughout the bout he was thinking of Brighton Bill. A few days later, "Galignani's Messenger," an English newspaper printed in Paris, published a strong article, in the course of which the French authorities were requested to prosecute the Englishmen who had broken the law. The French Press were quick to follow this lead, and before the end of the week warrants were issued against the principals and seconds. Bendigo and Burke at once returned home, while Adams, disguised, bolted to Havre, where he stowed away on a ship which took him to England. Swift, who was already a fugitive from justice, was compelled to remain in Paris, and on the advice of Monsieur Lafitte, the principal of the French Jockey Club, he surrendered. The charge against him was that he had inflicted wounds "occasioning an incapacity to labour for less than twenty days." The proceedings were thus reported in one of the Paris newspapers.

"Paris Tribunal of Correction, January 5. We have had cock-fights, steeplechases and the struggles of a representative government; we required but the extraordinary emotions of pugilism to complete our resemblance to our neighbours across the Channel. For this elegant accomplishment we are indebted to the Jockey Club. All Paris remembers the conflict which took place in September at Charenton St. Maur. One of the champions, Adams, was severely wounded. A prosecution was issued against one of the combatants; but both being summoned to appear before the Tribunal of Correction, this day have taken French leave, and are not in court. The King's Advocate read the examination sustained by the conqueror, Owen Swift. His replies were as follows:

"My name is Owen Swift, aged twenty-four, born in

London, residing in Paris, Passage Tivoli. There was a pugilistic encounter on the 5th of September, at Charenton. I was offered fifty louis by some members of the Jockey Club to fight the battle. I don't know who these persons are, but I have already received five hundred francs from Mr. Charles Lafitte, who resides in Place Vendome, No. 18. I have, moreover, received twenty pounds from Mr. Anthony Rothschild to give him lessons in boxing. It was Burke, an Englishman, who trained me for the fight at a place near a farm belonging to Lord Seymour, at Versailles. The training consisted in retiring to rest and rising early, eating good beef, good mutton, and taking a great deal of exercise. I did not know that such fights were forbidden. It was the second I had fought in France. The first took place at the Bois de Boulogne. The expenses were paid by the Jockey Club. I am mistaken in saying there had been only one fight before. There had been another four months before, but Adams and I had wadded gloves. It was Lord Seymour who presided at the first fight. I escaped to France after the fight in which I killed my opponent. I was to have been tried in England at the March Assizes. Adams is now in London.'

"Drake, an Englishman, owner of the enclosure at Charenton, was then questioned by the President. His replies were as follows: 'I did not know that Swift and Adams had come to my premises to fight. They probably came because they knew I was an Englishman. The wager was one hundred pounds. I saw the latter part of the contest. The parties fought long, but there were twenty-five pauses to enable them to take wind. Adams fell senseless. I believe that some mechanics at Rouen, and persons belonging to the Rothschild firm, supplied the one hundred pounds. Adams and Swift had already fought twice together. It is said that Swift has killed three men and won twenty-four fights in England. They had both left France out of fear; Swift had already left England to avoid the Assizes.'

"After Mertol, the rural guard at Charenton, had given his evidence, and stated that a number of carriages and other fashionable vehicles, lined the way to the ground, the Tribunal sentenced Swift and Adams to thirteen months' imprisonment."

"Thormanby's" comment on this report is distinctly

interesting. "The evidence of Mr. Drake," he wrote, "is very funny, surpassing in brazen impudence and sublime disregard of truth even the remarkable statement made by a certain bookmaker, a notorious backer of pugilists, who, not many years since, when charged with assisting at a prize-fight, assured the magistrate that he would not knowingly go within a hundred miles of such a degrading exhibition! Owen's description of the course of training which he had to go through had a curious effect upon the young sporting swells of Paris. For the next fortnight or more, these young exquisites might be seen going at their best pace along the streets and boulevards, muffled up to their eyes in sweaters and great-coats, and to all inquiries by their amazed friends, as to what on earth they were doing in that strange guise, the answer was '*Conditionner pour boxer.*'"

Swift did not see the inside of a French prison, for he left Paris disguised as a woman, and on arrival in England walked straight into a police station, and later took his trial for the manslaughter of Phelps. He was acquitted, but he never fought again. He retired at the age of twenty-five, and for nearly thirty years he was the landlord of The Horseshoe Tavern, in Tichborne Street, London, which, in its day, was probably the most popular sporting public-house in the country. He was a heavy gambler, and he ended his days in the Licensed Victuallers' Asylum, where Jem Ward was also an inmate. Swift died at the age of seventy-six.

Other feather-weights and light-weights who were contemporary with him were Dick Curtis, Johnny Broome, Dutch Sam, Arthur Mathewson, and Barney Aarons. There were very many more, but these were the most prominent. Curtis was known as "The Pet of the Fancy," and he came of fighting stock, for his grandfather, his father, and all his brothers were boxers. It was his brother Jack who lost his life in his contest with the Welshman, Ned Turner. Curtis was the best-looking pugilist of his time, but he was a very tiny man. His weight was eight stone six pounds, whilst he stood five feet four and a half inches. A hard hitter with both hands, he fought thirteen battles and won twelve. The biggest purse he ever received was fifty pounds. He lived at a time when it was the custom to write verses about pugilists. This is



ELIAS SAMUEL (Dutch Sam)

what was said of him, after he had been beaten in the final fight of his career by Perkins, "The Oxford Pet":

Oft had he met the foe with pride
And shone a star on stages gory;
Till over-matched, his best he tried,
Gave in to fate, but fell with glory.
Again his skill he means to try
E'er time shall turn his head-piece hoary,
And show us in another shy,
He has not lost—but lent his glory!

That, however, was a bad guess, for Curtis deserted the ring after his contest with Perkins. In 1838 he was sentenced to three months' imprisonment on the treadmill for taking part as a second in a fatal fight. This seems to have broken his spirit, for he became a complete drunkard and died of consumption in 1843.

Dutch Sam's real name was Elias Samuel. He was a Jew, and was born in Petticoat Lane, Whitechapel, London, in 1775. Although a little man, he was very muscular and his fists were said to be as hard as granite. He fought over one hundred battles in and out of the prize-ring, the majority of which he won. His chief fights were against Tom Belcher. He won the first after fifty-seven rounds, was again successful in the second, but was somewhat lucky to emerge victorious from the third. He was only once defeated in the P.R., and then by Nosworthy. He died at the age of forty-two, but his mantle was afterwards worn by his son, who called himself "Young Dutch Sam." This young gentleman seems to have been a very remarkable character.

"He had not the fire," says one writer, "or the spirited, animated look of the late Sam's face, but nevertheless he was an elegant-looking young fellow. His milling on the retreat was fine—he did not like at all to be hit—and he generally got out of danger. He fought ten battles and won them all. He was a great favourite in the sporting world, and was patronized by several Lords, who frequented his house in Vinegar Yard, Drury Lane. He was a great supporter of masquerades, the theatres, and every species of life the Metropolis afforded. He lived at the rate of three years to one, and the admonitions of the faculty were thrown away

upon him, until that universal enemy of mankind, Death, put a premature end to his career in his thirty-seventh year. There was nothing ferocious about his disposition, and he was a pleasing and entertaining companion. His imitations of several birds were not only excellent but truly musical. His principal fault was that, like most of the boxers, he lived too fast." Young Dutch Sam might have lasted longer had he followed the example of Hooper, the Tinman. He died with a Bible in his hand.

Johnny Broome's title was "Young Ducrow." He was a ten-stone man and was born at Birmingham. He had ten battles and retired undefeated. His mother would have made a good companion for Mrs. Thompson. She was of the same virago type, and it was she who taught her son to fight. She sent him a letter on the eve of his contest with Hannan, and said: "Mind and use your left, and keep away from your man till you find you can reach him with safety; avoid being thrown as much as possible, but don't fail to give Johnny Hannan as many bursters as you can." Broome was a splendid horseman. When he was six years of age he could ride a horse at full gallop, standing on its bare back. The great circus jockey of that period was Andrew Ducrow, who performed at Astley's Amphitheatre, and it was from him that Broome took his name. He entered his own horse for the Grand National, when he was at the height of his fame, rode it himself, and came in fourth. His last fight was against the first Australian boxer to appear in England—Bungaree. Broome had no difficulty in defeating him, but after the contest he took over *The Rising Sun*, in Air Street, Piccadilly. A week before he had been presented with a gold belt at The Castle Tavern, Holborn. He then turned his attention to backing and training prize-fighters, and his biggest discovery was his own brother, Harry, who, in 1851, became the heavy-weight champion.

Broome made at least three fortunes on the turf, but he lost them all. He was also mixed up in many scandals. He was concerned in some way or another with the card case at Brighton in which Sir Roger Tichborne figured. In 1855, when the police were on his track, he committed suicide. Here is a rather wonderful picture of the scene at his funeral:

"None of those who attended the ceremony ever forgot the pathetic picture of the mother standing beside the open grave into which had just been lowered the body of the son whom she loved and admired so passionately. There was not a tear in her dry, stony eyes ; not a muscle on her hard, stern face moved, though her stalwart younger son, Harry, was crying like a child beside her. But, for all that, the woman's heart was broken, and she never smiled again."

This chronicle would not be complete if the name of John (Hammer) Lane was omitted. He was another Birmingham man, and was a rival and also a friend of Owen Swift, but he was a bigger man than the latter, for he weighed eleven stone. His first three fights were not of much account, and the cleverness that was in him was not really demonstrated until, to the stupefaction of even his friends, he defeated Tass Parker, in 1835. This victory brought him into the picture with much certainty, but the seal was definitely set on his reputation when, two years later, he again whipped Parker after ninety-six rounds.

In 1840 sporting circles were much intrigued by an announcement that was published in some of the London papers. It was to the effect that an American, named James Sullivan, was ready to fight any eleven-stone man in England for fifty pounds a side. As no American had, up to that time, appeared in an English ring, the sporting world was naturally agog, but interest became even greater when it was discovered that Owen Swift had promised to find a suitable opponent for the visitor. It may be said right away that Sullivan was not an American at all. The first American to fight in England, indeed, was Charles Freeman, who arrived in 1842. Sullivan was born in the East End of London, and his real name was Frank Amor. He was a bad character, even as a boy, and long before he was out of his teens he was sentenced to fourteen years' transportation. After serving eleven years he migrated from Australia to America, where prize-fighting was just becoming known. According to the records, his first big contest was with a man named O'Connor, for five hundred dollars a side. He won with such ease that he was immediately proclaimed as the greatest fighter in all America. This so turned his head that he at once took ship to England, with

the avowed intention of beating the best who could be found to oppose him. His ridiculous challenges went unheeded for some time, but then Owen Swift caused a real sensation by stating that he was willing to back Hammer Lane for any amount that the pseudo American cared to cover.

Lane was an admirable choice. He was one of five sons, all of whom were prize-fighters. He was a hammer-maker by profession, and it was the hard work he was forced to do in his boyhood days that gave him his strong frame and muscles. But, like Broome—and also like Bendigo, Jem Ward, Dan Donnelly and many others—he had an exceptional mother. "It was she who taught her son how to use his fists as soon as he could toddle, and watched over him with the keenest vigilance all through his career in the ring. Hammer used to say that he had learned all he knew from his mother, and that she was the best trainer he ever had. She kept a strict hand over him, too, would hardly let him out of her sight when his work was done, and if he wasn't in by ten o'clock at night would scour the neighbourhood till she had found him. Such a respect, not to say terror, had Hammer for this strong-minded, strong-handed dame that he obeyed her like a lamb, and it was doubtless to her rigorous maternal control that he owed his sound health and undamaged constitution."

When he met Sullivan, Lane had been beaten once—by Young Molineaux, "The Morocco Prince." Those he had defeated included Harry Ball, Bill Hewson, Jack Green, Owen Swift, Jack Adams, and Byng Stocks, "The Westminster Pet." He would not have been beaten by Young Molineaux but for the fact that he was thrown on his head in the twenty-second round. It is stated that the negro picked him up by the waist, turned him upside down, and then dashed him head foremost on the ground. This fall so crippled Lane that although he fought for another thirty rounds, he was never within sight of victory. The battle with Yankee Sullivan was decided in the same ring where Nick Ward and Ben Caunt had fought for the heavy-weight championship—near Newbury, in Berkshire. Ward and Caunt gave a farcical exhibition for twelve minutes, and after they had been laughed out of the arena it was cleared for the smaller couple.

The betting was six to four on Lane, but the odds were

scarcely justified, for he was several inches shorter than his opponent, while his weight was nearly a stone less. Up to the seventh round, Lane was an easy winner, but in this round, in attempting to hit Sullivan with his right and left, his right connected with his antagonist's elbow. He dropped the arm at once, yelled something incoherent, and when he returned to his corner almost fainted. It was then found that he had broken a bone. The arm was so painful that it could not be touched. For the remainder of the fight—as another famous pugilist had done before him and as many have done since—he fought with one hand, and, as was reported at the time, “battled better with this one member than anyone had ever seen him fight with two.” He was so nimble on his feet that he never allowed Sullivan to come within striking distance.

Lane was always on the retreat, but the agony he endured was so great that after another six rounds he was whimpering with torture. It is extraordinary to find that Sullivan fought with oakum in his hands. This apparently was allowable, for the articles distinctly said that nothing was to be held in the hands made of wood or metal. “Sullivan got home some very heavy hits with his closed fists which turned the tide of battle in his favour. Three times in succession he knocked Hammer down with slashing right-handed hits under the left eye. The Brum was all abroad. The pace and the pain had exhausted him. He had done all that a brave man could do, robbed as he was of his chief weapon. His bolt was shot, though his spirit was as good as ever. Then Owen Swift stepped into the ring and said he would not allow Lane to fight any more, so victory went to Sullivan after thirty-five minutes of tremendous fighting. But there was not a soul there who did not feel certain that had Hammer Lane had the use of both his hands he would simply, to use the forcible phraseology of his Amazonian mother, “have smashed Yankee Sullivan into smithereens.”

Sullivan's end was as mysterious as it was tragic. He was secretly assassinated by a Vigilante Committee in the Far West of America. Whether he deserved this fate is uncertain, but he had undoubtedly developed into a notorious character.

CHAPTER IX

A GREAT CHAMPION

He was lying in his coffin when we saw him on Friday. The muscles of the face stood out boldly for such a wasted skeleton, and there was still much of the life expression left in his half-closed eyes. The box, with the trophies and the belts, was not there, but his own photograph with his medals on his breast, and the print of the "Farnborough Morning," took us sadly back from that pale and still troubled face to the days of his lusty prime. On the wall above it, and keeping, as it were, watch and ward to the last over the coffin, whose brass plate bore no vaunting inscription, hung the photograph of Harry Brunton, the faithful second in his battles, and, as Tom was wont to say of him, "the kindest soul to me that ever breathed" and faithful to the last.

—"Sporting Life," London, November 11, 1865.

ALTHOUGH Ben Caunt appears in some of the lists as the champion of England, he is not deserving of the title. He was beaten by Bendigo and also by Nick Ward, who, in 1841, claimed the championship. It may more fairly be said that the title was in abeyance for some years. There were any number of claimants to it, but the period between 1845 and 1850 was such a bad one for prize-fighting that it may well be passed over. "In the minor combats," said one historian, "there were many disgraceful squabbles, and for the want of a due observance of the new rules the most unsatisfactory results followed. These mischiefs were increased by the ruffianly interference of partisans who, instead of preserving a clear stage and no favour, when they found their calculations in danger of being defeated, rushed to the roped arena, and by threats, violence, and disgusting interferences endeavoured either to secure victory for their own man, or to lead to such wrangles as precluded the possibility of an impartial decision, thereby saving their bets."

The ring was, indeed, in a bad way. The happenings referred to were extremely numerous, and it is not astonishing to find

that at the majority of the fights arranged the "Corinthians"—to give the name which was again becoming popular—were conspicuous by their absence. The bout between Caunt and Ward, which was for one hundred pounds a side, was a particularly offensive exhibition. Ward went down in every round to escape punishment; and in the seventh round Caunt (it is said), irritated by the repetition of these practices, struck him on the head while he was down on both knees and thus lost the match. Another contest was arranged, but this was very little better than the first, for Ward pursued the same tactics. After fighting for thirty-five rounds, he was knocked out. Caunt, in possession of a belt which had been presented to him by his friends, later visited the United States, where he failed to get a match. When he returned, a year later, he brought with him Charles Freeman, the American giant—a moderately good fighter who stood six feet ten and a half inches in height, and weighed eighteen stone. Caunt's last fight was against Bendigo. It is obvious that he had a streak of yellow in his constitution, for he lost the contest through going down without a blow.

In 1849 Tass Parker claimed the title. He was not much cleverer than Caunt, and it is doubtful whether he would have come into prominence at all but for the fact that he fought one remarkable bout with Perry, the Tipton Slasher. This was in its sixty-seventh round when the police interfered. In 1850, Perry was acclaimed as a quite worthy champion. Many fables have been told about him, but he was unquestionably a capable fighter when at his best. He was born in 1819 and his real weight was in the neighbourhood of thirteen stone. His earliest fights were against Dogherty, whom he defeated in seven rounds; Spilsbury, whom he beat in nineteen rounds; and Scunner, whom he defeated in thirty-one rounds. After that he was conquered by Freeman, forfeited to Tass Parker, and then defeated Parker after twenty-three rounds. He was awarded the championship after his fight with Tom Paddock, but he only held it for one year, for he then lost on a foul to Harry Broome. Two years later Broome refused to enter into a second match with Perry, and retired from the ring. This allowed Perry to regain his old position, and although Nat Langham was generally

thought to be his superior, he managed to retain his title until he was toppled by Tom Sayers.

It would be ludicrous to speak of the Tipton Slasher as a boxer. He was purely and simply a fighter. He owed his victories to his strength rather than to his skill. He was not especially courageous, as was proved when he fought Freeman, for we are told that he was awed by the tremendous height and reach of his opponent, while he made no attempt to fight the American in a fair, stand-up way. He was well thrashed, but a perusal of the reports of the contest makes it palpable that if the Slasher had gone in and fought, instead of running away, he would have won. Prior to meeting Sayers, Perry's only real achievement was his defeat of Paddock; but even so, it has to be remembered that the latter was giving away many pounds. The Slasher was an exceptionally powerful man, but it is difficult to understand why so many compliments were showered on him.

If I were asked to name the greatest fighter of all time I think I would be inclined to nominate Tom Sayers, although perhaps I would also have to resist a temptation to bracket him with Jem Mace and Robert Fitzsimmons. Sayers was an amazingly clever pugilist. He was always fighting heavy-weights, although his own weight was never much more than ten stone ten pounds. He was, of course, lucky in one respect; he arrived when good heavy-weights were as scarce as blackberries in February. He was born on the 17th May, 1826, at Brighton, in the humble locality known as Pimlico, which was nothing but a row of small houses leading out of Church Street to North Lane. His father was a shoemaker, and a Sussex man born and bred—not an Irishman, as some writers have averred. Tom Sayers was put to work when he was seven years of age, and his first employment was helping fishwives, and pushing off hog-boats on the beach. He was a fighter even then, but he was sixteen years of age when he engaged in his first real contest. This was at Newmarket Hall, near the Brighton Race-course. It was a sort of novices' competition, which Sayers won. He was, at the time, an apprenticed bricklayer. He worked for a while on the Brighton and Lewes Railway, and then, when he was about twenty-three, moved to London, where, for further years, he was employed

as a bricklayer on the works then in progress for the North-Western Railway Company at Camden Town. His biographer states that he was noted for his cheerful disposition, his readiness for a spree, and his fearlessness of any biped who might offend him, regardless of height, weight, or strength.

The chief fistic celebrity of the Camden Town neighbourhood was a certain Abraham Couch. He was a biggish man, standing six feet in height, and weighing something over twelve stone. Hearing that Sayers was the champion of his set, he challenged him to a bout. Sayers, at this period, weighed but nine stone four pounds. A ten-pound note was put up for competition, and on the 19th March, 1848, the men met at Greenhithe, near London. "Sayers," it was written some years afterwards, "dated his success in life from this fight. He was comparatively a novice, for he had never seen a prize-ring before, while his adversary had been twice crowned with victory. Sayers, in this his maiden effort, proved himself too quick and severe in his delivery for Couch to afford him a chance. Sayers' debut was a credit to him, and the fight was one of the best that had been seen for some time; a gamer chap than Couch never doffed a shirt, while Sayers' gameness could not be spoken of, as he received nothing in the fight to test it. His friends were so satisfied with him that he received the whole of the stakes, while the loser was not forgotten for his courage and manly conduct." The fight lasted six rounds, or twelve minutes and twenty-eight seconds.

Sayers' next battle was against a waiter, named Dan Collins, who was employed at The Castle Tavern, Holborn, which was then under the management of Tom Spring. This took place about a year later. Sayers' height was five feet eight and a half inches, and he weighed nine stone twelve pounds, while Collins was exactly ten stone and was an inch the taller. The stakes were fifty pounds; Spring was the backer of the waiter, whilst Sayers' principal attendant was Jack MacDonald, who, by a curious chance, afterwards became the adviser and second of Heenan, the American. It is related that the journey to Eden Bridge, in Kent, was enlivened by the presence of a number of gentlemen, officers of the Guards, and sporting Corinthians; but the fight had only gone nine rounds when

it was interrupted by the police. In the sixth round a magistrate made his way to the ropes, and with the Act of Parliament in his hand, demanded a hearing. He was immediately surrounded by a group of enthusiasts who threatened him with all sorts of pains and penalties unless he quitted the scene. The magistrate thereupon retired, but in the ninth round returned.

"His Worship," said one of the reporters present, "still alone, not even accompanied by a constable, drew forth the Act and called upon all to be aiding and assisting. He was assured that Her Majesty had not a more loyal set of subjects than those present, as was proved by their conduct at that moment. His Worship replied that his duty had brought him there, upon information of the contemplated breach of the peace, and that duty, at whatever personal peril, he would perform. He trusted that some responsible person present would pass his word that the fight should not continue, and he would retire. Accordingly the ropes were unrove, the stakes drawn from the turf, and with many a longing look at the pretty little spot the groups moved off. A council of war was now held. The articles provided that in the event of magisterial interference the referee, or stakeholder, should name the next place of meeting, if possible, on the same day.

"The backers of Sayers were reasonable in their views, but his noisy followers, among whom was Tom Paddock, then candidate for the championship, were offensively conspicuous. They were for defying the law, order, decency, and common sense, and then and there, heedless of the consequence to the more reasonable parties, finishing the affair, on the presumption that they had a decided advantage at the time of the interruption. It was now half-past two o'clock, and the word was given to return to the train. Owing, however, to the obstinacy of some, the stupidity of others, and other less excusable motives, the parties who pretended such anxiety to get the affair off burnt daylight till twenty-five minutes past three, when, all being in their seats, the train returned to Red Hill. A convenient spot chosen, after the needful time for arranging the ring, etc., the men showed, and, being once more ready, at a quarter past four o'clock began the adjourned fight."

The result was a draw. After one hour and fifty-two minutes of very strenuous battling the referee entered the ring and declared that it was too dark for any more fighting. Soon after this, Sayers was taken up by Peter Crawley, and it was he who arranged the second fight with Collins. Under the tuition of Crawley Sayers had made remarkable improvement, and he defeated the waiter so decisively as to induce the Special Correspondent of "Bell's Life" to say that he would prove a tough customer to "whoever next had dealings with him in the fistic line." Collins, however, put up a game struggle; he did not surrender until forty-four rounds had been fought. Sayers quickly found that his lack of weight was a serious disadvantage. He was too light for the middle-weights and the heavy-weights, and too heavy for the nine-stone men. He was unemployed for well over a year, but then, to the delight of those who were supporting him, he was given a match with Jack Grant, of Southwark.

Grant at this time was undeniably the best man of his weight in the country. When he consented to meet Sayers it was taken for granted that he would win in a couple of rounds. Grant must have thought so himself, for he did not go into training. Sixty-four rounds were fought (the exact time was two hours and a half), and the end arrived with both men on the ground. This fall had lamentable consequences for Grant. He dropped with Sayers on top of him, and the latter's knee connecting with his stomach he suffered such severe internal injuries that he had to be conveyed on a railway truck to a neighbouring public-house, where he was medically attended. Sayers was still very much of a novice, but this victory gave him such a reputation that it became a common saying that he would one day acquire the championship.

Another six months went by, and then Sayers was matched with Jack Martin, who was a pupil of Ben Caunt's. Sayers won in the twenty-third round, and Martin was so badly punished that he was unconscious for nearly an hour. Said a reporter: "A few more such battles as this would go far to restore the fallen fortunes of the prize-ring. It was, in truth, a mill of the old school. More punishment was inflicted in fifty-five minutes than we have seen in two hours in any encounter during the last few years. There was not a single

appeal to the referee, nor was there a single action on the part of either man throughout the fight at which the greatest stickler for fair play could take exception. Tom Sayers' conduct was upright, and his tactics as fair as ever. He, on several occasions, refrained from punishing his opponent when he was down on one knee only—a position in which he was perfectly entitled to strike him, and one in which he might have administered pepper with excellent effect. He used his left hand with greater precision than in his battle with Grant, and his deliveries appeared altogether heavier than in that encounter. He has greatly improved since that time, and we fancy that he will prove a teaser to anyone near his weight who may have the temerity to oppose him."

Late that year (1853) Sayers met with his first defeat. His conqueror was Nat Langham, who seems to have been one of the best eleven-stone men of any age. In the early part of his career, Langham defeated Ellis in eight rounds, Lowe in forty-three rounds, Campbell in twenty-seven rounds, Gutteridge in eighty-five rounds, and Sparkes (the Australian) in sixty-seven rounds. Then, in 1851, he fought a memorable battle with Harry Orme, which lasted nearly three hours. The number of rounds fought was one hundred and seventeen, and Langham was beaten by being heavily thrown. He had been out of the ring for some time when he was persuaded to meet Sayers; for two years he had been in business at Cambridge. The fight was for one hundred pounds and the championship of the middle-weight division. Langham was by no means an elderly man, but his title, even then, was "Old Nat." He had great difficulty in getting down to the stipulated weight (eleven stone), but Sayers, who took the ring at ten stone ten, was at least five pounds heavier than he need have been. This is what was said of the sixty-first and last round:

"Tom, on coming up, was very groggy, and his friends cried out, 'Take him away,' but he persevered. He lunged out, but was not within distance. Nat coolly waited for him, and, as he came again, caught him heavily on the right eye, completely closing the account on that side. Tom lunged out wildly, and Nat, stepping back, met him, as he came, with a well-directed left-hander on the left eye, which knocked

him down and put up the last shutter. Poor Tom was now quite in darkness ; Alec Keen, seeing there was no hope for him, threw up the sponge, and Nat Langham was proclaimed the victor, after a gallant struggle of two hours and two minutes. So delighted was Nat at his good fortune, that, although he was previously extremely weak on his pins, new strength seemed to come to him, and, after having shaken hands with his fallen opponent, who shed tears of disappointment, he cleared the ropes at a bound, and threw his hands above his head as if waving a cap of victory."

Youth was not served in this contest, but Langham won because of his longer reach. For something like forty rounds he confined his attention to Sayers' body, and then, like the good general he was, changed his tactics and went for his adversary's face. This fight was run under the auspices of the Pugilistic Benevolent Association, an entirely new body which had come into existence to take the place of the old Fairplay Club.

So as to keep up an ancient fashion, Langham shortly afterwards opened the Cambrian Stores, in Castle Street, Leicester Square, London—for, as someone once very truly observed, "your pugilist is the publican in chrysalis, so sure as the caddis shall become a Mayfly in due season"—while Sayers took over the management of the Bricklayers' Arms, in Camden Town. He made several attempts to tempt Langham into another fight, but "Old Nat" was too wise to risk losing the title he had so hardly won.

Sayers' next fight was with George Sims, whom he defeated in four rounds, and he then had one of the most terrific battles of his career with the celebrated Harry Poulson, of Nottingham. Poulson's height was five feet six inches, but he weighed, in perfect condition, twelve stone ten pounds. Sayers scaled ten stone eleven pounds. His preparation was a rather hurried affair, but Poulson, whose work as a navvy made him as hard as nails, was specially trained for the fight by Bendigo. The betting, when the men appeared in the ring, was seven to four on the provincial ; Sayers' one advantage was that he was ten years younger than his opponent. The fight occupied three hours and eight minutes, during which time one hundred and nine rounds were contested. The *coup de*

grace was a right-hander to the jaw which put the veteran Poulson down for several minutes. He was quite blind, whilst Sayers was also in a woefully bad state.

"We are aware," mentioned one scribe, "that since this match was made many things have occurred to harass Tom's mind, and that he had difficulties to contend with which, we trust, will not exist in future matches. He does not want for friends, and, we doubt not, with steadiness and good conduct, he may now easily find himself on the high road to prosperity. By his quickness on his legs, his steadiness and excellent judgment, he not only astonished his adversary and his backers, but completely took his own friends by surprise."

The conquest of Poulson was an achievement that Sayers had every right to be proud of. His friends loudly stated that the time had come for him to fight for the heavy-weight championship, and in 1855 it was decided to raise, by public subscription, a sum of money to purchase a belt of greater intrinsic worth than the one which had been lost during the quarrels between Bendigo, Caunt, and the Tipton Slasher. A little over one hundred pounds was collected, the belt was bought, and the committee concerned in its purchase issued the following as the conditions on which it should be held :

"This belt shall not be handed over to any person claiming the championship until he has proved his right to it by a fight. Any pugilist, having held it against all comers for three years, without a defeat, shall become its absolute possessor. The holder shall be bound to meet every challenger of every weight who shall challenge him for the sum of two hundred pounds a side, within six months after the issue of such challenge, within the three years. He shall not be bound to fight for less than two hundred pounds a side. At the final deposit for every match within the three years, the belt shall be delivered up to the committee until after the battle. On the belt being given to the winner of any championship fight, he shall deposit such security as shall be deemed necessary, in the hands of the committee, to ensure the above regulation being carried out."

When it became known that the trophy was for open competition, every fighter in England shrieked out a defiance. Harry Broome was one of the first to issue a challenge, but

he was immediately followed by Tom Paddock, Aaron Jones, the Tipton Slasher, and dozens of others. Many people were distinctly of the opinion that Perry was still far and away the best man in the country, and it was to him that the majority of the challenges were directed. He made an arrangement to meet Aaron Jones, but this match did not materialize owing to Jones meeting with an accident. Meanwhile Broome and Paddock had fought fifty-one rounds, but although Paddock won it is not on record that he was ever presented with the belt. It remained, apparently, in the hands of the committee until Jones, having recovered from his mishap, was signed up to fight Sayers. This fight took place on the banks of the Medway on the 19th February, 1857.

"Owing to the puritanical persecution to which the ring had been for some time subjected," we are informed, "a line of country had to be selected which had, for a long time, been untried. Although bills were circulated, stating that a train would leave the Great Northern Station, at King's Cross, on Tuesday, at nine o'clock, it was at the eleventh hour considered that this locality would on the present occasion be too warm, and therefore an alteration was deemed prudent. This alteration could not be made public at so late a period, and it was only those who happened to consult the initiated at the benefit of the Pugilistic Benevolent Association, on the previous Monday evening, who got a clue to the real state of the case. The consequence was that on the Tuesday morning, at the Fenchurch Street Station, there were at the utmost one hundred and thirty persons, including a considerable number of patri-cians and a very small proportion of the professors of the noble art, while of the roughs and other noisy demonstrators there was an almost total absence. These gentry and some few unfortunates of the higher class hastened to the Great Northern terminus at the hour named in the handbills, and great was their disappointment, and loud their indignation, at finding themselves sold.

"The start from Fenchurch Street took place at eight o'clock precisely, and by nine o'clock Tilbury was reached, where all at once embarked in a vessel provided for the purpose. In order to throw dust in the eyes of the 'Blues,' it was determined to proceed straight to the mouth of the river, and, in



THOMAS SAYERS
Champion of England, 1857—1860

the face of a stiff gale from E.N.E., the journey to The Nore was effected in excellent style. After about an hour's tossing among the billows, the river was re-entered, and the vessel sped homewards until a spot was reached not far from Canvey Island, where Freeman and the Tipton Slasher fought."

Aaron Jones was a Shropshire man with a somewhat curious record. After each of his bouts it was his custom to take a rest of at least eighteen months. He was five years younger than Sayers, nearly four inches taller, and about sixteen pounds heavier. Sayers' colours for this occasion—it was still the custom to tie handkerchiefs to the stakes—were light grey and white, while Jones favoured white with a blue check. After sixty-two rounds the contestants were so exhausted that the fight to all intents and purposes was called off. This is what was written at the time :

"In the sixty-second round, after some slight exchanges, the men stood still, looking at each other for some time, their seconds covering them with rugs. At length the referee and umpires called on them to go in and finish. Both went to the scratch, but on Sayers approaching Jones, the latter retreated to his corner, and Tom, in obedience to the orders of his seconds, declined going to fight him there. It was getting dark, and it was clear that Jones and his friends were determined not to throw a chance away. The referee once more called on Jones to go to the scratch, which he did, but with precisely the same result, and the referee, seeing that Tom was not strong enough to go with prudence to finish on his adversary's ground, and that Jones was unwilling to try the question at the scratch in his then exhausted state, ordered the men to shake hands, leaving the motion as to future hostilities to a future day. Both were severely punished ; each had a peeper closed ; Jones's right was fast following his left, and his right hand was injured, so that a second meeting the same week was not to be thought of. The fight lasted exactly three hours."

The renewed battle, for two hundred pounds and an additional wager of one hundred pounds, was fixed for Tuesday, the 10th February, 1857, on the same spot at Canvey Island. Tom Sayers was then thirty-one years of age. He knocked out Jones in the eighty-fifth round after two hours' fighting.

Jones was again blinded and otherwise very badly punished, but Sayers was practically unmarked. His very next step was to challenge the Tipton Slasher. This created a tremendous sensation, and he was plainly told that he was crazy even to think of such a proceeding. Sayers' weight was still well below eleven stone, whilst the Tipton Slasher was only a few pounds short of fifteen stone. Perry treated the match with contempt. He was annoyed to think that public opinion was forcing him into a contest with a man so much smaller than himself. He scorned the idea of defeat, but so, for that matter, did Sayers. A pen picture of the Slasher, written at this time, may be found of interest. It read :

"From the waist upwards he possessed one of the finest and most herculean busts we ever saw, but his pins being somewhat the shape of a letter K, considerably deteriorated from the beauty of his configuration, which, had his understandings been straight, would have been the perfection of manly strength. He was a game, resolute fellow, but never possessed any very strong claims to scientific acquirements. He was a terrific hitter with his right when he did get home, but was always rather slow in his deliveries. As soon as the match was made he gave up his public-house in Spon Lane, Tipton, and commenced gentle exercise and gradually got off his superabundant weight. About six weeks before the fight he betook himself to the neighbourhood of Box Moor, where, by steady work, he got himself as fit as a man of his age and former somewhat fast habits could be expected to do."

The reference to the Slasher's public-house is misleading ; it needs to be explained that he sold it so as to stake the proceeds on the fight. As a matter of fact he backed himself to win with every penny he had in the world, and it is also believed that he mortgaged his furniture, his clothing, and even his watch and rings. The controversy which raged just before the fight was remarkable, but it was generally agreed that Sayers' chances of success were too tiny to be worthy of consideration. The Slasher had caused it to be known that the fight was to be his last, and he had further announced that it was his intention to go out in a blaze of glory. The scenes at Fenchurch Street Station have been made memorable by the reams that have been written about them. "The frantic,

noisy, blackguardly rabble," said "Thormanby," "surging round the entrance to the station; the crowd of swells in fashionable shooting-jackets and cloth caps, all pushing their way with fierce eagerness to the ticket office, as hansom after hansom disgorged its fare; the awful fight for tickets; the excited mob of gentlemen, publicans, tradesmen and pugilists on the platform—the desperate attempts to repel the assaults of the roughs, who made most determined charges at the doors; the terror of the non-sporting passengers, for it was an ordinary train—women screaming and almost fainting with fright, as swarms of big, broken-nosed men invaded the carriages in which they were peacefully seated: all these things come back to me vividly as I write."

After the fighters and their supporters had been tossed about in the Channel for some hours, the Isle of Grain was reached, where a ring was fixed. Sayers' seconds were Nat Langham and Bill Hayes. The Tipton Slasher's were Tass Parker and Jack McDonald. Sayers' colours were blue with white spots, while Perry had the famous blue bird's-eye. The betting was seven to four on the Slasher.

The men were in sharp contrast. Perry had been brought down to fourteen stone two pounds, but his proportions were nevertheless colossal. He was a mountain, while Sayers was a veritable anthill. The smaller man's weight was given at ten stone eight pounds, but even so he was at least five pounds heavier than he should have been. He gave away something like fifty pounds in weight, and nearly five inches in height. His condition was, however, magnificent, while the Slasher was perhaps a little too finely drawn. The Slasher's age was said to be thirty-eight, but as a matter of fact he was well over forty.

Perry fought a brainless fight. Instead of waiting on his more agile antagonist, as he should have done, he made the pace from the start, which was the equivalent of asking for defeat. He was only a lumberer at the best of times, but to attempt to chase Sayers was about as lamentable a display of tactics as has ever been known. Before the fight he had publicly stated that it was his intention to wait for Sayers to lead, but he seemed to have forgotten all about that the moment time was called. Had he shown more intelligence, it is certain

that Sayers would have been quickly pounded into a state of insensibility, for the Slasher was a clever counter-hitter, while in a slow fight, when he was allowed to stand his ground, he was very nearly without an equal. But as a maker of the pace he was ludicrously inept. There was no judgment in anything that the Slasher did. As soon as the scratch was toed he flung himself at Sayers, delivered a light blow to his opponent's skull, executed another blind rush, swung wildly, and so compelled Sayers to fall. This early success gave him even greater confidence, and in the second round he made a perfectly ridiculous rush which caused him to run full-tilt on to a right-handed punch which brought blood from his mouth. He stood stock-still, too astonished to move, but while he was bewilderingly asking himself what he should do next Sayers leaped in and again struck him on the nose. This so annoyed the Slasher that he indulged in a series of elephantine charges, but scarcely one of his blows connected with anything more solid than thin air. He was as mad as a hatter, and, as a consequence, Sayers had the easiest of tasks in keeping out of harm's way. The second round lasted half an hour, but it was in favour of the Slasher, for it ended with Sayers on the floor. This was the first knock-down to Perry. Dodging, swaying, ducking, and retreating, Sayers gave a delightful exhibition of defensive boxing in the third round. He was rapidly exhausting the Slasher, but the latter had not sense enough to see that he was really defeating himself. Although Sayers was down again in this round, it was getting more and more obvious that the cumbersome Perry had shot his bolt.

In the fourth, fifth, and sixth rounds, Sayers continued to dance about the ring, but it was not until the eighth that the Slasher's wind went. He was missing with great frequency, and once, in the eighth round, he retired to his corner, so as to rest. In the ninth round the Slasher was extremely leg-weary. His courage was still high, but any ability he had to inflict punishment had vanished for good. Sayers was boxing with extraordinary skill, and many times in quick succession he dashed his left hand against Perry's mouth. The round ended with the Slasher taking three tremendous punches in the face. He went down and Sayers fell over him. The final round—the tenth—was rather pitiful. The Slasher crawled

very slowly to the scratch and made a weak attempt to lead. Sayers easily avoided the blow, and, jumping in, delivered a terrific punch to the mark. Perry was badly staggered, but before he could fall Sayers whipped in an upper-cut which split the Slasher's lip. He was bundled to his corner, but it was only after much attention that he was got ready again to reach the scratch. His appearance was awful; his face was unrecognizable, while streams of blood dropped down to his chest from his gashed lip. There were loud demands that the contest be stopped, and Owen Swift, the Slasher's principal backer, realizing that his man had not one chance in a million of winning, stepped into the ring and declared that he would not allow him to fight any more. Perry was very unwilling to surrender, but the matter was taken out of his hands when a second or so later the sponge was skied. This had hardly been done when the police appeared. They had been sent to stop the fight, but they arrived just too late to carry their intention into effect. The exact time of the contest was one hour and forty-two minutes.

For weeks afterwards Sayers was accused of cowardice. It was said of him that in retreating he had displayed the white feather. This was such a ridiculous contention that it hardly warrants argument. His methods were the proper ones, for it is palpable that if he had attempted to mix matters with the Slasher the superior weight and strength of the latter would have sent him down to crushing defeat in a very few minutes. It was not his seconds' fault that the Slasher was conquered. They endeavoured by all the means in their power to induce him to change his tactics, but, stubborn man that he was, he refused to listen to this well-meant advice. "'Taint no good shakin' your puddin' head, Slasher," shouted one of his attendants to him, mid-way in the fight. "There aint nothin' in it." This was probably the truest thing said during the battle. From first to last the Tipton Slasher fought brainlessly and badly. He stated afterwards that it was beneath his dignity to stand and wait for a man so much smaller than himself. He only landed one real blow, but that was so weighty that the marvel is that Sayers was able to weather it. It was one of the Slasher's heaviest, and it landed squarely on Sayers' forehead. He fell like a stricken ox, but to the

amazement of all present, he came up to the scratch when called, and, save for a big lump above his eyes, appeared to be none the worse.

There was plenty of sympathy for the fallen champion, and on the voyage back to Strood, Sayers went round among the Corinthians and made a collection for Perry. It amounted to twenty-two pounds five shillings, and this sum was augmented by a gift of one hundred pounds which was subscribed by some people in London. The Slasher undoubtedly needed the money, for he had lost everything he possessed ; he had neither a coin, a stick, nor a stone in the world. His career ended, he went back to beerhouse-keeping. He was an exceedingly heavy drinker, but he lived to see Sayers and many others succumb to dissipation. He died in his sixty-first year, in his own house near Wolverhampton. He was talking to some friends when he was seized with a fit of apoplexy, from which he never recovered. Mr. David Christie Murray saw him just before he passed, and he has left this as a word picture of the declining days of a very remarkable man :

“ He was dying when I saw him again, and his vast chest and shoulders were shrunk and bowed, so that I wondered where the very framework of the giant had fallen to. He was despised, forgotten, and left alone, and he sat on his bed with an aspect altogether dejected and heartless. In his better days he liked ‘ a stripe of white satin,’ which was poetic for a glass of Old Tom. I carried a bottle of that liquor with me, and a quarter of a pound of bird’s eye. He did not know me, and there was no speculation in his look ; but after a drink he brightened. When I entered the room he was twirling an empty clay pipe with a weary, listless thumb and finger, and the tobacco was welcome.

“ ‘ They mought ha’ let me aloon,’ he said, when his wit grew clear. ‘ I held the belt for seventeen ‘ear (I think he said seventeen but “ Fistian ” is not at hand, and I can but make a guess from memory). ‘ Tum’s a good ‘un. I’ve sin ‘em all, and I niver sin a better. But he owed to ha’ let me be. There was no credit to be got in hammerin’ a man at my time o’ life. All the same, tho’, I thowt I should ha’ trounced him. So I should if I could ha’ got at him, but he fled hither and he fled thither, and was walkin’ about me like

a cooper walkin' round a cask. An' I was fule enough to lose my temper, an' the crowd began to laugh and gibe at me, and I took to racin' after him, an' my wind went, an' wheer was I then? He knocked me down—fair an' square he did it. The only time it iver chanced to me. I put everything I had on that fight, an' here I bin.' "

Could anything be more pathetic?

CHAPTER X

THE MOST MEMORABLE FIGHT

Serious Governor : " I am surprised, Charles, that you can take any interest in these repulsive details ! How many rounds (I believe you term them) do you say these ruffians fought ? Um, disgraceful, the Legislature ought to interfere ; and it appears that the Benicia man did not gain the—ahem—best of it. I'll take the paper when you have done with it, Charles."

—Letterpress beneath a " Punch " cartoon, April 8, 1860.

THE greatest fight that ever took place on English soil was the memorable one between Tom Sayers and John Camel Heenan, of America. It has become legendary, and stories are still told about it that are infinitely stranger than fiction. Prize-fighting was still in its infancy in America when Heenan conceived the idea of journeying to England to battle for a world's title. But it was Aaron Jones, an Englishman, whom Sayers had once defeated, who was really responsible for this match. After being beaten, Jones visited America, and there met with so much success that it occurred to him that one way of gaining notoriety was by challenging Sayers to a return contest. He was at this time Heenan's trainer, and one of his principal friends was Mr. George Wilkes, who was the editor of " Wilkes' Spirit of the Times," an American sporting journal. In March of 1859, Mr. Wilkes wrote to the editor of " Bell's Life," on behalf of Jones, challenging Sayers to a match. Sayers accepted the offer that was made, but six months later the following letter was received from Mr. Wilkes. It explains itself :

" My dear Sir,

" I take pleasure in informing you that Aaron Jones, conceding to the common desire on this side of the Atlantic to see Heenan have the first chance at Sayers for the championship, has desired me to have forfeited the fifty pounds which

now remains staked for him in your hands against Sayers. Enclosed I send you Jones' letter authorising me to take this course ; and as I represent the money of his backers, your authority for declaring the match off will, I suppose, be considered complete. I forget, as I write, whether Sayers has already covered a deposit of Heenan's for the championship ; if not, please let the same deposit be made and covered in his case (fifty pounds) as was made and covered in the case of Aaron Jones. I am very solicitous about this point as, for special reasons, I want Heenan regularly upon the record at as early a moment as possible. I send with this a note to Sayers, directed to your care, in which I apprise him of Jones' forfeit. Please preserve the note of Jones to me, and believe me to be yours, ever truly, at command, GEO. WILKES."

Within a week Sayers had covered the deposit, but during the months that followed many difficulties arose. Heenan was unwilling to fight on the date fixed for the proposed Jones-Sayers match, and, in addition, he was tremendously anxious to have a second battle with an old opponent named Morrissey. Eventually a Mr. Falkland was sent from America to deal with the articles, and on December 15, 1859, at a meeting at Owen Swift's public-house, the arrangements for the contest were definitely made.

A word or two about Heenan may be considered appropriate here. He was best known as the "Benicia Boy." He was born in the Naval Arsenal at Troy, U.S.A., in 1834 ; his father, who was an Irishman, was employed in the Arsenal as a charger of shells. When he was old enough to work, Heenan was employed as a forge-man at Benicia, from which locality he, of course, took his nickname. He was also a gold-digger in California, and it was in that State that he gained his experience as a pugilist. He arrived in New York to find himself mildly famous, and was at once given a post under the Government. He was appointed an Inspector of Customs. He was a finely made man, for he stood six feet one and a half inches in height, and weighed a little over fourteen stone. "When stripped his frame was a perfect model for a sculptor," said one critic who saw him during his training. "Every muscle was swollen out to a gigantic size, and every tendon

and sinew was distinctly visible ; taken altogether, such a specimen of a Herculean frame had not been seen in the British P.R. for very many years."

Heenan's record was not a particularly noteworthy one, but the excitement engendered by his appearance in England was amazing in the extreme. The night before the contest the scenes at the two leading taverns in London—Owen Swift's and Harry Brunton's—"beggared description." The majority of those who offered to pay large premiums for tickets, failed to get them at all, and even the public-houses kept by Nat Langham, Alec Keene, and other pugilists were crowded to the extent of their accommodation.

"The scene at London Bridge Station was one of continual bustle for at least an hour before the time appointed for the start, and judging from the early arrivals, all seemed impressed with the necessity of taking time by the forelock. The precincts of the station reminded us of the crush on Derby Day, but the effect was far more striking from the circumstance of its being a midnight flitting. Two monster trains were prepared, and as early as half-past three the first, which consisted of thirty-three carriages, was so full that the non-arrival of the men, both of whom were accommodated at private lodgings close by, alone delayed its departure. The champion arrived first, and his fresh, stylish appearance indicated a good night's rest, and especial pains with his toilet. He was soon followed by Heenan, who seemed to wish to avoid recognition, and instantly proceeded to a compartment reserved for him and his seconds. By this time night had cast off her sable mantle, and day dawned with that peculiar tint which foretold the brilliant sunny weather with which the expedition was favoured. Throughout the whole of the Metropolitan district, which extends for sixteen miles from London, the police, both mounted and on foot, and all armed with cutlasses, were on the look-out on each side of the line even at this early hour ; but the speed at which the train proceeded at once satisfied those watchful guardians that the mill was never intended to take place within their bailiwick, after leaving which scarcely a soul was to be seen beyond husbandmen proceeding to their daily avocations.

"Great preparations were made to stop the mill further

down, both on the Dover and Brighton lines ; but they were unnecessary as the travellers turned off at Reigate Junction on to the Guildford line, along which the train rattled at a good pace, until within a short distance of the latter old-fashioned country town, where the first stop was made for water. In due course the journey was resumed, and in a short time the travellers entered the wild district where the military town of Aldershot is situated, the deserted appearance of which satisfied all that the pilot to whom the selection of the *locale* had been entrusted had made a happy choice. It was near seven o'clock when the first train discharged its living burthen at Farnborough Station, after a most pleasant journey through one of the prettiest countries in England, which, illumined by a glorious sun, and shooting forth in vernal beauty, must have inspired all with feelings of intense gratification ; whilst the Benicia Boy and the numerous Americans present must have been struck with the highly favourable contrast to the miserable pilgrimage which, from all accounts, preceded their representative's last appearance in the ring when he fought Morrissey in America. No time was lost in choosing the spot for the ring, which was quickly and well formed by the veteran Tom Oliver and his son, in a meadow adjoining the railway, situate on the borders of Hampshire and Surrey, and within half a mile of the Farnborough Station on the South-Western line.

" By this time the second train had reached its destination, and the crowd could not have numbered fewer than twelve hundred persons, both of high and low degree, though compared with former mills the present congregation must unhesitatingly be pronounced the most aristocratic ever assembled at the ringside. It included the bearers of names highly distinguished in the pages of Burke and Debrett ; officers of the Army and Navy, Members of Parliament, Justices of the Peace, and even Brethren of the Cloth ; whilst the muster of *literati* on behalf of the leading Metropolitan journals and the most popular periodicals and miscellanies—to say nothing of the editorial and pictorial staffs of our American contemporaries, ' Wilkes' Spirit of the Times ' and ' Leslie's Illustrated News '—gave quite a new feature to the gathering, and evinced, at the same time, the overwhelming interest and excitement this

great national event has created throughout both hemispheres. The sale of inner-ring tickets (raised to ten shillings each on this occasion) produced a large revenue to the Pugilistic Benevolent Association, and Duncan's speculation in chairs must have been a most successful one, judging from the demand for those conveniences, by means of which the spectators were enabled to see the fight with comparative comfort."

The above was written by the editor of "Pugilistica," in his "Life of Tom Sayers," but so many brilliant articles were composed on the day of the fight, and during the weeks that followed, that some of them must of necessity be quoted. "The Times" printed an extremely long statement, which is not far short of being the best thing of its kind ever done. Part of it read as follows :

"Time was when the championship of England was an office which conferred honour on the highest, when 'Marmion, Lord of Scrivelhay, of Tamworth tower and town,' held a grant of the lands of the Abbey of Polsworth, on condition of doing battle in single combat against all knightly enemies of his King. The fashion of this office, however, had passed away with the days of chivalry, and lance and battle-axe have been laid aside to become mere things of show, and no more used by men. The Dymocks are still extant, but the modern champions of England know them not, and the pageant warrior who threw down the gauntlet to some hundred ladies and gentlemen in Court dress at a coronation has been succeeded by a race of brawny and muscular fellows, men who, 'mean fighting, and nothing but it,' and who vie with the *athleta* of old in their rigidity of training and immense powers of endurance. . . . The New Police Act has been the death of pugilism. Its greatest professors now lead a hole-and-corner life while training, or issue forth their challenges in mysterious terms. From this rapid downfall it has been just now, for a time, arrested by the first attempt to carry off the champion's belt into another country—and, of course, that country was America.

"There is no disguising the fact that this challenge has led to an amount of attention being bestowed upon the prize-ring which it has never received before; and, much as all

decent people disliked the idea of two fine men meeting to beat each other half to death, it was nevertheless devoutly wished that, as somebody was to be beaten, it might be the American. There is no doubt that Sayers had the good wishes of nine-tenths of the community. There seemed something almost patriotic in its way for a man of his light weight to encounter a brawny giant, who describes himself as being 'half horse, half alligator, and a bit of the snapping turtle,' and who, in addition to all these qualities, has proved himself to be as clever and formidable a prize-fighter as ever entered the ring. . . .

"It seemed impossible to restrain a murmur of admiration at the appearance which he (Heenan) presented. In height he is about six feet two, with extraordinarily long arms, deep chest, and wide and powerful shoulders. Exercise and long training had developed the immense muscles of his arms and shoulders till they appeared like masses of bone beneath the thin covering of skin. There seemed not an ounce of superfluous flesh. His ribs showed like those of a greyhound, save where they were crossed by powerful thews and sinews, and as he threw up his long, sinewy arms and inflated his huge chest with the morning air, he looked the most formidable of the tribe of gladiators who have ever entered the arena. Every movement showed the sinews and muscles working like lithe machinery beneath their thin, fine covering, and every gesture was made with that natural grace and freedom which always seem to belong to the highest development of physical power. Sayers looked at him long and earnestly, and as one who saw in his every movement a dangerous customer, and he, too, stripped in turn.

"The contrast between the men was then still more marked than before. Sayers is only about five feet eight; his chest is not broad, nor are his arms powerful, and it is only in the strong muscles of the shoulders that one sees anything to account for his tremendous powers of hitting. Sayers, too, looked hard as flint, but his deficiencies in regard to his antagonist in height, weight and strength, and, above all, length of arm, made it almost a matter of surprise how he could hope to contest with him at all. When to these disadvantages are added the superior height of the ground on

which Heenan stood, and the light of the sun full in Sayers' eyes, it will be seen how tremendous were the obstacles with which he had to contend. Heenan's skin yesterday was fair and white as marble—Sayers' as dark as that of a mulatto; and the fancy leant strongly to the opinion that the former was too delicate, and would bruise too much—and this was true."

The report in "All the Year Round," for the date May 19, 1860, was even more picturesque:

"There was a period, not more than some six months ago, when most of us thought we could never publicly state that we had seen a prize-fight. We had some notion that the ring was dead; and that its ropes and stakes had never been properly disinterred since their burial, some years back, at Moulsey Hurst. We had some notion that its exhibitions were illegal, and that its professors were compelled to live upon the traditions of the past, and bite their moth-eaten boxing gloves in pugilistic bar parlours. It is probable that we did not regard these professors as a down-trodden race, because we considered them at war with our present civilization. We looked upon them as melancholy relics of a departed fashion—as men who persisted in supplying an article that the public no longer called for or desired. The present writer, for one, set them down in his notes for a great History of England as having practically gone out with watchmen, oil lamps, and stage coaches.

"During the last five years, however, the World (meaning of course, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland) has witnessed many full-blown revivals and, last among them, and not least, a thorough revival of Pugilism. There has seldom been any demonstration so sudden, so successful, and so complete. I have seen the late contest between the immortal Sayers and the immortal Heenan apologetically described as an 'Exceptional Event.' The journalist was timid, and was feeling his way. I have also noticed a little shyness on the part of certain distinguished spectators of the battle, who gave the ring the sanction of their presence, but not the sanction of their names. A few more of these exceptional events may dispel all such mock-modesty.

"From the first moment when the late exceptional event—

the International Prize-fight—began to assume the aspect of a great and coming fact, there was the shallowest possible attempt on all sides to keep up appearances. People remarked very mildly that such disgraceful spectacles ought to be stopped, and immediately staked two to one that the Englishman would beat the American. A member or two in the House of Commons tamely asked the Home Secretary what he intended to do, and his reply was generally to the effect that he would try to keep up appearances. The powers of the Metropolitan Police were put in force, and they kept up appearances by pushing the training combatants into the country. Local Constabulary Forces, finding that they also were expected to behave with superficial decency, hunted the American (not very chivalrously, seeing that they might have hunted the Englishman) until he was bound over to keep the peace, with two sureties to the extent of a hundred pounds. That extremely useful end attained, they retired like good men who had thoroughly done their duty in keeping up appearances.

“When I went out into the frosty air, instead of going comfortably to bed, about one o’clock a.m. on Tuesday morning, April 17, I held a railway ticket in my hand that was printed to keep up appearances. A journey from London Bridge to Nowhere and back, by a special four o’clock train, was all that I was guaranteed by this slip of cardboard in return for the sum of three pounds sterling. For all this seeming mystery, the Railway Company knew that I knew I was going to the great prize-fight; the policeman who saw me close my street door at that unseemly hour knew that I was going to the great prize-fight; the cabman who drove me to my destination was bursting with intelligence of the great prize-fight; and the crowd who had assembled round the railway station were either going with me to the great prize-fight, or had come to see me go to the great prize-fight.

“There was an affectation of secrecy about the movements of some of the travellers, a reflection of the many eye-winkings they must have seen for the last few days; and there was an affectation of caution on the part of the Railway Company in dividing the passengers, and admitting them simultaneously at different entrances. These passengers moved silently along the passages and across the platforms as if they were tres-

passers upon the Company's property, who had stolen in while the directors were asleep, and were about to run away with the rolling stock, with the connivance of a small number of the railway officers. The anxious threatening glances that were cast upon unknown people, and the many whispered enquiries as to who was, or who was not, a detective-policeman, gave a pretty burglarious tone to the whole station for at least an hour before day-break. The farce was extremely well-acted, and appearances were carefully kept up till the last. The favoured railway had been known for months (it was the first that was ever mentioned in connection with the fight); the very spot upon which the battle was to take place had been confided to hundreds for days, and the morning, the hour, and the point of departure had been openly sold like any commodity in the market.

"It was all a preposterous keeping-up of appearances. The fact is, there was no public desire ever manifested to stop the contest, but a very strong desire to hear that it had been fairly fought out. In the face of such a feeling the law was paralysed; its function not being to make the whole nation more virtuous than they really are. The nation has no logical complaint against the law for standing still on this occasion, but only for its ridiculous pretence of being constantly on the alert. There were never, perhaps, so many passengers assembled on a railway platform who knew and addressed each other by familiar Christian names. The whole train might have been taken for a grand village excursion but for those unmistakable faces that rested in the folds of carriage cushions, under the dim light of the carriage lamps. The small eyes and heads, the heavy jaws, and the high cheek-bones were hung out like candid signboards to mark the members of the fighting trade. The two or three hundred Americans, and the small sprinkling of aristocracy and visitors, were not sufficient to modify in any perceptible degree the thoroughly animal character of the train."

"The Saturday Review" of April 28, 1860, had, in part, this to say:

"It was not to see the champion of England knocked clean off his legs some five-and-twenty times that so many hundred Englishmen travelled down to Farnborough. But if they did

not witness exactly what most of them expected, they saw even a finer sight. Never in the annals of pugilism were skill, coolness, judgment, variety of resource, pluck, and bottom displayed in such a wonderful degree as by Sayers in this splendid battle. Wherever courage and manly sentiments prevailed, his name will be held in honour. Taking the result as it now stands, or even supposing a further trial to end in the defeat of Sayers, we should still say, that for spirit, science, and endurance his character is unsurpassed throughout the world. He was pitted against a man who was his equal in resolution and not very far inferior in skill, while in height, weight and length of reach he possessed a vast superiority. Heenan, before this fight, was comparatively an untried man, and it could not be known beforehand whether, as is so often found in the noblest specimens of humanity, he had not a weak point somewhere. There was also the consideration that he came to us from a land where nobody's gifts or merits are at all likely to be understated. . . .

"The battle between Heenan and Sayers may very fairly be described as a battle between a big and a little boy. That Sayers should have fought so long and so beautifully as he did is the greatest triumph of the art of which he has been the worthy chief ; and it is a proof, which his countrymen will not soon forget, that he possesses, in the fullest measure, all those qualities which, in more deadly conflicts, have shed imperishable glory on his country's arms. We might say much, if it were necessary, in defence of prize-fighting, but we will content ourselves with saying this—that when British soldiers cease to feel the interest they showed in this famous battle, they will forfeit, at the same time, their character for unrivalled prowess. When the world has really entered upon a millennium of peaceful industry, let prize-fighting be abolished, and let the memory of its heroes pass away. But so long as restless neighbours will have their Magenta and Solferino, so long we should like to have occasionally, on some open, unfrequented heath, such a day as has been seen this week."

The article in "The Cornhill Magazine" was attributed by some authorities to William Makepeace Thackeray. It read :

"In George II's time there was a turbulent Navy Lieutenant (Handsome Smith he was called, his picture is at Greenwich

now in brown velvet and gold and scarlet ; his coat, his waist-coat, exceedingly handsome ; but his face by no means the beauty)—there was, I say, a turbulent young Lieutenant who was broke on a complaint of the French Ambassador, for obliging a French ship of war to lower top-sails to his ship at Spithead. But, by the King's orders, Tom was next day made Captain Smith. Well, if I were absolute King, I would send Tom Sayers to the mill for a month, and made him Sir Thomas on coming out of Clerkenwell. You are a naughty boy, Tom ! But then, you know, we ought to love our brethren, though ever so naughty. We are moralists, and reprimand you, and you are hereby reprimanded accordingly.

“ But in case England should ever have need of a few score thousand champions, who laugh at danger ; who cope with giants ; who, stricken to the ground, jump up and gaily rally, and fall, and rise again, and strike, and die rather than yield—in case the country should need such men, and you should know them, be pleased to send lists of the misguided persons to the principal police stations, where means may someday be found to utilise their wretched powers, and give their deplorable energies a right direction. Suppose, Tom, that you and your friends are pitted against an immense invader—suppose you are bent on holding the ground, and dying there, if need be—suppose it is life, freedom, honour, home, you are fighting for, and there is a death-dealing sword or rifle in your hand, with which you are going to resist some tremendous enemy who challenges your championship on your native shore ? Then, Sir Thomas, resist him to the death, and it is all right ; kill him, and heaven bless you. Drive him into the sea, and there destroy, smash, and drown him ; and let us sing ‘ *Laudamus*. ’

“ In these national cases, you see, we over-ride the indisputable first laws of morals. Loving your neighbour is very well, but suppose your neighbour comes over from Calais and Boulogne to rob you of your laws, your liberty, your newspapers, your parliament (all of which *some* dear neighbour of ours have given up in the most self-denying manner) : suppose any neighbour were to cross the water and propose this kind of thing to us, should we not be justified in humbly trying

to pitch him into the water? If it were the King of Belgium himself, we must do so. I mean that fighting, of course, is wrong; but that there are occasions when, etc.—I suppose I mean that the one-handed fight of Sayers is one of the most spirit-stirring little stories ever told: and, with every love and respect for Morality, my spirit says to her, ‘Do, for goodness’ sake, my dear Madam, keep your true, and pure, and womanly and gentle remarks for another day. Have the great kindness to stand a *leelle* aside, and just let us see one or two more rounds between the men. That little man with the one hand powerless on his breast facing yonder giant for hours, and felling him, too, every now and then! It is the little Java and the Constitution over again.’ ”

Whether Thackeray was actually at the fight is doubtful. He was reported as being among those present by some of the newspaper correspondents, but he himself denied that he was at Farnborough on the 17th April. Eleven days later, however, there appeared in “Punch,” a poem entitled, “The Fight of Sayerius and Heenanus: a lay of ancient London,” which he wrote. There is only space for these two verses:

Yet, in despite of all the jaw
And gammon of the times,
That brands the art of self-defence
—Old England’s art—as crime,
From off mine ancient memories
The rust of time I’ll shake,
Your youthful bloods to quicken
And your British pluck to wake.
I know it only slumbers;
Let cant do what it will,
The British bulldog *will* be
The British bulldog still.

Then gather to your grandsire’s knee,
The while his tale is told
How Sayerius and Heenanus,
Milled in the days of old.

Two hours and more the fight had sped
Near unto ten it drew
But still opposed—one-armed to blind—
They stood, the dauntless two.

Ah, me, that I have lived to hear
Such men as ruffians scorned,
Such deeds of valour brutal called,
Canted, preached down, and mourned !
Ah, that these old eyes ne'er again
A gallant mill shall see,
No more behold the ropes and stakes,
With colours flying free !
But I forget the combat—
How shall I tell the close,
That left the Champion's Belt in doubt
Between those well-matched foes ?
Fain would I shroud the tale in night—
The meddling Blues that thrust in sight—
The ring-keepers o'erthrown ;
The broken ring—the cumber'd fight—
Heenanus' sudden, blinded flight—
Sayerius pausing, as he might,
Just when ten minutes used aright
Had made the fight his own !

It was not only the Press that was concerned. There was a quite lengthy debate on the subject in the House of Commons on May 15, 1860. The question was raised by Lord Lovaine. He mentioned, in the course of his long speech, that the contest had been declared by the Home Secretary, though rather reluctantly, to be illegal. He argued, therefore, that as a natural consequence those who had aided and abetted in it were participators in an illegal act. He particularly censured the South-Eastern Railway Company for allowing their line to be used, and he asked whether it was not possible for the directors of the company to be brought within the law. He thought it incumbent on the House to express a resolution not to allow persons to wield powers granted them by the Legislature in defiance of authority. It was, in his opinion, essential that the Government should be asked whether they had attempted to enforce the law or whether anything had been done to stop the practice of prize-fighting. He concluded by moving that a copy of all the correspondence between the Home Office and the directors of the South-Eastern Railway Company in the years 1859-60, relating to the conveyance of persons intended to commit a breach of the law, should be supplied to the House.

The reply of Lord Palmerston, who was then Prime Minister, is worth giving in full. He said :

“ I have no objection to the noble lord’s motion, but I must make a protest against the sort of exaggerations in which the noble lord has indulged. He has described the railway launching two thousand or three thousand ruffians upon some quiet neighbourhood, in a manner that might lead one to imagine the train conveyed a set of banditti to plunder, rack, and ravage the country, murder the people, and commit every sort of atrocity. I am not going to dispute the point that a fight between two men—not a fight of enmity, but a trial of strength—is, legally, a breach of the peace, and an act that renders the parties liable to prosecution ; nor whether the persons who go to witness it are not, technically, involved in the charge. But as far as they are concerned, they may conceive it to be a very harmless pursuit : some persons like what takes place ; there may be a difference of opinion, as a matter of taste, whether it is a spectacle one would wish to see, or whether it is calculated to excite disgust. Some people look upon it as an exhibition of manly courage, characteristic of the people of the country. I saw the other day a long extract from a French newspaper describing the fight as a type of the national character for endurance, patience under suffering, of indomitable perseverance in determined effort, and holding it up as a specimen of the manly and admirable qualities of the British race.

“ All this is, of course, entirely a matter of opinion, but really, setting aside the legal technicalities of the case, I do not perceive why any number of persons, say one thousand if you please, who assemble to witness a prize-fight are in their own persons more guilty of a breach of the peace than an equal number of persons who assemble to witness a balloon ascent. There they stand, there is no breach of the peace ; they go to see a sight, and when that sight is over they return, and no injury is done to anyone. They only stand or sit on the grass to witness the performance, and as to the danger to those who perform themselves, I imagine the danger to life in the case of those who go up in balloons is certainly greater than that of two combatants who merely hit each other as hard as they can, but inflict no permanent injury upon each

other. I think there is moderation in all things—moderation in all opinions ; and although it may or may not be desirable that the law should be enforced—whatever the law may be—still I do not think any advantage is gained or good done, either to public morals or public feeling, by the sort of exaggeration in which the noble lord has indulged. At the same time, the motion is one to which I see no objection, and therefore I do not oppose it."

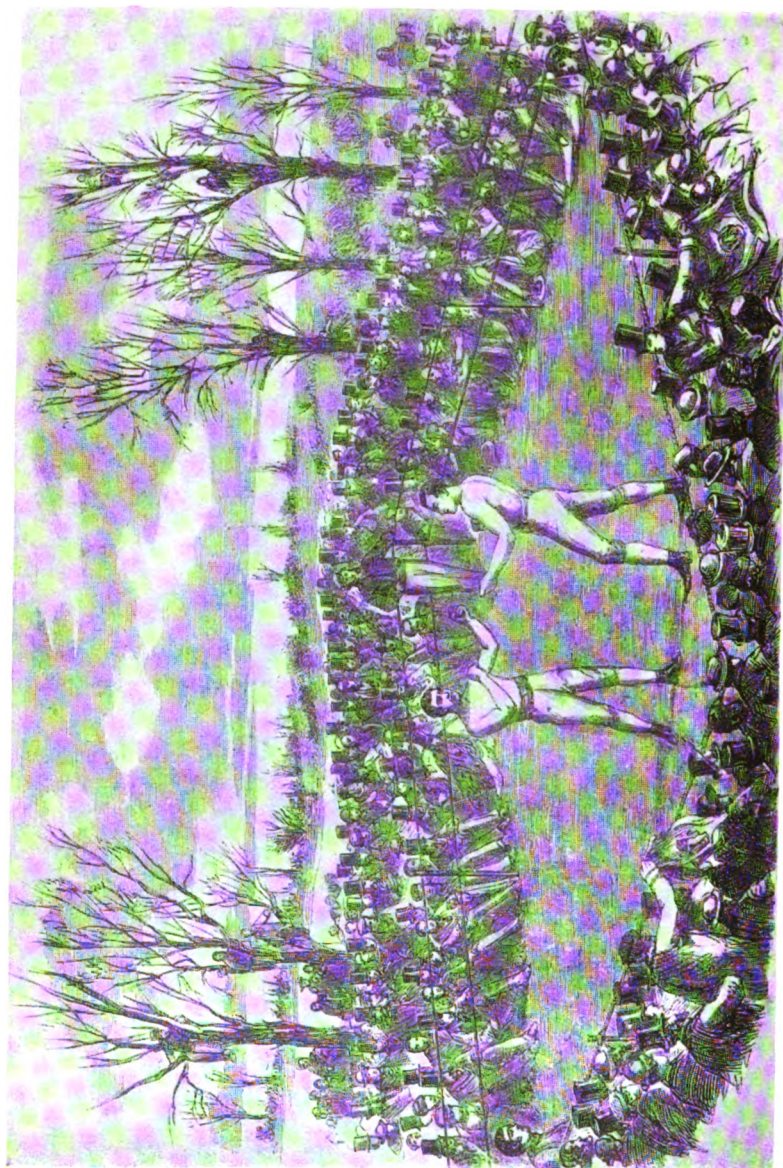
In answer Lord Lovaine laid great stress on the fact that the Prime Minister had skilfully defended prize-fighting, about which he (Lord Lovaine) had not said a word. Other speakers included Mr. Scully, who said that Lord Lovaine did not stand alone in his condemnation of such an exhibition ; Mr. W. Ewart, who remarked that when a few nights before he had asked the Home Secretary to state what was the law relating to prize-fighting he had been given an indirect defence of the practice ; Mr. Clive, who defended the directors of the railway ; Sir W. Jolliffe, who supported the views expressed by Lord Lovaine ; Colonel Dickson, who mentioned that although he had never seen a prize-fight in his life, he was, nevertheless, of the opinion that both Heenan and Sayers had shown qualities of which the whole British race had reason to be proud ; and Mr. Paull, who stated that he was astonished to hear that the noble lord at the head of the Government, after fifty years of memorable public service, was giving his name to posterity as the patron of prize-fighting. "It is an unfortunate thing," declared Mr. Paull, "whether or not it is in the power of the Government to stop these exhibitions, that the First Minister of the Crown and the Home Secretary should be palliating, if not sanctioning, them. After what the noble lord has said, I think the caricature in a certain facetious public print, which a few years ago represented the noble lord as a bottle-holder, was not altogether wrong." At the close of the debate the motion was agreed to.

The French journals, for probably the first time, devoted considerable space to the fight. When Lord Palmerston alluded to a certain French newspaper, he was referring to the "Debats," which published a five-column description. Its conclusions were somewhat quaint : "What we wish to point out is, that the Englishman, in this struggle, appears as the

faithful type of his nation. What are the attributes of the English race? What but endurance, patience, and energy, often latent, but always fierce, and that never knows defeat—an obstinacy that will not be conquered, and a secret oath to die rather than to yield? Even in the story of this fight, we find one and all those attributes. Even at the risk of offending the delicate tastes of our readers we will say that in the sternly obstinate and inflexible resolution with which the Englishman, apparently unconscious of the pain in his right arm, supported with one arm only, and that the left, the shock of the terrific avalanche which fell upon him, is in our eyes a triumph of moral force, and a miraculous exhibition of will. Five-and-twenty times was he flung upon the sward, and five-and-twenty times he rose again, the living image of England on the field of battle.

"History tells us that Englishmen are always beaten in the first campaign. Like all men of strong character, they gather force from misfortune. It seems that, like Antæus, they must kiss the earth before they know their strength, for after a series of defeats we find them ever masters of the field of battle. If they are not thoroughly beaten at first, their destruction will be a work of time. But there is still another reason which has made us allude to this singular fight. We mean the profound and universal and ardent interest which it has aroused in England, and which seems to us to have a political significance. During the last year and a half volunteer rifle corps have been formed in England, and the newly-awakened popular interest in the recent fight is intimately connected with the prevalent idea among Englishmen of the necessity of taking measures for the defence of their territory."

The "Siecle" called the contest a barbarous and disgusting exhibition, and its conclusions were as follows: "We are not living in ordinary times. The prospects of Europe are certainly not pacific. The elements of strife are in secret motion; at what moment a general outbreak may occur it is not in the power of many to predict. But the general arming and cautious preparations for future—it may be proximate—hostilities, combined with other circumstances and experiences too well established, point to a universal European war with a sure and ominous finger. It may be that the entire British



A DRAWING OF THE FAMOUS FIGHT BETWEEN
TOM SAYERS AND J. C. HEENAN

race all over the globe may have to defend their rights and liberties as the only free people on earth, and this at no very distant period. Several of the French newspapers, in speaking of this fight, have only seen in it a rude and disgusting exhibition. For ourselves, we recognize the play of animal instinct, but we think there is something else to which attention should be paid. The first defence of England consists in her wooden walls; but her second line of defence consists in the broad chests and formidable arms which play their part in contests like that which we have described. England sees in them a provision for the defence of the country. Such, it seems to us, is the moral of this fight—such the explanation of the interest it has excited in every class of English society—and such is our excuse for having occupied the attention of our readers with a description of it.”

Faithfully to deal with all the things said and written about this unique and remarkable encounter would require another volume, but perhaps sufficient has been given to demonstrate that the publicity it received was even greater than that awarded the last big fight for the heavy-weight championship.

Sayers was attended by Harry Brunton and Jimmy Welsh, while Heenan's seconds were Jack McDonald and his trainer, Cusick. The contestants had never met before, but they seemed to entertain the most friendly feeling towards each other, for their handshake was a very cordial one. At twenty-nine minutes past seven in the morning time was called.

The contest reached the very limit in sensationalism. It was a thrill from the first instant to the last. Heenan was quickest to lead, but Sayers, beautifully poised, danced away gracefully. For some time there was considerable feinting and dodging, but although Sayers made many attempts to reach his opponent with left jabs he was always short. He was bothered somewhat by the fact that the sun was shining directly in his eyes, but he was the first to draw blood with a rapid left-hander to the American's nose. The first round ended with Heenan striving to throw Sayers and the latter falling to get out of an awkward situation. Heenan showed marks of punishment when he came up for the second round, but he again threw the Englishman and rather angered the

spectators by falling heavily on him. In the third round he scored the first knock-down. Sayers was for a second unbalanced, and before he could recover Heenan had struck him full on the bridge of his nose with his left and knocked him down. Heenan's star was in the ascendant in the fourth, fifth and sixth rounds, for in each of these Sayers fell. The seventh round lasted thirteen minutes. Heenan was badly staggered at the start of it, but recovering quickly he rushed Sayers to a corner and slammed in a quick succession of blows. Sayers replied with a rasping punch which brought the blood from the American's nose. Heenan had returned to his own corner three times to be wiped and advised, but he was weathering the battle so indifferently that the odds against him were already two to one. It was in the seventh round that the spectators noticed that Sayers was carrying his right arm across his chest. It was badly bruised and tremendously swollen. No one was properly aware of it, but he had put the arm out of action in either the fourth or the fifth round. It was not broken, as is generally supposed; at least, the bones of the arm were intact, but a tendon had been fractured, which was almost as bad.

Heenan did not know that the arm was useless until the fight was drawing to its close, for Sayers kept it in such a position that it always seemed likely that he was on the point of employing it. In the sixth round Sayers did attempt to strike a blow with it, but finding the pain too great, he, to all intents and purposes, placed it out of commission by pressing it against his breast. It is true to say, as a matter of fact, that after the fifth round he fought more with his feet than with his head. He certainly landed many devastating punches with his left, but it was his foot-work—and it is doubtful whether there has ever been a more magnificent exhibition—which kept him in the ring. The eighth round was an exceptionally thrilling one. It lasted twenty minutes. Sayers, anxious to conceal the fact that he had been deprived of the use of his right hand, laughed most of the time. His activity was remarkable, and his boxing ability so much in advance of the American's that the latter, on occasions, was made to look foolish. He sought his corner at every possible opportunity, and there were moments when Sayers had

difficulty in persuading him to approach the scratch. Both men were bleeding freely, but it was the Englishman who was doing most of the work. At the end of eighteen minutes Heenan's right eye was completely closed, his right cheek fearfully swollen, while his mouth was also terribly bruised. When Sayers finally dropped he was still laughing loudly. These tactics he repeated in the ninth round. In the tenth he was lifted off his feet and thrown, and the effect of the fall was so great that he was slow coming up for the eleventh. In this round, however, Sayers again tried to land a punch with his right hand, but the effort caused him so much anguish that he quickly returned the arm to its old position across his chest.

He was decidedly weak in the thirteenth round, and Heenan, seeing his state, barged in and dealt him an awful blow on the nose which knocked him clean off his legs. This so changed the aspect of affairs that offers of five to four were made on Heenan. Sayers' nose was double its normal size, but his condition was no worse than Heenan's. As a fact, the American's hands had become so soft that he was forced to clench his teeth every time he landed a blow. Practically every round to the twenty-fifth ended with Sayers on the floor, but he was fighting very pluckily and was getting by no means the worst of the exchanges. Protests from both sides were frequent. It was pointed out to the referee, for example, that a stool had been provided for Heenan. As this was contrary to the laws, the official at once ordered its removal. In the twenty-sixth round an appeal for a foul was made by Sayers' backers. It is certain that the Englishman was struck when he was down, but as the punch was accidental the referee ruled that there was no necessity for him to interfere. From the twenty-seventh round onwards, the fighters were so fatigued that both took long rests. They were in a ghastly state—Heenan particularly. His left eye was closed, his hands were abnormally puffed, while he was having some trouble in drawing breath.

Heenan evidently saw that he had no time to lose. In the thirty-first, thirty-second, and thirty-third rounds he fought furiously, but Sayers was always too nippy for him. When the men faced each other for the thirty-fourth time, Heenan

was practically blind. Sayers, too, was extremely exhausted, but with the police very near—some of them had actually forced their way to the ringside—both made desperate efforts to end the struggle. The thirty-seventh round was terrible, and "The Times'" report had this to say about it :

"Heenan got Sayers' head under his left arm, and, supporting himself by the stake with his right, held his opponent bent down, as if he meant to strangle him. Sayers could no more free himself than if a mountain was on him. At last he got his left arm free, and gave Heenan two dreadful blows on the face, covering them both with blood ; but Heenan, without relaxing his hold, turned himself so as to get his antagonist's neck over the rope, and then leant on it with all his force. Sayers rapidly turned black in the face, and would have been strangled on the spot but that the rules of the ring provided for what would otherwise be fatal contingencies, and both the umpires called simultaneously to cut the ropes. This was done at once, and both men fell heavily to the ground, Sayers nearly half strangled.

"The police now made a determined effort to interfere, which those present seemed equally determined to prevent, and the ropes of the ring having been cut, the enclosure itself was inundated by a dense crowd, which scarcely left the combatants six square feet to fight in. Umpires, referees, and all were overwhelmed, and the whole thing became a mere close mob round the two fighting men. After this, four other rounds were fought, in the midst of this dense mass of partisans of either side, who, however, allowed the men to fight in the fairest way they could, consistent with their having hardly any room to fight at all. This, however, was, on the whole, unfair to Sayers, whose only chance now lay in avoiding the tremendous blows of his antagonist, against whom he contended with only one hand, and who, though now as blind as a bat, was still possessed of nearly all his immense strength, and to a little man like Sayers very nearly as formidable as ever. In these rounds sometimes Sayers got awful blows upon the head and body, and sometimes he managed to give in return his tremendous lunges full in the disfigured face of his opponent. At one time caps were thrown up, and cheers given for Heenan as having won, when he knocked down Sayers,

who would spring to his feet, and give the American such staggering blows that he, in turn, was hailed as conqueror.

"At length the police forced their way to where they were fighting, in a space not much larger than an ordinary dining table, and the referee ordered them at once to discontinue. To do them justice, both seemed very willing to leave off, and Heenan was so blind that in the last round he could not see Sayers, but hit his unsuspecting second a tremendous blow on the face, which knocked him head over heels. Both men then left what had been the ring, Sayers, though much blown and distressed, walking firmly and coolly away, with both his eyes open and clear. His right arm, however, was helpless, his mouth and nose were dreadfully beaten, and the side of his head and forehead much punished. Heenan was almost unrecognisable as a human being, so dreadful had been his punishment about the face and neck. Yet he was still as strong on his legs, apparently, as ever, thanks to his perfect training, and, after leaving the field of battle, he ran as nimbly as any of the spectators and leaped over two small hedges. This, however, was a final effort, and he almost instantly after became so utterly blind that he was obliged to be led by the hand to the train."

In England, people have always been taught to believe that Sayers would have won had the fight been fought to a finish. In America it has always been the opinion that Heenan was badly treated by the crowd, that he was robbed of the decision, and that he was the better man throughout. A draw, perhaps, was the best verdict that could have been given; but there is no doubting that the man who emerged from the conflict with most credit was Sayers. "The Times" correspondent, in his summing up, stated that in the last four rounds Sayers might have got a blow which would have struck him senseless, but he was also careful to emphasize that Heenan's sight was so far gone that in two or three minutes more he would have been at the mercy of a child. "The Saturday Review" remarked that Heenan had himself to blame for any disappointment he may have felt, but the very best comment of all was supplied by the editor of "Bell's Life." He said:

"Much do we regret the unpleasant duty that is now imposed upon us of finding fault with the Benicia Boy for

conduct which was not only unmanly but quite against the rules of the ring, and, had the referee been present, would inevitably have lost him the battle. The game displayed on both sides was remarkable. The gluttony and bottom of Tom Sayers are too proverbial to need further comment, but as certain rumours have been flying about to the effect that Heenan was destitute of these qualities, we deem it right to express our belief that a gamer or more determined fellow never pulled a shirt off. His punishment was terrible and yet he took it, round after round, without flinching, and almost invariably with a smile on his face. It appears to us, however, that his hands are not strong, for before half the battle was got through his left hand was so much swelled as to be almost useless; and this, doubtless, was fortunate for Tom, who, with his right arm gone, could have made but a poor stand against such a weapon had it retained its original hardness. Of Heenan's conduct at the conclusion of the battle we cannot speak in too strong terms. We trust it was occasioned by the state of excitement in which he was owing to the ring being broken, and by the fact that, being almost blind, he took the unoffending seconds of his opponents for some other persons. Of Tom Sayers, we need not say more than that he fought the battle throughout with consummate tact and judgment and, considering that his right arm (his principal weapon) was rendered almost useless from the commencement, too much praise cannot be awarded him for his courage and coolness. We are of opinion, even without that arm, that he would eventually have pulled through had the fight been finished on the day."

The battle was contested under the revised rules of the ring, which had been framed in 1853. They contained one clause which dealt with a happening such as the one which occurred. It was as follows: "Where a man shall have his antagonist across the ropes in such a position as to be helpless, and to endanger his life by strangulation or apoplexy, it shall be in the power of the referee to direct the seconds to take their man away, and thus conclude the round; and that the man or his seconds, refusing to obey the direction of the referee, shall be deemed the loser." If this ruling had been literally interpreted, Heenan would have been disqualified immediately

after the ropes were cut. That Sayers was less badly battered than the American is proved by the circumstance that next morning he was able to visit the stake-holder's office. Heenan, on the other hand, was unconscious for nearly forty-eight hours. When Sayers was taken to see him, about an hour after the fight, he was in a closed cab, wrapped in blankets, blind and unrepresentable.

Heenan's supporters made a loud demand that the contest should be resumed at the end of the week, but this, of course, was sheer bluff. It was eventually agreed that two belts should be made, and these were presented to the fighters later in the year. Sayers did not do any more fighting, but in 1863 he seconded the American when the latter fought King. Prior to that, however, he had become the proprietor of Howes and Cushing's Circus. This speculation ruined him. He had taken to drink, and when he stepped into the ring as Heenan's second it was abundantly clear that his descent had commenced. He was dressed in a fur cap, a yellow flannel jacket, and jackboots. He was more of a hindrance to Heenan than a help. He died of consumption, and was buried at Highgate Cemetery on November 15, 1865. He was not exactly poor when he died, for a sum of three thousand pounds, which had been subscribed for him, had been invested in the names of the trustees, a proviso being that Sayers was to receive the interest during his life, providing he never fought again. On the day of his death, "The Daily Telegraph" published an "In Memoriam" notice which deserves to be quoted :

"Tom Sayers is dead ; the last of the great gladiator's fights is lost and won. . . . If Sayers lived a poor life, of hard combats and of doubtful triumphs, he had in him many of the instincts that we should be sorry to miss amongst the rank and file of English manhood. The prize-ring, especially of late years, may be said to have more than shared the proverbial 'degeneracy of the age.' It is not an elevating trade ; and positively its least offensive moments are those when a couple of bruisers, stripped to the skin, pummel one another into insensibility. Infinitely more revolting, from a moral point of view, however, are the coarse orgies with which the victor celebrates his triumph, stupefying his brain and

wasting away the grand physical strength in which chiefly he surpassed his neighbours. . . . It was the good fortune of Sayers to show, more convincingly than it had ever been proved before, how skill and courage can hold their own against vastly superior physical strength. No doubt national feeling was the main cause which made Englishmen rejoice that the fight between their little champion and the young American giant was a drawn battle. But they were glad also to see how their old practice of skilled boxing was proved to be so effectual against mere brute force.

"As a matter of pure physical hardihood, that encounter at Farnborough five years ago was well worthy of all the attention it received. . . . It was really the Battle of Waterloo on a small scale. The accessories were sickening and repulsive; heroic, on the other hand, was the spirit of Tom Sayers. For the rest it is recorded of the dead man that, living much amongst disreputable associates and often tempted to dishonesty, he was true as steel to those who trusted him; that he was a liberal giver, a kindly and genial companion. As his illness grew worse, he was—as he deserved to be—more fortunate than most of his comrades; warm-hearted friends tended him to the last, and assuaged his sufferings. That, and the fact that no braver man ever wore a soldier's uniform, are the pleasantest things to remember about poor Tom Sayers."

Sayers was only thirty-nine when he went to his rest. It is doubtful whether another boxer of his kind will ever arise.

CHAPTER XI

JAMES MACE, THE LAST OF THE GREAT KNUCKLE-FIGHTERS

The first time I became acquainted with the famous Adah Isaacs Menken I fell under the spell of her beauty and witchery. . . . The wayward Adah was then the wife of John Heenan, who fought the great battle with Tom Sayers for the championship. . . . I have met many women in my time, pretty and otherwise, good women and bad women, clever women, too ; but never did I come across one who could hold a candle to this peerless creature. Her physical beauty alone, both of face and form, was superb, so that when she appeared at Astley's Amphitheatre as "Mazeppa," all London flocked to see her, and her share of the takings amounted to two hundred pounds a week. . . . Life as Adah's acknowledged lover would have been too exciting just then to have been altogether to my liking.

—James Mace, 1908.

THE reaction which set in after the Sayers-Heenan fight forced boxing into the background for several years. The police became more active, the public lost interest, and although there were many secret fights they do not call for particular attention. The successor to Sayers as champion was Sam Hurst, who was known as the Stalybridge Infant. He fought and defeated Paddock, and a belt was given him, but he does not appear to have been a man of much skill. Curiously enough, however, there came shortly afterwards a man who was almost as interesting as Sayers. He was called, by all and sundry, the Swaffham Gipsy, but his real name was James Mace. A cabinet-maker by trade, and passionately addicted to music, he was born at Beeston, in Norfolk, on April 8, 1831. He was one of four brothers, three of whom were blacksmiths. Mace always denied that he had gipsy blood in his veins. His ancestors, he was fond of explaining, were all British-born, and, in the later years of his life, he carried about with him a chart which traced his family history back over a period of three hundred years.

Mace was, of course, the last of the old prize-fighters.

Whether he was quite so good, or so plucky, or so agile as Sayers is questionable, but if he were alive to-day he would have every right to say that it was he who introduced an entirely new method of fighting. When he was a lad, pugilism was almost the only thing talked about. Every little village in England possessed its own champion, and it was the custom, in those days, for contests to be held in barns on Sunday mornings. Long before he was twenty, Mace had fought nearly a hundred "love battles." These, he used to say, when in a reminiscent mood, were almost invariably fought outside the Ploughshare Inn, at Beeston. "I think the fighting instinct must have been extra strong in me," he once told an interviewer, "for, before I was turned fourteen, I had fought at least a score of battles, and one, I recall, was with a big lad of nearly sixteen. We fought twenty rounds and I got beat. He was the youngest of seven brothers, all of whom were chimney-sweeps, and all noted bruisers. I was wild and ashamed at having been licked, although I need not have been, for the other lad was bigger, older, and stronger than I. But, as I say, I *was* wild, and I *was* ashamed."

Mace may not have been a gipsy, but he was decidedly a born rover. Even when he was apprenticed as a cabinet-maker, it was his habit to slip away and travel the country with boxing booths. He was also an itinerant fiddler, a "snuffer boy" at a circus, an attendant in a skittle alley, and a potman. He managed to fight, however, at least three or four times a week. When the bouts were with the gloves the purse was "copper," when they were with the bare fists it was "silver." But Mace has placed it on record that up to the time of his first appearance in a real fight the biggest amount he ever received was eight shillings. He became a professional through losing his violin. That, in any case, is his own story, although it must be confessed that it reads a little like fiction. He was at Yarmouth, and, following his usual custom, had stationed himself outside a public-house near the quay. He was tuning up his fiddle when a big fisherman, rather under the influence of liquor, dashed up to him, brought his fist down on the instrument, and smashed it to pieces. This resulted in a fight, and in less than a quarter of an hour the fisherman was on the ground. A passer-by thereupon handed

Mace a sovereign with these magic words : " You ought to be a prize-fighter." And that, according to himself, was how Jem Mace turned to pugilism as a profession.

There are plenty of people still living who say that Mace had a streak of cowardice in his make-up. It is hard to credit. That he took part in a number of arranged contests is very probable, but my memories of the old fighter—and he was very elderly indeed the last time I saw him at the National Sporting Club—are such as to make me feel convinced that, when in the mood, he could display as much courage as any man who had fought before him. He was an active performer when he was well past sixty, so that the wild life he sometimes led did not affect his constitution to any great extent. It was his misfortune to be born at a period when respectable people avoided the prize-ring as though it were a foul disease. He was at his best when pugilism was at its lowest ebb, and although he made a fair amount of money during his lengthy career I question very much whether the whole of his fights brought him anything like so much money as was handed to Dempsey after he had beaten Carpentier. The day of the gigantic purse had not even dawned when James Mace breathed his last, but I am ready to believe—and this statement has often been made to me by people who should know—that he was about the only one of the old-timers who would have stood a chance with any of the modern school.

This raises an interesting point. How, for instance, would the famous Mr. Jackson, or Bendigo, or Mendoza, or Spring—supposing they were back on earth—figure in a championship bout with, say, Dempsey, Carpentier, or Wills, the negro? Personally, I am of the opinion that they would not last three rounds. Science will always beat mere strength; and it was science more than anything else which helped to make for Mace his great reputation. It is true that in his very early days he was singularly inconsistent, but he was a novice then, while he did not receive the encouragement or the financial rewards that were given men like Sayers and Spring and Perry. It has repeatedly been said that he was an infinitely poorer fighter than Sayers, but this is a contention that cannot be accepted without argument. I remember reading somewhere that Sayers only defeated newcomers and has-beens,

and that Mace only fought veterans and never-wasers. I cannot imagine a more inaccurate statement. It would have been much better and fairer if it had been said that both men fought the best who could be found to oppose them, and that, in point of merit, they were on a level. It has been mentioned that Sayers was a little man. So was Mace. His height was five feet nine inches, and he rarely, if ever, weighed more than eleven stone. Like Sayers, on the majority of occasions he was compelled to give away weight. The supporters of Mace claim that Jem would have beaten Sayers in a couple of rounds, but the friends of Sayers are equally emphatic in declaring that Mace would not have lived for five minutes. There are really no lines to go on, but a sort of comparison can be made by remembering some of the fights in which the men took part.

Sayers drew with Heenan; King, some time later, defeated Heenan, and Mace still later conquered King. A line drawn through that suggests that Mace was a cleverer man than Sayers, but it should not be forgotten—indeed, this is the point of greatest importance—that when Sayers fought Heenan the American was at the very top of his ability. When he met King (the date was December 10, 1863) he was either drugged or extremely unwell. Besides, Mace was also beaten by King after a contest of twenty-one rounds. So that another line drawn in the same way indicates that Mace would have been an easy opponent for Sayers. This “drawing of lines,” however, is a silly way of attempting to compare boxers. I do not profess to know anything about the respective attributes of either Sayers or Mace, for the fighting days of both were long before my time, but it does seem to me that if the two had met (and they nearly did in 1862) either might have won. For myself, I am content to believe that they were about on an equal.

Mace's first recorded professional fight was against Slasher Slack on October 2, 1855. He won in nine rounds. He suffered his first defeat on September 21, 1858, when he was beaten in two rounds by Bob Brettle; but Mace, years ago, wrote a magazine article in which he stated that he had dozens of contests before he met Slack. His own statement was that he had grown tired of fights in public-houses for a few

shillings. He therefore fixed on five pounds as a minimum, but whenever he visited a fair or a market in East Anglia he allowed it to be understood that he would not consent to take on all comers unless the purse was at least ten pounds. Among those he fought at this time were Sydney Smith, of Wisbech; Charlie Pinfold, of Norwich; Farden Smith ("The King of the Gipsies"), and Johnny Walker, of London. The turn in the tide of his affairs arrived when he met Nat Langham. The incident, described in Mace's own words, makes good reading:—

"One day, when I was giving an exhibition of sparring in a booth at Norwich fair, in walked a fine, strapping fellow, elegantly dressed, with a big hard face, clean-shaven, and a look about him that told me in an instant he was one of the fancy. He stood and watched me critically for a while, then he came over and shook hands.

"'You're Jem Mace?' he said.

"'Yes,' I replied, wondering all the while who he could be, and what he wanted with me.

"'You don't know me?' was his next remark.

"'No, I don't,' I replied.

"'Well,' he said, 'I'm Nat Langham, and I've heard of you. Would you like to take a situation in my boxing-booth?'

"Now I don't suppose the name of Nat Langham means much to the men of this generation. But in those days there was no more influential or famous man connected with the ring. His triumphs were many, and they had been blazoned all over England. For one thing, he was the only man who ever beat Tom Sayers. He also founded the Rum-pum-Pas Club, an association of aristocratic patrons of the ring. This gave him immense influence; in fact, he had for a time the monopoly of the business side of pugilism, because a novice could hardly ever hope to get at the right men to back him except through Nat's recommendation. Besides the Rum-pum-Pas he also ran a boxing-booth, which travelled the country, and was considered the best thing of its kind on the road. The ordinary booths charged threepence admission, and sixpence to the reserved seats. The prices at Nat's were half-a-crown and five shillings. But for this he put before his patrons the best talent in England, fighters who, it was

clearly understood, were little, if any, beneath championship form.

"Now you know about this, you will understand something of what Nat's invitation to join his company meant to me. Of course, I accepted gladly, not even enquiring as to terms, which I found afterwards were two pounds a week and all found. For this I had to meet all comers with the gloves, and beat them, for Nat had no use for a boxer who allowed himself to be defeated. One lost battle, or at most two, meant instant dismissal. Behold me then, on the morning following the eventful meeting, strutting about the fair as vain as any peacock, clad in a brand-new guernsey of the regulation pattern, the mittens on my hands, all ready, nay eager, to do battle on behalf of my patron. It was indeed the proudest moment of my life."

It was at this booth that Mace fought Slack, the stakes being five pounds a side. Langham immediately took him to London, and arranged a series of contests for him at the Rum-pum-Pas, which, for all its splendid name, was little more than a glorified public-house. Its chief habitués were Lord Drumlanrig, Lord Verulam (his brother), the Hon. Robert Grunston, Lord Edward Russell, Sir Edward Kent, and Mr. Keen, the manufacturer of mustard. The meal at the Rum-pum-Pas was always the same—roast beef and plum-pudding, with quantities of port wine, champagne, and brandy. Mace's first opponent was Lord Drumlanrig. Following the custom among professionals, he was compelled to strip to the buff, while his lordship fought wearing a ruffled shirt. It must have been a quaint bout, but when the peer eventually surrendered he showed his pleasure by presenting Mace with a couple of sovereigns.

Mace was not allowed to leave the room, but was straightway sent against Johnny Walker, whom he defeated in thirty minutes. Then another antagonist, named Betson, was found for him, and when he was levelled, still another, called Harry the Swell, was ordered to take the ring. Mace thus beat four men in one afternoon. For this he was presented with five pounds, so that the day's work gave him in all less than a third-rate novice would now accept for a one-minute exhibition.

The first of his big fights was against Bill Thorpe, whom he

met at a secluded spot near the mouth of the Medway. It was a sort of charity affair, for the whole of the proceeds went to the Pugilists' Benevolent Association. Thorpe had a good reputation, and the confidence that was reposed in him is evidenced when it is mentioned that he was seconded by Tom Sayers. Seventeen rounds were fought, and Mace did so well that he was made a great fuss of when he left the ring. The sponge was thrown up by his opponent's seconds after twenty-seven minutes. Hé was then matched with Mike Madden, and as a consequence there came happenings which transformed Jem Mace from a "popular idol into a by-word and mockery." Mace has described the series of occurrences very sorrowfully in these words: "Suffice it to say that my match with Madden did not come off. I was then matched with him a second time, but again the fight did not come off. As a result, all Britain cried shame on me, and called me a coward, the very boys in the street stopping to turn and jeer at me, while my Norfolk friends and backers were so frightfully incensed that they tried to burn down a house I had taken in Norwich. It was all very terrible, but it was not cowardice. No. A thousand times no. My after career proved even to my enemies that that part of their charge, at all events, was quite unfounded."

The trouble came about through Langham objecting to the referee who had been appointed to control the contest with Madden. Hewasacertain Dan Dismore. Hisnamewasnot known until the contestants were actually in the ring. The moment he appeared Langham jumped up, protested hotly, and there was tumult for nearly an hour. Eventually both men left the ring together—the etiquette of prize-fighting in those days demanded that the loser should quit the arena before his conqueror—and next day the editor of "Bell's Life" decided that the stakes be awarded to Madden. That same afternoon a fresh match was made. It was to be decided at a spot on the river below London Bridge, but the night before the battle Mace fell out with his backer and, as he himself stated, went on the spree. As a consequence, he did not turn up at the appointed place, and he was found late in the afternoon playing in a cricket match on the south side of London.

"I paid a very bitter penalty," said Mace. "I don't sup-

pose that in the whole world of sport there were more than half a dozen men who had a good word to say for me. Mr. Frank Dowling, of "Bell's Life," attacked me in language so severe that I shiver even now when I recall it. He dubbed me an 'arrant cur,' and wrote of me in his editorial columns as 'the most unmitigated coward and impostor that ever laid claim to the title of a fighting man.' Even Nat Langham turned against me, although he eventually so far relented as to allow me to frequent, on sufferance, his boxing saloon at the Mitre in St. Martin's Lane. Here I took on with the gloves all comers, posing as an unknown, although, of course, the regular frequenters of the house knew me perfectly well. For an hour's hard boxing I have received as little as sixpence, and my remuneration seldom exceeded half a crown. From the gatherings of the Rum-pum-Pas, where gold was to be had, I was rigidly excluded. Those were the blackest days of my life, and in secret I shed many bitter tears."

For a year or so, Mace was very much on his beam ends. Then he again encountered Lord Drumlanrig, who was instrumental in matching him with Bob Brettle. This was a decidedly unfortunate occasion for Mace, for he was knocked out after only half a dozen blows had been exchanged. It was thought by many that this crushing defeat would finish him, but three months later he showed unexpectedly good form in a fight with Posh Price, of Birmingham, and when he followed this up with another victory over Bob Travers, a negro, some of those who had deserted him once more sought his acquaintance. In the year 1860 Mace fought two battles against Travers and two against Brettle. The second with Travers lasted fifty-seven rounds, and was one of the hardest ever witnessed. In June of 1861, Mace was given a contest with Sam Hurst. He had not altogether regained his lost popularity, and it was nowhere anticipated that he would put up even a good show against the Stalybridge Infant, who at the time held the heavyweight championship. Hurst was a giant in stature, for he stood six feet three inches in height, and weighed over seventeen stone. Mace was only ten stone ten pounds. It is not too much to say, indeed, that Hurst was one of the most powerful men who ever took to pugilism.

He was a noted wrestler, and for some years held the championship of Lancashire. When he fought Paddock he smashed in two of the latter's ribs. Those newspapers which gave publicity to the match with Mace said openly, or either inferred, that it was a fake, but Mace, so as to prove that he had not issued his challenge to bring custom to a public-house he was keeping in the East End of London, left it in charge of an assistant and joined a circus at a salary of seventy pounds per week—an indication this, that if his honesty was suspect his drawing powers were remarkable. The Heenan-Sayers fight, which had been decided the year previously, was still a matter that was widely discussed, but the police were so down on prize-fighting that it was generally taken for granted that another championship battle—especially one between men so ill-matched—was out of the question. The authorities went so far as to announce that they would do all in their power to prevent a repetition of a Sayers-Heenan fight.

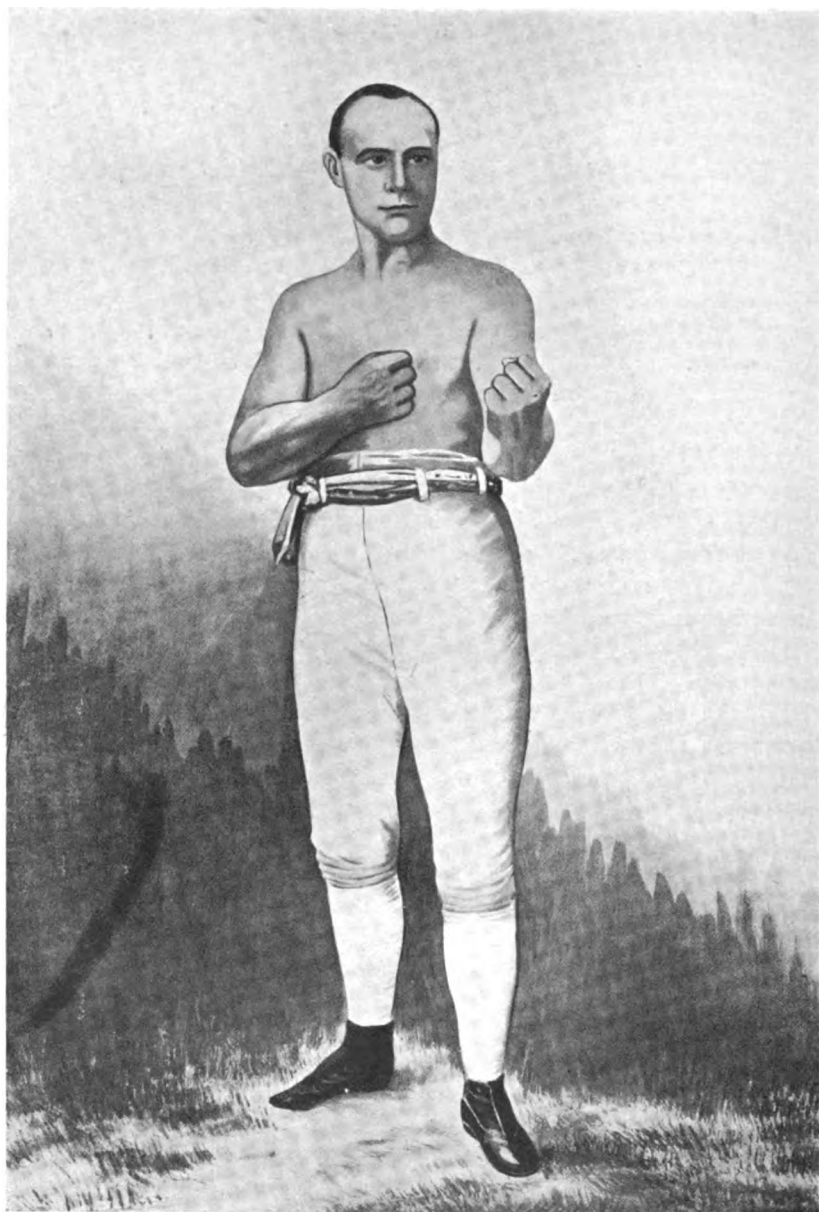
"For this drastic action," said Mace, whose opinion must be accepted as authoritative, "the promoters of the battles fought about this time were largely to blame. Either carelessly or by design, the roughs were allowed free access to the places of meeting, with the result that the more respectable patrons of the ring were driven away. It is true that some attempt was made to keep order, and protect the peaceably inclined spectators from the depredations and violence of these human vermin. But such were not always successful. Indeed, it not infrequently happened that the special ring-keepers, who were appointed at a wage of a guinea a day by the Pugilists' Benevolent Association, were themselves overpowered, and in some cases badly beaten, by the ruffianly mob. As these ring-keepers were invariably trained boxers, specially selected for their strength and skill, it may be imagined what sort of chance the ordinary spectator would stand, did he venture to resent the loss of his property, or the ill-usage to which he was too often subjected."

When the contest was at length arranged, it was decided that double the usual number of ring-keepers be engaged, while orders were given that no known rough characters were to be allowed to travel by the special train. The tickets were not put on sale until the night before the fight. They were not in reality

tickets, but simply vouchers, for neither station, place nor time was printed on them. When Hurst stepped into the ring, he resembled a huge gorilla. He was a swarthy man, heavily over-muscled, and his great chest was covered with thick, matted hair. Mace, before he left his dressing tent, was anointed with oil, so as to lessen the chances of the Infant gripping him.

Mace fought with great skill. His tactics were those that had earlier on been adopted by Tom Sayers; he retreated, dodged, or side-stepped whenever his opponent rushed at him. Hurst was blazing with passion throughout the fight, but he was really beaten in the sixth round, although the contest did not actually come to an end until the eighth. Hurst, like Heenan, was completely blind, which supplies evidence that Mace could hit if he could do nothing else. The blow which knocked the consciousness out of Hurst was a left-hander to the eyes. He was unable to rise, and Mace left the ring as the acknowledged champion of England. He had not gone more than ten yards, however, when he was publicly challenged for his title by Tom King. Mace accepted, but on his return to town he became part proprietor of a circus, and it was while he was travelling with this that he introduced the novelty of offering to fight anyone in a three three-minute rounds contest. Those who were on their feet at the expiration of nine minutes were guaranteed five pounds. The money was never won, for Mace, although he fought dozens and dozens of men of all weights, invariably levelled them in the first few minutes. His favourite knock-out blow was a left to the mark, which he employed after feinting with his right. When this failed, he aimed for the Adam's apple in the throat.

The fight with Tom King took place on January 28, 1862. King was a London dock labourer, and his chief work was assisting in unloading guano ships, a decidedly unsavoury occupation. He was a strong and well-made man, standing six feet two inches in height, and weighing a little over fourteen stone. Those who imagine that Carpentier was the first pugilist to make long journeys to assess an opponent will be interested to learn that Mace was doing the self-same thing in 1860. When King, for example, fought Broome, Mace was at the ringside making notes on the back of an envelope, in



JAMES MACE
Heavy-weight Champion, 1861, 1865, 1866, and 1870

exactly the same way as I have seen Carpentier jot down observations, both in England and in France.

The venue of the contest was Godstone, in Surrey. It was a bitterly cold day and rain fell heavily. For twenty-two rounds Mace was outweighted and outfought. When he came up for the twenty-third, his left eye was closed, while his mouth was shapeless. King scarcely bore a mark. In the twenty-fourth round Mace's right eye was badly damaged, and the odds on King rose to ten to one. By this time the rain was falling in torrents, and the ring was a quagmire. In the twenty-seventh round, while attempting to duck, Mace received an uppercut which knocked him flat on his back. He was only able to see through a slit on his right eye, but in the next round he was struck a tremendous punch which burst the enormous swelling and drenched him with blood. In the thirtieth round, Mace recovered sufficiently to back-heel King. This was the turning-point, for the challenger fell on his head and had to be carted to his corner. From then to the end of the forty-third round, which was the last, Mace threw him again and again. The final tumble was very dreadful.

"I wanted him to fall my way," said Mace, explaining his victory; "I dodged his mad rush, and played him about the ring until I saw his lower jaw begin to drop from sheer exhaustion. Then I sprang at him, and, summoning every ounce of strength I had left, dealt him a smashing blow on the throat. He would have fallen with that, but I took care that he should do nothing of the kind. Immediately following the throat blow, I gripped him round the body, got what wrestlers call the crook on him, turned him half round, and dashed him face forwards to the ground, myself falling on top of him."

When the customary seconds had been counted off, King was still inert. He was very dissatisfied with the result, and after a few days' rest issued a second challenge. This fight was delayed until the following November, for both men accepted an engagement with Mr. Ginnett, the circus proprietor. Thrown together as they were, Mace and King became fast friends, but this did not prevent them from fighting like dogs when they met on the Medway on November 26, 1862. The newspapers were dead against this fight, and,

as a result of the clamour they raised, the South-Western Railway Company refused to provide a special train for the boxers and their friends. Many hundreds of two-guinea tickets had been sold, and at the last moment it was resolved to find a new meeting-place. The scenes at Fenchurch Street Station were positively beastly. Everyone in possession of a ticket had been warned to put in an appearance at four o'clock in the morning, but the first thing they discovered was that the rough element had arrived before them. Dozens were robbed of all they possessed, while others were beaten into insensibility. The few police about declined to interfere, on the ground that everyone present was engaged in an illegal action. Mace was himself assaulted, and it is doubtful whether he would have reached the train at all had it not been for the assistance rendered him by his old opponent, Bob Travers, whose hands were covered with knuckle-dusters, and by Bill Richardson, the celebrated landlord of the Blue Anchor public-house, who got in some good work with the butt-end of a broken billiard cue.

Mace was knocked out in the twenty-first round. The result was a complete surprise, for when he took the ring the betting on him was twenty to one, while at one period a well-known bookmaker, named Johnny Gideon, offered to lay one hundred pounds to one on him. This is how he himself described the closing stages :—

“ At length came the time when I thought I might safely sail in and finish him. He was nearly blind, his head was double its normal size, and he reeled like a drunken man whenever he attempted to stand still for even the fraction of a second. And then ! Well, how it happened I do not properly know. I remember walking warily up to the tottering, bleeding, half-blind figure that shared the ring with me. I recollect saying to myself that I must be careful and not hit my old pal too hard, because he was already a beaten man. The next instant I had trodden on a bit of turf that was slippery with blood, and felt myself falling—falling ! I tried to recover my balance and had partly succeeded when—smash ! Tom had landed me one of those tremendous, swinging, round-arm blows on the side of the jaw, rolling me head over heels like a shot rabbit. They carried me to my corner, and my seconds tried all the

familiar tricks to bring me round, biting my ears, tickling my throat with a feather, and so on. By these means I was enabled to toe the scratch twice more. But it was all to no purpose. That one blow of King's had made him champion of England.

"I can see him now, as I staggered towards him, and he makes up as if to strike me. Then, seeing I can no more defend myself than could an infant in arms, he whispers softly : 'Jem, old man, chuck it, you're done for.' Of course, I shake my head, but very feebly. Whereupon he walks up to me and pushes me over, but half holding me up too at the same time, so that I shall not fall too hardly. Twice is this repeated. Then I lapse into merciful unconsciousness. So I lose the championship. By a fluke ! Yesterday I was, in certain circles, the most sought-after man in England. I could, and did, earn from fifty pounds to one hundred pounds a week, merely by exhibiting myself. To-morrow I shall be unable, as I well know, to earn as many shillings. The world has no use for a beaten pugilist."

The last remark is probably the truest that has ever been uttered. I shall never forget the scenes that followed the downfall of Georges Carpentier at Montrouge, near Paris, in the autumn of 1922. He was the idol of his country when he strolled into the ring that Sunday afternoon to fight Siki, the Senegalese. There must have been between fifty and sixty thousand people in the big velodrome, and, so far as I could judge, every single one roared out a welcome to the man who had justly been called "the Chief Ambassador of France." When he fell before the awful punishment that was inflicted on him by the coloured man he had scarcely a friend ; when he was carried from the ringside on the shoulders of one of his seconds he was sneered at, shouted at, and laughed at. An idol one moment, he was despised the next. That night in the cafés I heard comments that proved to me that even the lowliest were unwilling to recollect the splendid things he had done. None, indeed, was poor enough to do him reverence. I remember, too, the occasion when 'Kid' Lewis was toppled from his throne by the Londoner, Roland Todd. Prior to that occurrence, Lewis was always surrounded by friends, whose habit it was to fawn on him and practically

crawl at his feet. When he returned to his dressing-room after the verdict had been given against him, the only person who stood by him was the man who had trained him.

For some months Mace had a very bad time. His great anxiety, of course, was to get another match with King, and it was this that led him to commit an offence which made him many enemies. King was appearing at Weston's Music-hall, in Holborn, London (now known as the Holborn Empire), and one night Mace jumped on to the stage and threw out a challenge. King was not disposed to accept, and for a moment it seemed that there would be a fight. The men were separated, but next morning, when Mace met King in the street, he lost control of himself and struck his conqueror in the face. King immediately replied with another blow, and, in the twinkling of an eye, the two best-known pugilists of the day were indulging in a street brawl. There was no knock-out, for, just as they were warming to their work, a policeman rushed up and parted them. King resolutely refused to entertain a rubber match, but he did consent to meet Heenan for a purse of over two thousand pounds, which was the biggest that had been put up since prize-fighting had been invented. He died worth fifty thousand pounds.

When King retired Mace very naturally claimed the championship. His next fight was with Joe Goss, of Wolverhampton. This was for one thousand pounds, and both men had made the stipulation that they would not weigh more than ten stone ten pounds on the day of the contest. Mace won after nineteen rounds, but the fight was nothing like so terrific as the one he had had with King. He had two other fights with Goss, one of which he drew and the other of which he won. All his contests, however, were not for his title. Mace seems to have been willing to fight at any time so long as sufficient money was guaranteed, and when he was not fighting he was acting as a second. He was once sentenced to fourteen days' imprisonment for seconding a man at Walsall; but he spent the greater part of his time travelling with circuses. His third bout with Goss took place in 1866. He was successful in twenty-one rounds; but he was not always acknowledged as the champion. In 1865, for instance, Joe Wormald claimed the

belt after beating Andrew Marsden, but when Mace challenged him he forfeited one hundred and twenty pounds rather than meet him. In 1867 Ned Baldwin called himself the champion on the strength of having fought a drawn battle with Mace. In 1869 an American named McCooile defeated Tom Allen, at St. Louis, U.S.A., but he does not deserve to figure in the championship records, nor does Allen, although, four years later, he whipped McCooile in seven rounds.

The first real champion of the world was undoubtedly Jem Mace. All the men who preceded him were champions of England only ; but when Mace journeyed to America and fought Tom Allen, in 1870, the world's title was at stake. Mace went to America because the prize-ring in England was practically extinct. It had become such a very bad business that no one in his senses ever attempted to attend a fight. Here are Mace's own words on the subject :—

“ There was no longer the same high standard of honour in connection with fighting that there was when I was a young man. Fights on the cross were frequent, and this, together with the disgraceful rowdyism which seemed to be well nigh inseparable from most of the later battles for the championship, served to alienate the good old race of sport-loving noblemen and gentlemen who were once its chief supporters. Their places were taken largely by sporting publicans, some of whom were very good fellows indeed, but some of whom, on the other hand, were not. Trickery, amongst these latter, was rampant. They would get up a match, sell perhaps two or three hundred tickets for a special excursion to see it at from two to four guineas apiece, and, in the end, after all, there would be no fight, the unwary speculators being, of course, diddled out of their money.”

It used to be a favourite saying of Mace's that his third fight with Goss was the last knuckle-fight on British soil. That, however, was incorrect ; fist-fights were comparatively common up to 1895. He landed in America in the autumn of 1869, but the fight with Allen did not take place until the following year. Allen, of course, was an Englishman, but although he had never taken out naturalization papers, he was regarded by many as an American. Mace's age at the time of this contest was thirty-nine, while Allen was twenty-six. It was

a poor affair, for, after forty-four minutes, Allen had to be carried away wrapped in a horse-rug. Mace then crossed over to Canada, where he made considerable money by giving exhibitions. He received many challenges, but finding that his life was frequently in danger—he lived most of his time in saloons—he determined to visit Australia. He took with him several pugilists, and for some years travelled up and down the country with a boxing booth. The best-known trainer of fighters in Australia at that time was Larry Foley. It was he who taught Fitzsimmons, Slavin, and Peter Jackson, to name only three ; but he owed much to what he was himself taught by Mace. It is not too much to say, indeed, that Mace's sojourn in Australia was one of the most significant things that has happened in boxing.

He was over eighty years of age when he died. He had spent most of his money and was frequently hard put to it to obtain a meal. His last appearance in a big ring was on October 14, 1895, at the National Sporting Club, London, when he sparred several rounds with the late Dick Burge. He was then sixty-four years of age. His iron constitution served him well to the last. There is a general belief that pugilists die when they are no more than middle-aged. This, however, is only partly true. Tom Sayers, as has been recorded, passed away at thirty-nine, the Game Chicken at thirty-two, and Jem Belcher at the same age. But Broughton reached his eighty-sixth year, Jem Ward his eighty-fourth, John Gully his eighty-first, John Jackson his seventy-seventh, Dan Mendoza his seventy-fourth, Bendigo his seventieth, and Tom Cribb his sixty-eighth. A very wonderful man was James Mace, and he was never more wonderful than when he had reached an age when ordinary people are content to occupy a comfortable armchair by the fire. He was a great admirer of Tom Sayers, but it is curious to find that Sayers had a poor opinion of him. "He's a bloomin' duffer" was what Sayers once said to a gathering in Mace's presence. There is no better way of closing this section than by repeating what Mace wrote of Sayers. "I should like to say that he was, when in his prime, one of the gamest and fastest fighters I ever saw put up a hand. He was, though, most deceptive in appearance, his arms being no thicker than a girl's. Yet his

hitting powers were terrific, and his small, hard, sharp knuckles gashed like the edge of a razor. I have often wondered what would have been the result between him and myself."

The last champion under the rules of the London Prize-ring was Jem Smith. He will ever be remembered for his fight with Frank Slavin, at Bruges, in 1889. It is not my intention to deal with this bout, and it may be dismissed with the remark that it was a foul blot on pugilism. Soon afterwards it was found necessary to scrap the old rules, and as a consequence those known as the "Marquess of Queensberry's" were introduced. Under the old laws men fought with bare fists, and a round lasted until one of them was thrown or was knocked down. When either of these happened the fallen fighter was given thirty seconds to recover, and another eight seconds were granted him before he was required to toe the scratch. The Queensberry Rules insisted on gloves being worn, and a round lasted three minutes, whether a man went down or not. Ten seconds only were permitted for recovery. As all the champions who followed Smith will be dealt with in succeeding chapters, there is no necessity to say anything about them here, but so that the continuity of this narrative may be preserved it is perhaps as well to give a full list of all the championship fights from 1873 onwards.

UNDER PRIZE-RING RULES.

- 1873. Tom Allen beat Mike McCoole, in seven rounds, at St. Louis, U.S.A.
- 1876. Joe Goss beat Tom Allen (foul) in twenty-seven rounds, at Covington, Kentucky, U.S.A.
- 1880. Paddy Ryan beat Joe Goss, in eighty-seven rounds, in U.S.A.
- 1882. John L. Sullivan beat Paddy Ryan, in nine rounds, in U.S.A.
- 1885. Jem Smith beat Jack Davis for the championship of England.
- 1887. Jem Smith and Jake Kilrain fought a draw in France.
- 1888. J. L. Sullivan and Charles Mitchell fought a draw, after thirty-nine rounds (three hours eleven minutes), at Chantilly, France.

1889. J. L. Sullivan beat Jake Kilrain, in seventy-five rounds (two hours sixteen minutes), at New Orleans, U.S.A.
1889. Jem Smith and Frank Slavin fought a draw, at Bruges, Belgium.
1891. James J. Corbett and Peter Jackson fought a draw, after sixty-one rounds, at San Francisco, U.S.A.

UNDER MARQUESS OF QUEENSBERRY RULES.

- Sept. 7, 1892. J. J. Corbett beat J. L. Sullivan, in twenty-one rounds, at New Orleans, U.S.A.
Jan. 25, 1894. J. J. Corbett beat Charles Mitchell, in three rounds, at Jacksonville, Illinois, U.S.A.
Feb. 21, 1896. Robert Fitzsimmons beat Peter Maher, in one minute thirty-five seconds, in Mexico.
March 17, 1897. R. Fitzsimmons beat J. J. Corbett, in fourteen rounds, at Carson City, Nevada, U.S.A.
June 9, 1899. James Jeffries beat R. Fitzsimmons, in eleven rounds, at Coney Island, New York, U.S.A.
Nov. 3, 1899. J. J. Jeffries beat Thomas Sharkey, in twenty-five rounds, at Coney Island, New York, U.S.A.
May 11, 1900. J. J. Jeffries beat J. J. Corbett, in twenty-three rounds, at Coney Island, New York, U.S.A.
Nov. 15, 1901. J. J. Jeffries beat Gus Ruhlin, in five rounds, at San Francisco, U.S.A.
July 25, 1902. J. J. Jeffries beat R. Fitzsimmons, in eight rounds, at San Francisco, U.S.A.
Aug. 14, 1903. J. J. Jeffries beat J. J. Corbett, in ten rounds, at San Francisco, U.S.A.
Aug. 26, 1904. J. J. Jeffries beat Jack Munro, in two rounds, at San Francisco, U.S.A.
July 3, 1905. Marvin Hart beat Jack Root, in twelve rounds, at Reno, Nevada, U.S.A. Jeffries, who had retired, refereed this bout, and presented the winner with his title.
Feb. 23, 1906. Tommy Burns beat Marvin Hart, in twenty rounds, at Los Angeles, California, U.S.A.

- May 7, 1907. Tommy Burns beat Jack O'Brien, in twenty rounds, at Los Angeles, California, U.S.A.
- July 4, 1907. Tommy Burns beat Bill Squires, in one round, at Colne, California, U.S.A.
- Dec. 2, 1907. Tommy Burns beat Gunner Moir, in ten rounds, at the National Sporting Club, London.
- Feb. 10, 1908. Tommy Burns beat Jack Palmer, in four rounds, at London, England.
- March 17, 1908. Tommy Burns beat Jem Roche, in one round, at Dublin, Ireland.
- June 13, 1908. Tommy Burns beat Bill Squires, in eight rounds, at Paris, France.
- Aug. 24, 1908. Tommy Burns beat Bill Squires, in thirteen rounds, at Sydney, Australia.
- Sept. 3, 1908. Tommy Burns beat Bill Lang, in six rounds, at Melbourne, Australia.
- Dec. 26, 1908. Jack Johnson beat Tommy Burns, in fourteen rounds, at Sydney, Australia. The contest was stopped by the police.
- Oct. 16, 1909. Jack Johnson beat Stanley Ketchell, in twelve rounds, at San Francisco, California, U.S.A.
- July 4, 1910. Jack Johnson beat J. J. Jeffries, in fifteen rounds, at Reno, Nevada, U.S.A.
- July 4, 1912. Jack Johnson beat Jim Flynn, in nine rounds, at Las Vegas, Mexico. The contest was stopped by the police.
- June 27, 1914. Jack Johnson beat Frank Moran, in twenty rounds, at Paris, France.
- April 5, 1915. Jess Willard beat Jack Johnson, in twenty-six rounds, at Havana, Cuba.
- July 4, 1919. Jack Dempsey beat Jess Willard, in three rounds, at Toledo, Ohio, U.S.A.
- July 2, 1921. Jack Dempsey beat Georges Carpentier, in four rounds, at Jersey City, New York, U.S.A.

The only fights for the heavy-weight championship that have taken place since the above list was compiled were

between Jack Dempsey and Tom Gibbons at Shelby, U.S.A., in July, 1923, and Jack Dempsey and Luis Angel Firpo (Argentine) at New York in September, 1923. Dempsey won both, defeating Gibbons on points, and knocking-out Firpo in the second round.

CHAPTER XII

THE RING IN AMERICA

The prize-ring shows that the generic and individual courage of men, like other animals, varies in kind and degree. . . . Generally speaking, it displays the headlong impetuosity of the Irishman—the caution of the wary Jew, risking no more than is absolutely necessary—the short-lived fury of the gipsy, negro, or other foreigners, commonly bottomless, and yielding to opposition; and lastly the genuine John Bull, armed at all points by a courage equally active and passive—the safest man to back in the universe.—"Fistiana," 1843.

Prize-boxing is unknown in America.—"Boxiana," 1821.

I have done much to elevate and bring boxing before the public to a degree that had not been known for a number of years previous to my ascending this ladder of fame.—John L. Sullivan, 1892.

THE man who made prize-fighting popular in America was an English farmer named William Fuller. He was born in Norfolk, but when, in 1818, he decided to visit the United States, his record was not of the kind that was calculated to give him much prominence. He had had four contests, two of which he had lost. His conquerors were Molineaux, the black, and a somewhat indifferent performer named Jay. But his form was apparently good enough, for, within two or three months, he was labelled "the Jackson of America." He remained in the United States for eight years, and during the greater part of the period he ran an academy. He was not at the start exactly a popular visitor, and some of the newspapers had hard things to say of him. One of the few journals favourably disposed towards him was the "Charleston Mercury." In its issue of February 1st, 1825, it had this to say:—

"The general impression that pugilists are rude and troublesome characters is happily contradicted by the very gentlemanly deportment of Mr. Fuller. Since his residence in Charleston, his conduct has entitled him to attention, and the

respectability of his pupils should remove all prejudices against his art. Viewing pugilism as useless in the way of defence among gentlemen, the best medical authorities recommended it as an excellent exercise for the preservation of health. The enervating influence of our climate is a fact which should induce the youth of our country to adopt every athletic habit, that they may be ready to encounter fatigue and deprivation when necessary; and we think we may say, without giving offence to our young countrymen, that many expensive and pernicious habits might be substituted with advantage by the exercises of a sparring room. Of prize-fighting, as it exists in England, we say nothing; but, if there be an objection against it, it surely is not too much to assert that the sturdy courage of the English is in some measure fostered by the frequent exhibitions of invincible valour displayed in the ring. . . . We hope that the young gentlemen of the city will avail themselves of the present opportunity to acquire a knowledge of pugilism, and afford that encouragement to Mr. Fuller which his conduct, since he has been among us, so much deserves."

Fuller was always at pains to point out that he was not in America to introduce fighting. He was simply there, to quote his own words, "to instruct gentlemen in a useful, manly, and athletic exercise, at once conducive to health and furnishing the means of self-defence and prompt chastisement to the assaults of the ruffian." He appeared frequently at the theatres, and the poster which advertised him in 1824 is so quaintly worded that it must be reproduced:—

The Public is respectfully informed that

MR. FULLER,

The celebrated Pugilist, is engaged, and will appear

This Evening, December 15, 1824,

When will be performed for the sixteenth time, in Charleston,
the Extravaganza Burletta of Fun, Frolic, Fashion, and Flash,
in three Acts, of

TOM AND JERRY,

OR, LIFE IN LONDON :

When an entire new scene will be introduced, of
JACKSON'S ROOMS,
In which Mr. Fuller and Corinthian Tom will exhibit the
ART OF SELF-DEFENCE

To conclude with a Grand Display of
FIREWORKS

Previous to which will be acted the Comedy of
ANIMAL MAGNETISM

The new Comedy of "MARRIED AND SINGLE" is in rehearsal, and will soon be produced.

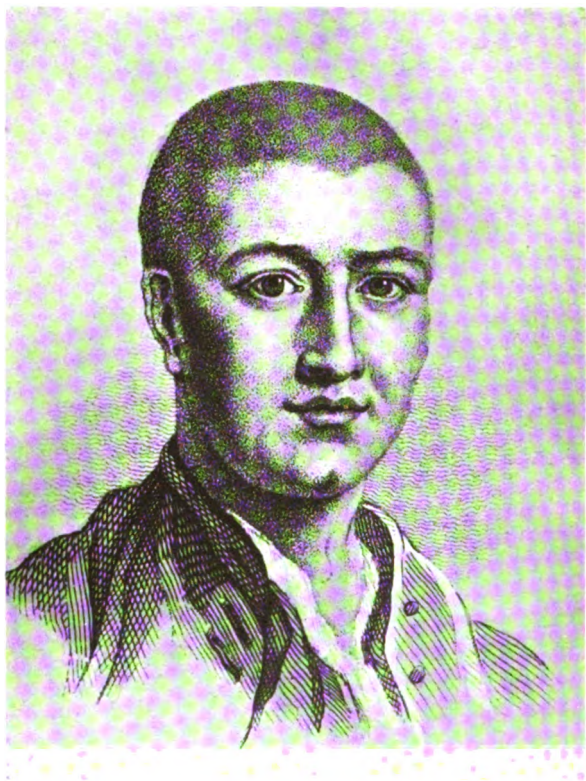
Doors opened at half-past Five, and the Curtain to rise at half-past Six. Price of admission—Boxes, Lower, Third Tier, and Pit, 1 dollar. Second Tier of Boxes, 50 Cents. Gallery, 25 Cents. Box Office at Miller's Printing Office, where the Proprietor's Tickets may be obtained.

Fuller's labours did not bear fruit for very many years. Deaf Burke, in 1837, did as he liked with the American fighters who were sent against him, and in 1841 Ben Caunt failed to find an opponent. The same fate befell Jem Ward and other English pugilists.

The first American champion was Tom Hyer. He won his title by defeating Yankee Sullivan (of whom something has already been said), at Still Pond Creek, Maryland. The battle was for ten thousand dollars, but after his victory Hyer retired from the ring, and Sullivan mounted his throne. Hyer's only other fight was against George McCheester (also known as Country McCloskey). This took place at Caldwell's Landing, New York, on September 9, 1841. It lasted two hours and fifty-five minutes, during which a hundred and one rounds were fought, McCheester's seconds then throwing up the sponge. The battle with Yankee Sullivan was of much shorter duration. It went sixteen rounds, or eighteen minutes seventeen seconds. Hyer was an extremely powerful man, but he was more celebrated for his physique than he was for skill. He was six feet three inches in height, and weighed over fourteen stone.

Hyer was popular because he had been born in America. Practically every other pugilist in the United States in 1840 was either English or Irish. The man next to Hyer in point of popularity was John Morrissey, who was once actually matched with him for the championship. Morrissey, however, forfeited.

Sullivan was accepted as the champion until October 12, 1853. On that date he fought Morrissey for two thousand dollars at Long Point, Canada. Both men were British, and their contest, as might be expected, was a desperate affair. Sullivan was a winner from the beginning, but just when it appeared certain that Morrissey would go down a quarrel broke out, and the crowd invaded the ring. Morrissey, on the advice of his seconds, remained in his corner, but Sullivan, incensed by what had happened, jumped over the ropes and left the spot. As this was contrary to the rules, he was adjudged the loser. Four years went by before there was another fight for the American championship. Then Morrissey was matched with Heenan, and defeated him in twenty-one minutes. This again was for two thousand dollars a side, but although Heenan threw out many challenges, Morrissey refused to listen to him, and retired. On August 1 of the same year (1857), Dominick Bradley fought Sam Rankin for one thousand dollars a side, and the title, at Point Alvino, Canada. Bradley won, but he was not accepted as of much account. In April, 1860, came the contest between Heenan and Sayers. It has already been recorded that both pugilists were presented with championship belts. That given to Heenan, however, had to be returned; it was never paid for. On May 17, 1863, Joe Coburn defeated Mike McCoole, at Charleston, and on December 10 of the same year King defeated Heenan, who thereupon retired from the ring, and the American championship went by default to Coburn. In 1865 the chief claimant to the title was Bill Davis. He fought a hard battle with James Dunn, in Pike County, which he won, but he was almost immediately challenged to another fight by McCoole. They met on September 19, 1866, and Davis was soundly whipped. In 1867 McCoole's only championship fight was against Aaron Jones, at Busenbark Station, Ohio; but in 1868 (May 27) he was signed up with Coburn, who had emerged from his



GEORGE TAYLOR
Claimant to the Heavy-weight Championship, 1734

retirement again to battle for the championship. The contest was fixed for Cold Spring Station, Indiana, and was for five thousand dollars. The police, however, had got wind of the affair, and although McCoole managed to reach the ring Coburn was arrested almost as he was climbing through the ropes. McCoole was taken into custody later, and both were sentenced to forty days' imprisonment. There was a somewhat similar happening on October 29, 1868, when Ned Baldwin and Joe Wormald, at Lynnfield, Mass., were arrested after they had fought one round. Both had journeyed to the United States to fight for the American championship, but as they were unable to find opponents they came to an arrangement to battle for what was called the championship of the world. There were two bouts in 1869, both of which were won by Tom Allen the Englishman.

On January 12 he defeated Bill Davis, at Foster's Island, St. Louis, and on June 15 he smashed McCoole to a jelly. Some time later, however, he was deprived of the verdict on the ground that he had delivered a foul blow. The biggest fight in 1870 was between Jem Mace and Allen. This was staged at Kennerville, New Orleans, and it resulted in the complete defeat of Allen. One year and one day later (May 11, 1871) Mace and Coburn met at Dover, Canada. This appears to have been one of the most extraordinary fights on record, for the men were in the ring one hour and sixteen minutes without striking a blow. The result was a draw—but the fight was a grotesque farce. Mace and Coburn fought again at St. Louis, on November 31, 1871. After twelve rounds another draw was declared.

Tom Allen reappeared on the scene in 1873, and on September 23, beat McCoole at Chateau Island, near St. Louis, but on November 18 he was deprived of his honours by Ben Hogan. This fight, which was more of a debating match than a pugilistic contest, took place at Pacific City, Iowa. Victory was claimed for Allen and for Hogan, but Allen finally lost his title on September 7, 1876, when, in Kentucky, he fouled Joe Goss. On May 9, 1879, Johnny Dwyer defeated Jimmy Elliot, after which Dwyer retired. Then, in 1880 (May 30), Joe Goss and Paddy Ryan fought for the championship of America, at Collier Station, Virginia. The winner was

Ryan, after a battle lasting one hour and twenty-seven minutes.

It will be observed that practically all these pugilists were Britishers. Heenan was, of course, born in America, but it is generally understood that his ancestors hailed from Ireland. Dwyer was also American-born, but Coburn, Dunn, Elliott, McCoole and Baldwin were Irish; while Allen, Wormald, Aaron Jones, Goss, Mace, Davis, and Rankin were English. Hogan was a German.

On December 9, 1880, the "Cincinnati Enquirer" published this startling challenge:—

"I am prepared to make a match to fight any man breathing, for any sum from one thousand dollars to ten thousand dollars, at catch-weights. This challenge is especially directed to Paddy Ryan, and will remain open for a month if he should not see fit to accept it.—Respectfully yours, JOHN L. SULLIVAN."

In the same issue of the "Enquirer," Sullivan was referred to as this "modest and unassuming man." His challenge is the best answer to the contention, and the plain fact is that the prize-ring has never known a man with a greater conceit of himself than John Lawrence Sullivan. He was certainly a very fine fighter, but he was not nearly so fine as he thought himself to be. He shares with Georges Carpentier the distinction of having been born at a very lucky time. He flashed before the public at a period when people were sick and tired of contests under prize-ring rules, but it was particularly his good fortune to reach his best when men of his own weight were extremely scarce. He first saw the light in Boston in 1858, and it is said that at seventeen years of age he weighed thirteen stone. More fantastic stories have been told about Sullivan than about any other pugilist the world has known. He was painfully addicted to boasting, and it is a fair surmise that he himself put into circulation some of the yarns that helped so materially to give him his reputation. But he was such an exceptional person that he is entitled to more than passing reference.

He came of Irish stock. His father was a native of Tralee, County Kerry, while his mother hailed from Athlone. He was

originally intended for the priesthood, and it was rather a come-down when he was sent out to work with a plumber. He stuck to this job for six months, and was paid four dollars per week. Then he became an apprentice to a tinsmith, but after eighteen months he joined a baseball club, with which he remained until he was offered employment as a mason. He was nineteen when, as he once phrased it, he drifted into the occupation of a boxer. "I never was taught to box," he stated. "I have learned from observation and watching other boxers, and outside of that my style of fighting is original with me. I never took a boxing lesson in my life, having a natural aptitude for the business. I was always a big fellow, and I had the reputation for more than my proportionate share of strength. I remember one time a horsecar getting off the track on Washington Street (Boston), and six to eight men trying to lift it on. They didn't succeed, and so I astonished the crowd by lifting it on myself. I used to practise such feats as lifting full barrels of flour and beer or kegs of nails above my head, but I gave up those things, as I found that men who did feats of strength made themselves too stiff for any good boxing."

His first contest of note was against Johnny Woods, and it took place in Hanover Street, Boston, in 1878. That year Sullivan met, among others, Dan Dwyer, Tommy Chandler, Mike Donovan, and Jack Hogan. In 1880 he sparred an exhibition with Joe Goss, and then went on to score victories over George Rooke and Jack Donaldson. After that, for some months he confined himself to exhibitions, and two years went by before he was given an opportunity of fighting for the championship. His opponent was Paddy Ryan. Sullivan's colours were decidedly spectacular. The big handkerchief was of white silk with a green border ; in the left hand upper corner was an American flag, in the right hand upper corner an Irish flag, in the lower left-hand corner another American flag, and in the lower right-hand corner another Irish flag. In the centre was an American Eagle. The fight was a short one, for Ryan was knocked out after nine rounds. The exact time was eleven minutes and ten seconds. Ryan, who was a comparatively old man, made no sort of a show at all, and he was down for the first time within thirty seconds of the

start. He is reported to have said, when he recovered consciousness, that when Sullivan struck him he thought that a telegraph pole had been pushed against him endways. An American Press opinion of this fight may be found of interest. It is from the New Orleans "Democrat": "It is amusing to observe the style in which the newspapers now speak of the Sullivan-Ryan fight. They describe it contemptuously as a mere brutal hammering of Ryan by Sullivan. The fact is that previous to the battle nine-tenths of the sporting men in the country looked upon Sullivan's pretensions with open derision. He was alluded to as a green and gawky boy, a chap who had never fought without gloves, and who would give up at the first good blow. He sat in the ring for half an hour waiting for Ryan. A heavy blanket enveloped him, so that only his face could be seen. He was the subject of a vast deal of disparaging comment, and of little or no enthusiasm. He endured those depressing thirty minutes, feeling the popular sympathy was against him, knowing that ninety of every hundred present were anxious for his defeat. That he defeated Ryan was due, not only to his magnificent physical strength and skill, but to his imperturbable and intrepid spirit. Sullivan won the fight by virtue of superior science and irresistible strength."

About three months later Sullivan issued a statement to the effect that he would never again fight with bare knuckles. He was nevertheless willing to meet any man in the world, in four weeks from signing articles, for five thousand dollars a side; he to fight with gloves, and his opponent, if it suited him, to battle with his knuckles. This gives a very fair idea of Sullivan's confidence in himself, but it is as well to recollect that he was being lionized wherever he went. He was so certain of his own powers that he offered large sums to anyone who would stand up against him for four rounds. This was a circus performance he had copied from Jem Mace, but he did not meet a Tartar till he encountered the Englishman, Tug Wilson. Sullivan never forgot this affair; there were times, indeed, when the very mention of it made him go black in the face. Wilson was a Leicester man, but the reputation he took with him to America was more manufactured than real. He opposed Sullivan at Madison Square Garden, New York,

on July 17, 1882. The spectators numbered twelve thousand, and they witnessed a comedy that compelled some to laugh very heartily and others to show their teeth with rage. It was an absurd contest, for Sullivan had guaranteed to knock out Wilson in four rounds. He failed to do so, despite the fact that in the first round Wilson was floored nine times in quick succession. In the second round he was down eight times, while for the remainder of the contest he was scarcely ever off the floor. He defeated Sullivan—defeat, of course, meaning that he managed to be on his feet when time was finally called—by collapsing whenever he was touched. This did not say much for Sullivan, however, for he was thirty pounds heavier than the Englishman, while he also possessed an advantage in height and reach. This fiasco made Sullivan very angry, and some of the things he said about Wilson were the reverse of kind. Another match was made between them, but it did not materialize owing to the interference of the authorities.

It is frequently stated that Jem Mace was the best boxer-showman who ever lived, but Sullivan undoubtedly ran him a close second. When he was not training for contests he was rushing about the world giving exhibitions, or displaying himself on stages. He must have visited almost every town in America after his foolish bout with Wilson, and it was not until May 4, 1883, that he arrived back in New York. He was immediately engaged for Madison Square Gardens, where, for the first time, he met Charles Mitchell. Whether this was a real contest or not is questionable, for it was limited to three rounds. In the first Sullivan was given the surprise of his life; he was knocked flat on his back by a man who was so much his inferior in weight that there was a difference of nearly sixty pounds between them. The punch that Mitchell delivered was so nearly a knock-out that the spectators were astounded. In the second round, however, he was flung clean over the ropes, and fell off the platform. This definitely settled any chance of victory he may have had, for, although he was able to climb back in time, he was so injured that he was compelled to take an unmerciful pummelling. Before the third round ended the contest was stopped by the police, and the decision awarded to Sullivan.

Sullivan's own explanation of the happening was that

Mitchell had struck him when his (Sullivan's) legs were crossed. This, it may be said, is in keeping with some of the other statements he made after being sent to the floor. Sullivan firmly believed that he was unbeatable, and whenever the unexpected occurred he was always ready with an excuse.

It was about this time that Jem Mace arrived in America with his Maori fighter, Herbert Slade. The latter was a magnificently built young fellow, and for some months he had been under the tuition of the old champion. Mace was convinced that he would beat Sullivan, but his anticipations were completely falsified. Sullivan won in the third round. "In the second round," said one report, "Sullivan beat Slade all around the ring, knocking him down twice. In the third round Sullivan led off with a terrific right-hander, square in the face, which staggered Slade. The two clinched, but Sullivan, breaking away again, rattled his antagonist, whose replies were weak. The Maori was finally sent sprawling upon the platform. He appeared dazed and unconscious of his surroundings. Inspector Thorne and Captain Williams rushed on to the platform to stop the fight, but Slade made their interference unnecessary."

Later in the year, Sullivan started what he was pleased to call a "Knocking-out Tour." One of the pugilists who accompanied him was the Maori, and it is singular to find that one of his managers was a man called Frank Moran. The trip lasted eight months, and during that time fifty-nine men tried to win the purse of one thousand dollars which Sullivan offered to anyone who remained on his feet for four rounds. The majority were beaten in the first minute, and all were knocked out long before the stipulated time had elapsed. One of these novices—his name was Fleming, and he lived at Memphis, Tennessee—was dropped in two seconds. It was always Sullivan's claim that this was the shortest fight on record. He was probably right.

He may well be described as the first of the great glove-fighters. He was never in love with the London Prize-ring Rules, and it was largely due to him that they were barred in America. His objections to them are best stated in his own words :—

"Under the London Prize-ring Rules," he said, "all the mean

tactics can be used right under the eyes of the referee without his seeing them. Contests last too long to demonstrate which is the superior man, and the length of time occupied does not depend on the superiority of the man as a fighter or boxer, but on the contemptible trickery possessed. There are hundreds of instances where men, fighting under the London Prize-ring Rules, and knowing that they were inferior to their opponent, have resorted to trickery, so as to lose the fight on a foul rather than be beaten fairly. Fighting under the Marquess of Queensberry Rules before gentlemen is a pleasure ; to the other element it becomes a brawl. Summing up my reasons, I will state that the Marquess of Queensberry Rules are the best, for under these rules a man can demonstrate his superiority without fear of the law ; without showing unnecessary brutality, either to himself or to his opponent ; without the great expense incidental to fighting under the London Prize-ring Rules, and also with better advantage to himself. The London Prize-ring Rules allow too much leeway for the rowdy element to indulge in their practices. Such mean tricks as spiking, biting, gouging, concealing snuff in one's mouth to blind an opponent, strangling, butting with the head, falling down without being struck, scratching with nails, kicking, falling on an antagonist with the knees, the using of stones or resin, and the hundred other tricks that are impossible under the Marquess of Queensberry Rules are under the others practised almost openly."

During his tour of America Sullivan made a profit of forty-two thousand dollars, the total receipts for eight months being one hundred and eighty-seven thousand dollars. His reappearance in New York was a tribute to his extraordinary popularity. " If John L. Sullivan had received the necessary majority of electoral votes to proclaim him President," said one of the chief newspapers, " the homage paid by the successful party would have been scarcely less than that accorded him by the multitude of people who gathered in and about Monico Villa at One Hundred and Forty-sixth Street, on November 9, 1884, the day previous to his fight with Lafin." Sullivan defeated Lafin without exerting himself, and then entered into an arrangement to fight Alf Greenfield, a Londoner. The bout did not come off on the date arranged, for both men

were arrested. They were placed on parole, but seven days later they met at Madison Square Gardens, where the police interfered in the second round. They again fought on the 12th January, 1885, and this time Sullivan was given the verdict after four rounds. At this period Sullivan was perpetually in conflict with the authorities. His contest with Paddy Ryan, in 1885—which was a match that should never have been made—was stopped after thirty seconds; but in the two years that followed he defeated, among others, Dominick McCaffrey, Jack Burke, and Patsy Cardiff. The fight with the last-named took place at Minneapolis on January 18, 1887, and in the first round Sullivan fractured his arm. This put an end to his fighting career for a time, but it did not stop him from giving exhibitions. He travelled for some months with Lester and Allen's Minstrels at a salary of five hundred dollars per week, and, later still, opened a saloon in New York.

He arrived in England on the 6th November, 1887, and, to quote his own words, "when we stepped from the tender we were cheered by thousands with the utmost enthusiasm. The crush was so great that it was deemed advisable to form a bodyguard, so that I might make my way to the four-in-hand that was waiting to take me to my hotel." He made his first English appearance at the St. James' Hall, London, on November 9. He took the ring with Jem Smith, the champion of England, and then sparred three rounds with Ashton, one of his partners. The Pelican Club was at that time the chief boxing resort, and it was there, on December 8, that Sullivan was handed this message:—

St. James' Barracks.

My dear Mr. Sullivan.

I have great pleasure on behalf of the officers of the Scots Guards in inviting you to breakfast in our Mess Room to-morrow at twelve o'clock, and subsequently to meet H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, who has repeatedly expressed the desire to make your personal acquaintance.

Very truly yours,

CLIFFORD DRUMMOND,

Captain, Scots Guards.

What happened next day was thus recorded in one of the newspapers :—

“ In the Mess Room, Captain Drummond, the ideal of Ouida’s Guardsman, received the transatlantic slugger. Captain Drummond presided, with Sullivan on his right, Phillips on his left, next to whom were Lord Randolph Churchill and Sir Gordon Cummings. In addition to the full roster of officers of the Scots Guards there were present many officers of the Grenadier and Coldstream Guards. The history of the prize-ring was twice told, from the homeric days of Epeus down to Tom Sayers and Heenan, whose healths were drunk in silence. Shortly before three o’clock the word came that the Prince had arrived at the Fencing Club across the way. Breakfast was immediately adjourned.

“ The Guards’ gymnasium is a gem in its way ; the fighting ring is a model, and the fencing space is admirable. Standing in front of an open wood fire, toasting himself, was the Prince, dressed in a cutaway black coat, grey trousers, drab gaiters, and thick-soled walking boots. He was smoking a cigarette, not an American, by the way, for, as he subsequently remarked, ‘ the only thing American I don’t like is an American cigarette.’ Sullivan entered the room, dressed quietly in black, demure and as innocent to all appearances as a Sunday-school super-intendent, and as self-contained as a young lady who had seen several seasons. ‘ There comes Gentleman John,’ ran the whisper among the officers, who agreed that the only thing that they would like to have changed about Sullivan was his birthplace.

“ Sir Francis Knollys skipped forward and said :—

“ ‘ His Royal Highness desires very much to meet you, Sullivan. May I have the honour of presenting you ? ’

“ ‘ You may ; I reciprocate heartily the sentiments of the Prince.’

“ Neither the pugilist nor the Prince were in the least bit stiff or formal in their manner, as they met and shook hands right heartily. The Prince immediately took away the frigid nap of newness from the acquaintance by saying that he felt as if he had known Sullivan many years, whereupon John L. reciprocated by remarking that, next to Jem Smith, the Prince of Wales was the man he had most wanted to see on coming

to England. Then the Prince looked Sullivan over carefully. Then Sullivan did ditto, and they again shook a shake of mutual satisfaction. The Prince was in very good trim for a man who had opened five fairs, three bazaars, gone to seven funerals by proxy, and laid two corner stones, in a week. He immediately referred to his trip to America before the War, and how in Detroit he had had his first real scrapping match.

“ ‘ It was a stand-off,’ he remarked ; ‘ my eye was darkened, and the other man’s nose was red.’

“ ‘ I see,’ remarked Sullivan, with professional nonchalance ; ‘ you got what we call a baptismal black eye, while the other fellow received his claret christening.’

“ The Prince then referred to some of Sullivan’s big fights, particularly that with Paddy Ryan. The fighter blushed as he heard the soft words of praise from the Prince’s lips, and turned the conversation glibly by asking the Prince if he put up his ‘ dukes ’ much nowadays.

“ ‘ Oh, no ; I am too old ! ’ said the Prince.

“ ‘ I don’t know, of course, how you feel,’ said Sullivan ; ‘ but you look as young as Jack Ashton.’

“ ‘ No, I do not spar at all now,’ continued the Prince ; ‘ but my eldest boy, who is down in York with his lancer regiment, punches the bag half an hour every morning before breakfast, and my second son, George, the middy, is a regular slugger, at least so the officers of his ship, the “ Dreadnought,” tell me. I never sparred very much myself, but I believe in the manly art, and, like most fathers, am endeavouring to bring my boys up in the way I should have gone.’ ”

Sullivan boxed three rounds with Ashton, but the main fighting was supplied by Bat Mullins, Jem Smith, Jack King, and Alf Greenfield. The meeting of the Prince and Sullivan inspired much prose and poetry, but nothing that was written was more entertaining than this :—

Ho ! Britons, raise a joyous shout,
Give voice in thrilling tones,
Accompanying your song throughout
With banjo, harp, and bones.
The olive branch floats on the breeze,
Peace marches in the van ;
The Prince’s hand has had a squeeze
From John L. Sullivan.



THOMAS BELCHER
Brother of the more famous Jem

Perchance some day the Prince will King
Become, when value much
Enhanced to that same hand shall cling
Which Sullivan did touch.
The loyal throngs, as on they pass,
Shall step with more élan
To kiss the hand which got the squeeze
From John L. Sullivan.

Sullivan's tour of Great Britain lasted from November of 1887 to January of 1888. He gave fifty-one exhibitions, and netted a profit of well over five thousand pounds. His celebrated fight with Charles Mitchell—whom he referred to as the "bombastic sprinter boxer"—took place in Baron Rothschild's grounds at Chantilly, France, on March 10th, 1888. The rules were those of the old London Prize-ring, and although Sullivan wanted a small ring it was finally agreed that one of twenty-four feet should be employed. The result was a draw, by mutual consent, after thirty-nine rounds had been fought, but Sullivan would never agree that Mitchell had the better of any of the rounds. It rained heavily throughout the fight; and according to Sullivan the termination of the contest was brought about by one of Mitchell's seconds, Jack Baldock, who stepped into the ring and called upon the men to shake hands and agree to a draw. This has been strenuously denied by Mitchell's supporters, but it is by no means certain that Sullivan would have won if the contest had been fought to a finish. Both Mitchell and Sullivan were arrested on leaving the grounds, and were kept in the lock-up for six hours. They were then released on parole, but as soon as he was clear of Chantilly Sullivan hurried to Paris and then made for England with all speed. He was sentenced to three days' imprisonment and fined two thousand francs, but he had reached safety before this became known.

Sullivan had only been back in America a few months when he was stricken down by incipient paralysis. He was then thirty years of age. He was out of action for a considerable time, but early in 1889 he was challenged to a fight for the championship of America by Jake Kilrain. Sullivan, who had recovered from his illness, at once accepted, and the battle took place at Richburg, Mississippi, on the 7th July, 1889. Sullivan had never been very fond of training, but for this bout he

allowed himself to be specially prepared by William Muldoon. This was one of the longest fights ever staged in America, and it was far and away the most protracted in which Sullivan was engaged. It lasted seventy-nine rounds. Omitting his struggle with Mitchell, the longest he had had prior to that time went but ten rounds. And that was the second of his career. Six of his fights ended in the first round, four in the second, eight in the third, six in the fourth, while nearly a dozen ended before the tenth was reached. Kilrain won the first fall by throwing Sullivan with a cross-buttock, but from then to the end Sullivan was his master. "The temperature was 120 degrees," wrote Sullivan, in his account of the fight. "Kilrain resorted to all the tricks imaginable. He spiked me and tore my right shoe wide open, so that the blood oozed through the shoe on to the grass. I found no fault with him, and never made it known to his seconds or to anybody else at the time. He was finished five rounds before they threw the sponge up, and I was more scared than anybody for fear that I had killed him, as in each fall that he had made during the last five rounds it looked as if his neck had been broken."

The aftermath was a very serious one for Sullivan. He was arrested for breaking the law, was clapped into prison, and spent something like five thousand dollars before he was allowed to leave the State of Mississippi. This, however, was by no means the end. He was again apprehended for the same offence, compelled to return to Purvis, Mississippi, which was the County Seat, and was there sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment. Sullivan appealed against this sentence, but, after about a year's haggling, he was advised to plead guilty to prize-fighting, on the promise that if he did so his fine would not be more than one thousand dollars. He did as he was counselled, but when he made up his books some few weeks later he discovered that he had spent on litigation the sum of 18,670 dollars. What it cost Kilrain is not recorded.

Sullivan visited Australia in 1891, but he did no fighting there. In 1892 (September 7) he lost his championship to Corbett, by whom he was knocked out in twenty-one rounds. This was the forerunner of all the big fights that have happened since. His contest with Kilrain had been fought with bare knuckles. The one with Corbett was, of course, with gloves,

and it was for an amount of money that constituted a new record—nearly ten thousand pounds. The venue was again New Orleans. Sullivan was thirty-four years of age and Corbett twenty-six. The latter stood six feet one inch in height, and weighed in the neighbourhood of thirteen stone. Sullivan's height was five feet ten and a half inches, and he usually scaled fourteen stone two pounds. One of the many singular things about this contest was that Sullivan refused to shake hands when the signal for the start was given. He was contemptuous of the young Californian, and it never entered his head that his day was done.

His refusal to go through the usual preliminaries created a very bad impression, but that did not worry Sullivan, for as soon as the bell rang he made a bull-like rush at his opponent, and attempted to end the fight with one punch. Corbett, who was in perfect condition, and who was at least twice as fast as his antagonist, and three times as scientific, evaded the charge with ease, and it was not until the third round that he received a blow in keeping with Sullivan's reputation for steam-hammer punching. The first seven rounds were not particularly exciting, but the eighth was a thriller. Sullivan had been given proof that his title was in peril, and he left his corner like an enraged animal. He took Corbett completely by surprise, and made him flounder by slamming him on the mouth. Corbett, instead of retreating, as was expected, stood his ground, and drove in three tremendous punches to the ribs, but he was almost immediately floored by a fearful drive which landed on the spot above his heart.

That Sullivan was badly trained was shown when he came up for the ninth round. He was breathing heavily, his mouth was wide open, while his knees were shaking. He smashed out punches with all his force, but the more active Corbett managed to avoid them by skipping nimbly to right and left. Maddened, Sullivan called on him to stand his ground, but the reply was a succession of blows to his body. From the twelfth round onwards—save for one thrilling moment—the fight was Corbett's. He was better than his opponent in everything save pluck and power of endurance. For four rounds he did very much as he liked, but then in the fifteenth he eased up very considerably. This encouraged

Sullivan, who gathered together all the strength that remained in him, and flung out one of his celebrated right-hand deliveries. It missed Corbett by the fraction of an inch, and he countered with a straight left to the mouth, which sent the veteran headlong against the ropes. Throughout the sixteenth round Corbett used his left with splendid precision. Sullivan's blows were now weak and badly timed, while his strength was so nearly gone that a glancing right-hander to the chin nearly toppled him ; but in the seventeenth he caught Corbett off his balance and floored him. This caused the wildest excitement, and it looked, for an instant, as if Corbett was beaten. When he regained his feet, it was seen that he was badly shaken ; Sullivan rushed him to the ropes and belaboured him right up to the call of time. It is still a matter of doubt whether the ringing of the bell did not save Corbett. In any case, he was very tottery when he shuffled to his corner, and he was extremely cautious when he came up for the next round. Sullivan, despite the fact that he was gasping for breath, was still hitting very hard. Corbett boxed, while Sullivan fought—and the boxer, as usual, scored most of the points. After the nineteenth round Sullivan's strength went completely ; in the twentieth he was jockeyed against the ropes, and compelled to receive a perfect fusillade of punches. When this round ended he was beaten to the world. He managed to stagger up for the twenty-first round, but it was obvious that his star had set.

He could hardly move his feet or lift his hands. He had taken more punishment in the twentieth round than in all the rest put together. Very wearily he dragged himself to his feet when the bell went. Corbett at once sprang at him and drove four successive blows into his face. The old champion reeled away, his guard down, his face a picture of torture. Corbett followed him, shook him to his toes with a pitiless shower of lefts, and then smashed in a right to the jaw. Down went the man who had made fistic history in America. He rolled over on to his face, and, amid the wildest scenes of excitement, crawled to the upright as the time-keeper intoned the word seven. He was a complete target, for his hands were at his sides ; Corbett measured him with his left, and then slung in the terrific punch which made him the champion of the

world. When Sullivan was picked up, he was quite unconscious.

Sullivan's last appearance in the ring was on August 31, 1896, when in New York he fought a three-round exhibition with Tom Sharkey. For all his boastfulness and his uncommon belief in himself, he was a very fine fighter. He had strong likes and dislikes, and the person he hated most of all was Charles Mitchell. "Of all the men with whom I have boxed, sparred and fought," he said on his retirement, "I consider Ryan, Kilrain, Slade and Flood the gamest group. Ryan stood up und fought me like a man, did not resort to any trickery or petty dirtiness, but fought from the start. Kilrain fought for all he was worth in my last battle with him, and stood his punishment gamely. Slade and Flood did the same. Very different from my encounters with these men was my fight with Mitchell. As the last round of that memorable fight will show, the last thirty-nine minutes passed without a blow being struck, for the very simple reason that I was unable to catch him or get within striking distance. It was simply run, run, run ; he in the lead and I not as good as a close second. Repeatedly in that last round I asked him to let us have one decent round, to all of which he paid no attention, but went on with his talk, telling me that I could not catch him in a month."

Sullivan disliked knuckle-fighting because he knew in his heart that he was no good with the "raw un's." His chief fault was that he never gave credit to the men who put up a good battle with him. But as a glove fighter he was, until the advent of Corbett, the best in the world.

CHAPTER XIII

THE INVENTORS OF THE MODERN STYLE OF FIGHTING

The change from an old-fashioned prize-ring fight to a modern glove contest shows how much in these days depends on speed, training, and the cultivation of special knock-out blows. The same qualities of courage, endurance and what may be called the fighting instinct par excellence, the promptness to attack, are all as valuable as ever; but on the whole, the glove fight demands more, and the skill of the modern exponent must be at a higher level than that of his old time comrade.—Henry Sayers, 1900.

JAMES J. CORBETT started his fighting career in 1885. He was then nineteen years of age, having been born at San Francisco on September 1, 1866. His is one of the great names in pugilism, for, in addition to being a boxer as well as a fighter, he was also possessed of a fine personality. His first contest was against a certain Captain Daly, whom he knocked out in two rounds, but his first year as a fighter was a good one for him, even if it did not bring him much money. He defeated Dave Eisenman, Dan MacDonald, Mike Brennan, John Donaldson, Martin Costello, William Miller and Frank Smith. Then he struck a bad patch, for after knocking out Billy Welsh he was beaten by the same opponent, and could only draw with Jack Burke and Frank Glover. These were not very important fights, and it was not until 1889 that he commenced to figure among the top-liners. In this year he defeated Joe Choynski twice, while in 1890 he received the decision over Jake Kilrain and Dom McCaffrey. The year before he met Sullivan he fought sixty-one rounds with Peter Jackson, which gives some idea of his skill and his strength. It is nevertheless a fact, however, that when he went up against Sullivan to contest for the championship, there were not more than a hundred people in America who thought he had a ghost of a chance of winning.

He was originally a bank clerk. For about three years he

was employed by the Nevada Bank, at San Francisco. His father was bitterly opposed to prize-fighting, and when young Jim announced his intention of embracing the ring there was a bitter scene, which caused him to leave home. "When it was announced," he once stated, "that I was to meet Peter Jackson, my father went crazy with anger, and vowed that if I dared attempt to do such a thing, he would have me arrested. I knew that the old gentleman thought a good deal of his boy, even though he was a prize-fighter, and I thought I knew how to get round him. So I took him aside, and said: 'I have signed an agreement to meet Jackson. True, he is a coloured man, and I appreciate your feelings. Now, however, that I have signed the agreement, I cannot get out of the fight without disgracing myself, and losing the friendship of my friends, as well as their money. If you do not permit me to meet him in San Francisco, I shall go with him to Australia, and fight him there.'"

Corbett senior was present at the contest with Jackson, at the close of which he was so pleased with his son that he publicly embraced him. Corbett's ambitions seem to have been fired by John L. Sullivan, for he attended the fight between the latter and George Robinson. He was then only thirteen years of age. His methods are too well remembered to need description here, but it may be said with truth that few men have combined boxing ability with fighting ferocity to a greater extent. He was given many titles, the best known of which were "Pompadour" and "Gentleman Jim." He was one of the first pugilists to do really well on the stage. He was not a great actor, but he was infinitely better than the majority who have strutted the boards. He was a man of good appearance and had a distinct charm of manner, but it is questionable whether what was called his gentlemanly manners would have been made so much of if it had not been for the fact that his connection with a bank had been so widely published to the world. The majority of pugilists up to his time had started life as blacksmiths or farm hands or dock labourers—and a bank clerk was supposed to be on a different social scale. Corbett took good care to foster this idea. He differed from Sullivan in every particular. Sullivan was a relic of the old school; Corbett was one of the first of the

new. He appeared when knuckle-fighting had definitely taken its *congé*, and the fact that he had once been an amateur boxer helped him very materially. For a big man his speed was remarkable, but he proved, in his three fights with Choynski, that he could fight as well as box. He was, indeed, the perfect combination of the boxer and the fighter.

Many of his contests, after his victory over Sullivan, were very indifferent affairs. He defeated Bill Spillings and Bob Caffrey in one round, Joe Lannan in three, Charles Mitchell in three and Peter Courtney in six. His fight with Mitchell took place at Jacksonville, Illinois, on January 25, 1894. It was a lamentable exhibition, for Mitchell put up no sort of a show at all. He was knocked out in the third round. Corbett held the championship from 1892 till 1897, although there are some who say that it was captured by Fitzsimmons in 1896, in which year the Cornishman defeated Peter Maher in less than a minute and a half. Most people, however, are content to believe that Corbett was best entitled to the name of champion when he stood up to face Fitzsimmons at Carson City, Nevada, on March 17, 1897.

This was a wonderful fight. Fitzsimmons, like Jimmy Wilde, was something of a freak; he was thin and angular, while his arms were exceptionally skinny. He was not good on the defensive, but as a receiver of punishment he was one of the most phenomenal the boxing business has ever known. When he first arrived in America from Australia, he was looked upon as rather a joke, and when he left his corner to battle with Corbett it is but truth to say that ninety per cent. of those present took it for granted that he would be beaten. Corbett had no admiration for Fitzsimmons, and the result was that there was no hand-shaking before the fight started. Both men opened cautiously, and nothing of much consequence happened until the third round was reached. There had been considerable clinching, and Fitzsimmons, who had been worried by some tremendous body blows, was hitting out wildly. The majority of Corbett's punches were aimed at his opponent's heart, and in the fourth round Fitzsimmons was plainly distressed. Corbett was not only shining as a skilful boxer, but he was also seriously inconveniencing Fitzsimmons with his frequent and terrific smashes to the body. Matters were

fairly even in the fifth and sixth rounds, but when he came up for the seventh Corbett was obviously tiring. He was bleeding from the mouth and the nose, and it was abundantly clear that he had made up his mind to keep out of range of Fitzsimmons' devastating left hand. Fitzsimmons had taken much punishment, and when in the sixth round he was urged by his wife, who had a seat at the ringside, to change his tactics, his prospects of victory seemed very small indeed. He took one enormous uppercut on the jaw, which put him down for nine seconds, and in the seventh round he was no better than a chopping-block. Wide open to the world, and with no semblance of a guard, he permitted Corbett to punch him at will. He was a frightful spectacle, for he was drenched in blood, while his face was gashed beyond belief. But he was hard as hickory ; he assimilated punches that would have killed most men, and it was perhaps his refusal to be hurt that presently broke Corbett's spirit. In the ninth round, the latter was lifeless and a little hopeless, and it was at this stage that Fitzsimmons commenced to take command. He was now going for his antagonist's stomach, and was twice warned by the referee to exercise care. As Corbett grew weaker, Fitzsimmons grew stronger. Corbett was using up his strength in dancing about and in swinging badly directed punches ; Fitzsimmons husbanded his powers by sticking to one spot, and by hitting out only when his opponent was near enough to be struck.

But it was he who did all the furious work ; in the eleventh round it was becoming plainer and plainer that Fitzsimmons was the likely winner. He was still ignoring every punch that fell on him. The way in which he shook off the effects of pile-driving deliveries was amazing. For twelve rounds he was outboxed and practically outmatched, but he was still easily the fresher of the two when the thirteenth round was signalled. He was the aggressor in this, and chased Corbett all over the ring. Towards the end of this round Corbett made a spurt, which cheered his supporters ; he forced Fitzsimmons to the ropes, and landed one particularly good upper-cut. It was by no means certain even then that the champion would be defeated. He rushed from his corner, swung with his left, and Fitzsimmons dodged out of range.

Corbett plunged after him, and clinched hard for some seconds. Down went Fitzsimmons' head, and simultaneously his lathy arms commenced to work. One punch connected with Corbett's ribs, one with his face, and yet another with his stomach. Staggered, he tottered back against the ropes, and, as Fitzsimmons darted after him, swung once more with his left. Fitzsimmons, however, was infinitely the quicker, and after rattling in a succession of punches to the head and body, he stepped away. He was grinning—and nothing was clearer now than that he was playing for a knock-out. Stumblingly, Corbett left the ropes, and shot out a left. This missed by inches, but as the champion was striving to recover his balance, Fitzsimmons slid in and whirled a tremendous left-hander to a spot on Corbett's body midway between the heart and the mark. Corbett was really beaten by this blow, but, as he reeled away, Fitzsimmons changed feet with the quickness of the wind, and whipped in another punch—this time with his right—to the jaw. Corbett went down like a house of cards collapsing. He landed on his knees, and it was in this position that he heard the seconds being counted off—for he has himself said that he was conscious of everything that went on around him. His brain was active, but his body was paralysed. He did make one heroic effort to pull himself erect, but twelve seconds had gone by before he scrambled to his feet.

The scene at the end can only be described as regrettable. The instant it dawned on him that he had been beaten Corbett made a blind rush at his opponent, and furiously attacked him. Fortunately the seconds intervened, but Corbett's disappointment was so great that long after the spectators had left the ringside he was hurling hard words at the man who had conquered him. Many millions of words were written about this fight, but the best commentary was supplied by the referee, Mr. George Siles. It was his opinion that the boxer was outmanœuvred and outfought by the fighter. "In the earlier stages," he said, "it looked as though it was all up with Fitzsimmons, but Corbett spent all his vigour in vain efforts to wear him down with jabs. Fitzsimmons took these as they came, and waited for just such a blow as he landed in the fourteenth round. His left did the work at a time when

Corbett was led to believe that the right was intended as the driving weapon, and the left as the guard."

This was practically the end of Corbett. In 1898 he lost on a foul to Tom Sharkey; in 1900 he was knocked out by Kid McCoy (five rounds), and by Jim Jeffries (twenty-three rounds); and, finally, in 1903, his career was terminated by Jeffries, who again knocked him out in ten rounds. At the present time he is chiefly employed in trying to make popular a new set of rules, which, according to his own statement, will, if adopted, make boxing the cleanest game in the world.

Robert Fitzsimmons stands in a class of his own. When he fought Corbett, he weighed nearly twelve stone, but his proper fighting weight was eleven stone four. He was, in fact, a natural middle-weight. He was born at Helston, in Cornwall, on June 4, 1862, and for some years he had the unique distinction of being both the heavy-weight and the middle-weight champion of the world. He went to New Zealand with his parents when he was still a lad, but nothing very much was heard of him until 1880. In that year Jem Mace was touring New Zealand with his troupe of boxers. At Timaru he promoted a tournament to decide who was the amateur champion of New Zealand. It was won by Fitzsimmons, who knocked out four opponents in one evening. This, however, was not an exceptional performance; he went one better a year later, when he defeated six men in less than three hours. He turned professional in 1882, but prior to that he had been a blacksmith, a coachbuilder, a painter, a butcher's assistant, and a mender of roads. Jem Mace claimed some of the credit for teaching him, but without much reason; the only real tuition he ever received was given him by Larry Foley. This man, who was the Ned Donnelly of Australia, introduced to the ring such remarkable fighters as Peter Jackson, Frank Slavin, Jim Hall, and Young Griffo, the latter of whom is considered by many to be the only real rival—although he was considerably heavier—to Jimmy Wilde.

Fitzsimmons had a good many contests in New Zealand and Australia, and it was largely on the advice of Foley that he visited America. He arrived in San Francisco in 1890, unknown, unhonoured, and unsung. We are told that when he

made his first appearance in a San Francisco gymnasium he was sniffed at. It is easy to believe, for Fitzsimmons was very peculiarly built. His legs and arms were those of a fly-weight, but his body was that of a big heavy-weight. He was abnormally muscled about the back and shoulders, but his very long arms were nearly the same width from the wrist to where his biceps should have been. The ring up to that time had never known a man so curiously constructed, and there were plenty to be found who said pointedly that he was totally unfitted for the profession he had adopted. As a consequence, everyone wondered when he knocked out Dempsey, the famous Nonpareil. This was in 1891. Dempsey, of course, was the recognized middle-weight champion of the world. Fitzsimmons floored him in the thirteenth round. The sensation caused by this unexpected achievement led up to his match with Corbett, but six years went by before he was given a chance at the world's heavy-weight title. In the meantime, he defeated, among others, James Farrell, Peter Maher, Millard Zender, Jim Hall, Jack Warner, Jack Hickey, and Dan Creedon, but lost on a foul to Tom Sharkey. In the years between 1891 and 1897 he had eighteen fights, winning sixteen, losing one and making a draw of the other. The actual number of rounds for these eighteen contests was sixty-seven. He held the heavy-weight championship for two years, but he was the middle-weight champion of the world from 1891 until 1905.

After beating Corbett he made the mistake of taking things too easily. He rested on his laurels for two years, and was then challenged for his title by James J. Jeffries, a gigantic man who rarely entered the ring weighing less than fifteen stone. The fight took place at Coney Island, New York, on June 9, 1899, and Fitzsimmons was knocked out in the eleventh round. It is curious to reflect that when the match was first mooted it was derided by all the experts. They said that Jeffries was clumsy, muscle-bound, and too slow to get out of his own way. He disproved these assertions in the most complete fashion, but it is due to Fitzsimmons to remark that he was shockingly overweighted. He scaled something like twelve stone, while Jeffries was nearer sixteen. It was in this contest that the latter introduced what has since become known as the American crouch. He had developed and perfected it so as to counter

Fitzsimmons' favourite punch to the body. Immediately the battle started it was seen that Fitzsimmons' long rest had lessened his speed. He was stiff and slow, and, in addition, he was completely puzzled by Jeffries' style. Fitzsimmons was only thirty-six years of age, but he looked considerably older. He won the first round, but in the second he was knocked clean off his feet by a left-hander that landed on his ear. He was undoubtedly alarmed, but he did not take a count, for the reports show that he climbed back to his feet before the fourth second was counted off. But he was more badly shaken than the majority of the spectators supposed. Blood was streaming from his nostrils when he stood up for the third round, but he fought with skill, and returned with interest practically every blow that Jeffries dealt him. Those people who held the opinion that Fitzsimmons was the hardest man in the world were given the shock of their lives at the end of this round, for Fitzsimmons landed one of the heaviest punches he ever shot out, but Jeffries did not even lose his balance. The fourth and fifth rounds were fierce; in the fifth Fitzsimmons worked his celebrated shift, immediately after breaking away from a clinch, but Jeffries took the blow that followed without turning a hair. Indeed, he was so invulnerable to punishment that he was able to charge in and clip Fitzsimmons over the heart. Fitzsimmons was down for six seconds, but the fighting that finished the round was too wild to have been of much value. From the sixth round onwards the champion was on the retreat. It was palpable that he was amazed by the extraordinary endurance of Jeffries; he had hit the big man with all his best punches, but Jeffries had thrown off the effects with the greatest possible ease. In the eighth round the pace was so hot that Fitzsimmons was first to seek a clinch, but in the ninth he drove in a punch that was practically a replica of the one that had downed Corbett. Jeffries certainly gave ground, but there was no indication that he was badly hurt. Instead, he walked in, swung with all his strength, and doubled up Fitzsimmons with a blow to the body.

Jeffries was very wary in the tenth round. He knew he had his man beaten, but he did not want to risk another solar plexus punch. Fitzsimmons, rather dazed, for the pace and the punishment had taken a lot out of him, went all out for a

finishing blow. He missed by a yard, and Jeffries, stepping aside nimbly, rammed in a punch to the chin which sent his opponent down for seven seconds. This was probably the blow that finished Fitzsimmons, for when he crawled back to his feet his face was ashen and his thin legs were trembling. Jeffries, at this stage, was wildness personified. The luck, however, was with him, for he again caught Fitzsimmons with a left-hander, and this time the old champion was down for nine seconds. The agony ended in the eleventh round, when Fitzsimmons, after being flogged to a standstill by rights and lefts—particularly lefts—to his stomach, heart, chest and jaw, collapsed on his face.

Three years later he was given another contest with Jeffries. He had regained some of his lost reputation by defeating Geoff Thorne in one round, Jim Daly in one round, Ed Dunkhorst in two rounds, Gus Ruhlin in six rounds and Tom Sharkey in two rounds. The second fight was extremely unpopular, especially in England. It was felt that the promoters were more concerned with making profits than they were with giving the spectators a sporting chance of seeing a decent fight. Fitzsimmons was on the verge of forty, and only weighed eleven stone four pounds, while Jeffries, a quite young man, was within a few pounds of sixteen stone. This time Fitzsimmons was knocked out in the eighth round, but he gave Jeffries a hard battle. He was far and away the cleverer boxer, and although he made Jeffries bleed he could not properly hurt his very tough antagonist. The punch that settled all his hopes was a left-hander to the mark. It made him bend forward, and, as he did so, Jeffries swung again with his left, and Fitzsimmons rolled over and over until he came again to rest on his face.

This, however, was by no means the end of him. In 1903 he defeated Con Coughlin in a round, but in 1905 he was decisively whipped by Jack O'Brien, who knocked him out in the thirteenth round. Then, in 1907, Jack Johnson did the same in the second round, while in 1909, when he should not have been fighting at all, he was knocked out by Bill Lang at Sydney, Australia, in the twelfth round. This must have filled his cup of bitterness to overflowing, for Lang was certainly no better than a good second-rater, as was demonstrated when he

came to London to fight the negro Sam Langford. Fitzsimmons' last appearance in a ring was in February, 1914, when he was well over fifty years of age. He toured England in 1908, but he did not make the money he deserved. He was fifty-five when he died.

James Jeffries will always be remembered as the fighter who was never knocked down until he met Jack Johnson, six years after his retirement. He was born at Carroll, Ohio, on April 15, 1875, and he was one of the best-made men who ever stood in a ring. His strength was abnormal, his hitting power terrific ; but as a boxer, pure and simple, he did not compare with either Fitzsimmons or Corbett. He held the championship for six years, and he is about the only title-holder one can recall who was invariably willing to meet any logical contender for his honours. He started boxing in a very small way in San Francisco in 1896. His record is not a long one, for he only had twenty-one fights in all. Of these he won eighteen, drew two, and lost one. The men he failed to defeat were, in addition to Johnson, Gus Ruhlin and Joe Choynski. He met both at the outset of his career, and created something of a minor sensation by forcing both to go the full distance of twenty rounds. Jeffries owed so much to his strength that it is possible his skill was not given sufficient credit. In action he was a human bullock, for he could be struck the most powerful blows without blinking an eyelid. It is of interest to recall that his father was a Nonconformist minister. Jeffries loved fighting for fighting's sake, and there is a good deal to be said for those who contend that he was the world's greatest heavy-weight. Practically every man he met and defeated was a champion of sorts. They included Peter Jackson, Fitzsimmons, Corbett, Goddard, Sharkey, Armstrong and Munroe. If he had not been pestered to come out of his retirement to fight Johnson he would have gone down into history as one of the few heavy-weight champions who had never been beaten.

There has never been a more ghastly blunder than this. It was made possible by Johnson's victory over Tommy Burns. The moment this happened, a howl went up for Jeffries to get back into training and recapture the title for the white race. Foolishly, he listened to the appeals, despite the fact that he had been getting fat for six long years—and six years, it need

hardly be remarked, is a lifetime to any fighting man. For a month or so Jeffries showed wisdom by declining to entertain the propositions that were made to him, but eventually, when press and public were united in screaming out the tidings that he was the only man in the world who could legitimately be called the "hope of the white race," he left his farm, and went into training for a debacle that is still well remembered. The fight was first fixed for San Francisco, but when objections were raised it was decided to stage it at Reno, in Nevada. It was the only thing talked about for many weeks, but Johnson had become so unpopular that half the world hoped fervently that he would be beaten.

The purse was an enormous one—over one hundred thousand dollars—but the men were fairly equally matched, Johnson weighing fifteen stone three pounds, and Jeffries sixteen stone four pounds. But the fight itself was a tragedy for the white man. He was not only beaten, but made to look foolish. Johnson's tactics were those he had employed in his fight with Burns; from the first round to the last he kept up a stream of offensive chatter. Jeffries had long since passed his best, and although he tried to rush Johnson off his feet in some of the early rounds he failed miserably. Johnson toyed with him, and when he was not talking he was laughing. But it has to be said that the conditions were all against Jeffries. There was a pitiless sun beating down on him throughout the bout. The heat affected him seriously; on the other hand it suited the negro, who was in his element. His style contrasted strangely with the white man's. He stood upright, while Jeffries' head was practically on a level with his chest. He could never fight without crouching, but the system that had served him so well against Fitzsimmons was of no avail against the crafty coloured man. He tried to batter down Johnson's guard, but he was never within distance of success. Johnson was his master in everything that appertained to boxing. He was quicker on his feet, quicker with his hands, a better general, and infinitely speedier in skipping away from danger. There was really never a time when Jeffries looked like winning. He did manage to land some blows, but they always connected when the black was retreating. His best punch of the fight was delivered in the third round, and this must have been a fairly

heavy one, for Johnson jumped back against the ropes and grinned agitatedly. Jeffries' lip was split in the fifth round, but in the sixth Johnson got seriously down to his work. It was all over from that time.

It is all very well for people to say that Jeffries fought poorly and without method ; the plain truth is that in 1910 there was no man in the world who could be compared with Johnson. He was as much on top of the pugilistic ladder as Dempsey is to-day. He could box as well as fight. He was a tremendously hard hitter, while, for a man of his size, he was amazingly swift on his feet. Objection has been raised to his habit of talking when he was fighting, but there is nothing in the rules that bars this. He had as much right to use his tongue as he had to use his hands. There is no doubt that he drove Jeffries, as well as some of the spectators, to distraction ; but it is only bare justice to say that on that day, at Reno, he was undeniably the white man's master. He did as he liked with him in the tenth, eleventh and twelfth rounds—stung him with his left, smashed him with his right, pounded him in a way that few men had ever been pounded before. But for his abnormal strength, Jeffries would have been knocked out in the tenth round. He was positively riddled with blows, and when he went to his corner his state was such that some of the women onlookers fainted. In the thirteenth and fourteenth rounds he was scarcely able to defend himself. Johnson fought like an animal—had he not said that he was out to humiliate the white race ? When Jeffries went to his corner for the last time, he was only able to crawl to it feebly. The final round (the fifteenth) was pitiful. Johnson drove Jeffries round the ring for nearly a minute, and then, with the theatricalism for which he was famed, knocked him down. It was a sad moment for the white man. He had never been on the floor of a ring in his life before. But his courage was still good. He crawled up at nine, but, as a section of the crowd tried to force a way into the ring, Johnson knocked him down again. This time, when he rose (again at the call of nine), Jeffries clung to his opponent for support. In struggling to free himself the black man pulled him across the ring ; and then, as the crowd pressed up to the ropes, he shook himself free and struck Jeffries fairly on the point of the jaw. The

customary count was not made, for, as Jeffries fell, hopelessly beaten, the referee waved Johnson away, and awarded him the fight. This was a sorry end to a fine career, but it is not easy to feel sympathetic towards Jeffries. He should have had more sense than to listen to the absurd pleas of his friends.

Tommy Burns was born at Hanover, Canada, on June 17, 1881, but as he did most of his early fighting in America he may well be included in this chapter. His real name is Noah Brusso, and he is, at the time of writing, a publican in the north of England. He won the world's heavy-weight championship from Marvin Hart in 1906, a year or so after Jeffries had retired. He held it for two years, during which time he had eight contests for his title. At least six of these, however, were against men who were hardly of championship class. It is still the fashion to say that Burns was lucky to reach the top of the pugilistic tree, but, even if this is admitted, it is nevertheless a fact that at his best he was a plucky and a quite skilful fighter. He was sadly handicapped by his shortness of reach and his lack of inches. When he fought Johnson he weighed twelve stone six pounds, but his height (five feet seven inches) was only that of a light-weight.

Burns was responsible for many introductions after he had acquired his title. It was he, for instance, who insisted on a fixed sum, whether he won, lost or drew. In all his chief fights, he knew precisely what he was to receive before he entered the ring. This system is still in vogue, but it was Burns who was first to make it a sort of unwritten law. Prior to meeting Marvin Hart he had engaged in nearly fifty bouts, the majority of which he won, but some of his later bouts—particularly those against Squires, Grimm, Palmer and Roche—were such unimportant affairs that they do not call for reference. The contest with Gunner Moir, at the National Sporting Club, London, was of greater moment. Moir was the heavy-weight champion of England, and was built on much the same lines as his Canadian antagonist. The fight was for a purse of two thousand three hundred pounds, and it took place on the night of February 25, 1907. Burns was always very sure of himself, but on this occasion his confidence in his own powers were so overwhelming that it proved extremely distasteful to those who had turned up to see him battle with Moir. Shortly

before the bout started, he walked across the ring and loudly asked whether the stake money was on the premises. This created a very bad impression, and when Burns stood up to fight practically everyone in the building was hoping for his defeat. All that need be said is that Burns was given one of the easiest journeys of his career. Moir was too apprehensive and too nervous even to extend the champion, and although he managed to remain on his feet for ten rounds he was outclassed throughout. Burns's display, if his infighting cleverness is excepted, did not reach a very high standard, and it would be untruthful if it were said that he made many friends. It was palpable to the spectators that he could have knocked out Moir in the third or fourth round. He did not do so, but preferred instead to play about.

Burns' chief challenger at this period was the negro Jack Johnson. They met, after much argument, at Rushcutter's Bay, Sydney, Australia, on December 26, 1908. Burns did not show any great liking for this match, and it was really public opinion that forced him into it. He was disadvantaged in every possible way; he was shorter, lighter and infinitely less strong than the coloured man. He made the mistake of doing far too much talking prior to the fight, and as a result feeling ran very high. Johnson was not by any means a modest man, but, in blowing his own trumpet, Burns was decidedly his equal. He was also a "mouthfighter," as was Johnson. Burns was nearly beaten in the first round, for almost immediately after the gong had been touched, Johnson jumped in and knocked the Canadian down for eight seconds. He was again levelled in the second round, and it was patent, even at this early stage, that he was destined for crushing defeat. The amount of talking indulged in by both men was, to use a word freely employed at the time, disgusting; when Johnson was not shouting, "Come on, Tommy; I thought you were an in-fighter," Burns was calling his opponent a "yellow dog." Burns took a fearful hammering, but although his performance was not of the kind that tempts one to remark that he was entitled to much congratulation, his pluck was unquestionably of the highest order. In the seventh round he was bleeding like a stuck pig, his eyes were terribly swollen, and Johnson was doing as he liked with him; but there was

never an instant when Burns gave an indication that he would quit. The things the men said to each other in the tenth, eleventh and twelfth rounds were so totally unworthy that they are best forgotten. In the fourteenth round, after Burns had been down for a count of nine, the police very rightly stopped the fight. From whichever angle it is viewed, the contest was a bad one. Apart from demonstrating that Burns was a courageous man, it served no purpose that by any stretch of the imagination could be called good. It had more to do with the antagonism that has since been shown to fights between white men and black men than anything else that has happened. Burns, as his end, received six thousand pounds, which was not adequate compensation for the tremendous hiding he was given.

His last appearance in the ring was at the Albert Hall, London, on July 16, 1920, when he fought Joe Beckett, the British champion. Burns had been on the shelf for some years, and it was an error on his part to suppose that he was sufficiently young to come back. He was thirty-nine years of age, and he had accumulated so much flesh that the early part of his training was sheer agony. He boxed well, and there were moments when he made Beckett look extremely foolish. But his years rested very heavily on him, and it was no surprise when his seconds threw up the towel in the seventh round. He was down twice in this round, but he was actually beaten much earlier. Burns was never a great champion, but he most certainly compares with the majority of those who have been in the limelight during the last ten years.

Jess Willard, heavy-weight champion for four years (1915-1919) is still in the fighting game, and this year has spent a deal of his time seeking a match with Jack Dempsey. He was born at Pottawatomie County, Kansas, in 1883, but it was not until 1911 that he became a professional. He is particularly well blessed by nature; he stands six feet six inches, weighs nearly eighteen stone, and has a reach of eighty-three inches. In his very early days, his opponents were men of no especial standing, but between 1913 and 1915 he defeated some of the best heavy-weights of the time. Those he conquered included Luther McCarthy, George Rodel, Soldier Kearns, Arthur Pelkey and Dan Daly. When he was matched with

Jack Johnson, in 1915, he had only been beaten four times. All sorts of stories have been published about this contest, but the fact remains that in the twenty-sixth round Johnson was beaten.

Furthermore, his defeat wiped him clean off the fistic map. In 1919 Willard made a very poor show against Dempsey at Toledo. It was generally expected that he would win, but he was knocked out in the most complete fashion in the third round. Like Jeffries, he depended on his strength for his victories, and it would be absurd to suggest that he was on the same level as Corbett, Fitzsimmons or Sullivan. It is no wonder that the proposal again to send him against Dempsey has been frowned on by the majority of the American experts. As a matter of fact, Willard had to thank the war for holding his title for so many years.

Jack Dempsey is, of course, the present champion. In my opinion, he is a very worthy one. It is said by some of his critics that he is awkward in action, that his long range work is poor, and that he is simply a powerful in-fighter. It must be admitted that Dempsey is more fond of close-quarter work than he is of boxing from a distance ; but this does not prove that he is not a real craftsman. His victory over Carpentier was a very workmanlike performance, for in addition to having eighty per cent. of the spectators against him, he weathered a punch in one of the early rounds that was hard enough to put any man down for good. Dempsey can not only give punishment, but he can also take it.

He was born at Manassa, Colorado, on June 24th, 1896, and is of mixed blood. He is—among others—partly Scotch, partly Irish, and partly American. His height is six feet one and a half inches, his weight thirteen stone six pounds and his reach eighty-one inches. His record is better than that possessed by any heavy-weight pugilist of to-day. He has had sixty-seven battles, of which he has won fifty-six—forty-six by knock-outs. Two of his bouts were exhibitions, and two were of the no-decision variety. He has been knocked out once (by Jim Flynn in 1917) ; he has lost on points on two occasions ; whilst four of his contests ended with honours easy. That he is decidedly the best heavy-weight in the world is established when it is stated that he has beaten Carpentier, Miske, Brennan,

Willard, Porky Flynn, Carl Morris, Gunboat Smith, Fulton, Keller, Pelkey and Jim Flynn.

His contest with Carpentier was the biggest thing of its kind that has ever happened. It attracted (to the special arena built at Jersey City) a crowd of nearly 100,000 people. Dempsey won in the fourth round, but in the second Carpentier had the misfortune to badly damage his right thumb. The fight was a very thrilling one, but the scenes were even more remarkable. "The field of study and the materials jammed up in it," said one reporter, "was simply amazing. There were soldiers in uniform, hordes from Cuba, a whole section of Japanese, and a vast admixture of representatives of every race under the sun. Every European, and every brand of American hyphenate, demonstrated its presence by garb, feature or language. There must have been at least one thousand Chinese. Why, the Tower of Babel wasn't in it with Tex Rickard's arena!"

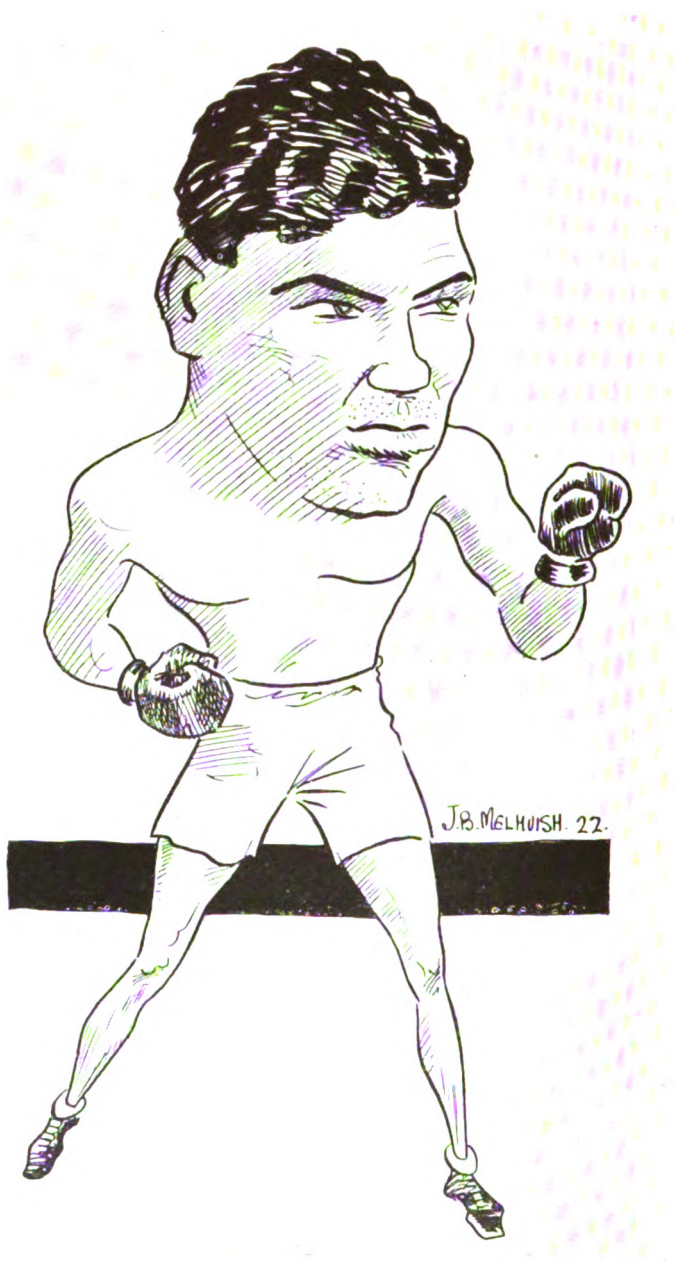
Carpentier was given the reception of his life when he entered the ring. The money of the crowd may have been on the American, but their hearts were with the Frenchman. He was undoubtedly excited, for instead of following his usual custom of sitting quietly in his corner, he took something out of himself by shaking hands with the scores of enthusiasts who pressed forward to greet him. It was an unwise proceeding, as he has since admitted. "Georges had shaken perhaps fifty hands when another roar of welcome greeted Dempsey," stated another reporter. "The champion was attired in a dark red sweater, and was wearing a ferocious glare. He seemed to be conscious of the fact that although nearly all the cash of those present had been wagered on him the general hope was that he would be severely licked."

Dempsey weighed one hundred and eighty-eight pounds, Carpentier being sixteen pounds lighter. In the first round Dempsey forced the pace. He had not shaved for several days, and his appearance was truly formidable. But it was Carpentier who landed the first blow—a swift left to the face. This nettled Dempsey, who rushed in and drove a left to the Frenchman's stomach. Had Carpentier at that stage fallen back and kept Dempsey away with his left, there might have been a different result; instead, he stood his ground and exchanged punches. His tactics, as was proved by what hap-

pened subsequently, were poor ; he should not have fought, but boxed. It was Carpentier's belief, however, that he was a harder hitter than Dempsey, and that he could win with a knock-out. "With that conviction in his mind," said an American journalist," he shook himself away from the hail of blows Dempsey was raining on him, side-stepped the next rush in the neatest possible style, and, leaping in close, slipped between the whirling arms and whipped an upper-cut to the big man's chin. This was some blow. All but a very few heavy-weights would have gone down before it, but Dempsey is not among the number. He was checked in his stride, and as Carpentier at once whipped home a terrific right hook to the side of the head, Dempsey visibly sagged at the knees. . . . The groan that went up changed almost at once to a cheer as Dempsey, pulling himself together in the flick of an eyelash, literally went mad. Scarcely drawing breath between his lunges, he flung himself forward, driving home a machine-gun fire of blows. Most of them went to the body, but a very fair percentage were aimed at the face. One, a swishing left-hander, found Carpentier's nose, and all but flattened it."

Carpentier was apparently the only person who did not realize that Dempsey had made up his mind to keep close. He should have made use of the ring, but in this first round, rather to the dismay of his connections, he actually welcomed clinches. In these, he was more or less at Dempsey's mercy ; weight and strength, as was afterwards pointed out, were the dominating factors, and Dempsey held both. Towards the end of the round Carpentier was pushed through the ropes, but he was back on his feet before the time-keeper had properly started to count. The winner of the round was unquestionably Dempsey.

He was tigerish in the second round. His arms were whirling before he left his stool. Carpentier still stood his ground, and for something like a minute he kept Dempsey at bay. After about seventy seconds of terrific fighting, he slammed in a quick right-hander, which caught Dempsey midway between the cheek-bone and the chin. Had this punch landed less than an inch lower down, it is fairly certain that the American would have been floored ; as it was, he was made to reel, and for a gasping instant—the pictures of the fight give the best idea of the excitement that was created—it seemed certain that the



JACK DEMPSEY

Heavy-weight Champion of the World since 1919

Drawn by J. B. Melhuish, and reproduced by special permission of
the Editor of *Sporting Life*

title would change hands. Dempsey, however, recovered with amazing rapidity, and fell into a clinch. This round was Carpentier's, but his chances of success had definitely vanished, for his right hand had gone.

Dempsey was more restrained in the third round. He had taken punishment that had astonished him ; as he neared Carpentier, he swerved and swayed out of range of three swift punches that were shot at his head. In long-range boxing, Carpentier was clearly the superior man, and in the third round he again almost snatched the victory by striking Dempsey on the mark with his damaged right hand. The American not only snorted audibly, but also backed away to the ropes. Then he concentrated his attention on riddling Carpentier with body punches. He swept aside almost all the blows that were flung at him, drove his man to the ropes, and banged away at his stomach. Every now and again he varied the procedure by swinging in upper-cuts. Carpentier was as game as a pebble, but when the bell went he was hanging on for all he was worth. He looked like a beaten man when he left his corner for the fourth round. His face was the colour of milk, while his legs were shaky. Dempsey charged down on him, and, after pounding him on the body, slung him against the ropes. Carpentier clinched, but, as he was breaking away, he was knocked down by a left hook to the jaw. He fell in a heap, on his face, and at the call of " six " he was still prostrate. At " seven " he rolled over, at " eight " he was poised for a spring, and at " nine " he managed to stumble back to his feet. He made a gallant effort to delay the inevitable, but even as he raised his left hand—it was hardly a conscious motion—Dempsey stepped in, brushed down the Frenchman's guard, and then, after landing once more on Carpentier's body, slashed the consciousness out of him with a right to the point of the jaw. When Carpentier fell, it was obvious that no power on earth could get him back to his feet in time to resume the battle. He was carried back to his stool by his conqueror, and it was fully five minutes before he recovered.

This achievement must be regarded as the finest of Dempsey's career. His rise to fame was lightning-like in its rapidity, for he was hardly more than a preliminary fighter one day, and a champion of the world the next. He developed his powers

through the medium of short no-decision bouts. He has many detractors and many critics, but I am inclined to side with those who say that he is one of the greatest fighting machines the ring has known for many, many years. As an in-fighter, he is miles above anyone else on earth. His style resembles that of Jeffries, in that he favours swinging punches ; but he can also hit straight. His blows are not required to land many times. He toured Europe in the early months of 1922, and was greeted everywhere with extraordinary enthusiasm.

He was the lion of London, Paris and Berlin for many weeks ; he was entertained and fêted as no other American boxer—not even Sullivan—has ever been, and those who were present at the Carpentier-Lewis fight will remember that among those who asked to be introduced to him were two sons of the King of England. Dempsey is an excellent type of the modern fighting man. He is presentable, well conducted, modest and gentlemanly in all his ways. When he was entertained in London by the late Lord Northcliffe he made a short speech that would have done credit to an experienced diplomat. If there were more champions like Dempsey, the boxing business would have fewer opponents.

The majority of the world's best boxers, during the last twenty or thirty years, have come from America. There is only space in this book to deal with a few of them. Of the heavy-weights, mention must be made of Gunboat Smith, Fred Fulton, Luther McCarthy, Billy Miske, Bill Brennan, Battling Levinsky, Al Palzer and Frank Moran. The latter has always been an especial favourite in England, where his battles have been very many. He was never perhaps quite a champion, but he gave Jack Johnson one of the stiffest fights of his life. His favourite blow—a right-hand swing called " Mary Ann "—has passed into fistic history.

America has always been rich in middle-weights. Harry Lewis was an uncommonly fine fighter, and so, for that matter, were Willie Lewis, Frank Klaus, Billy Papke, Joe Burman and Ketchel—to name but a few. I have the liveliest recollections of Harry Lewis. He was not actually a middle-weight, but it was against men of that poundage that he usually fought. His left hook was about the heaviest thing one could encounter. He fought some wonderful fights, but the close of his

fighting days were tragic ; he was injured in a taxi-cab accident in London, and was soon afterwards stricken down with paralysis. Jack Britton is perhaps the cleverest welter-weight that even America has known. He is getting on in years now, but is still fighting splendidly. Benny Leonard is easily the best light-weight in the world, and that despite the fact that he has held the title of world's champion for many years. But whether he is of the same standard as Jimmy Britt, Joe Gans, Battling Nelson and other wonderful light-weights who preceded him is purely a matter of opinion. Still smaller men who have to be alluded to are Pete Herman (whose style is English), Johnny Kilbane, Johnny Dundee (known as the "Scotch Wop"), Joe Lynch, Johnny Buff, Jack Sharkey, Pal Moore ; and the two latest discoveries, Frankie Genaro (the Italian) and Pancho Villa (the Filipino). The latter is the first of his race to win a boxing championship. Boxing attracts very much bigger attendances in New York and other American cities than it does in England. In 1922, in New York alone, over two million five hundred thousand dollars were paid for admission to boxing matches. In 1921 the receipts were almost double that amount, but this was due to the fact that a fight for the world's championship was staged at Jersey City. The total receipts, when Dempsey defeated Carpentier, were one million six hundred and twenty-six thousand five hundred and eighty dollars. Lest it be supposed, however, that only heavy-weight bouts draw big crowds, it should be mentioned that when Leonard fought Tendler at Jersey City in 1922 the takings were nearly four hundred thousand dollars. That America is top of the pugilistic tree is not very surprising, for she has material to call upon which other countries are denied. In this connection I am reminded of a striking statement made by Mr. E. B. Osborn, one of the best informed writers on boxing in the world, in the columns of the London "Evening Standard." He was speaking of heavy-weights, and said : "The ready-made heavy-weight is a treasure that will never be found. He has been sought for in the West Country (of England), where they grow "Rugger" forwards who have to pass the turnstiles 'sideways,' and in the North of England, where gigantic wrestlers of the 'Steadman' type are still to be seen in the Grasmere Ring. These fine and

large Englishmen, however, are too kindly and cumbrous to make pugilists ; furthermore, they have not that fighting spirit which ruthlessly insists on finishing off a shaken antagonist. Specialized types, such as Fitzsimmons, and men of abnormal dimensions, such as Jeffries, are not nearly so plentiful in this country as they are in the United States, which is a melting-pot of the world's races, and constantly produces freak mechanisms of human flesh and blood. The racial composition of Dempsey would have to be expressed in the form of a formula as complicated as those in works of organic chemistry. It is only once in a generation that England, a land of standardized men and women, produces a Fitzsimmons—a born fighter, with a heavy-weight's torso on a light-weight's legs, and a terrific natural punch."

There are eight world's championships, and America, at the moment, has the best claim to six. Mr. Osborn, in the statement quoted above, supplies the reason.

CHAPTER XIV

COLOURED FIGHTERS

I saw Richmond, when he was fifty-five years, enter the lists with a tall, strong, and young navigator ; and won the battle in twenty minutes. If there had been prejudice against men of colour appearing in the P.R., the fancy would never have let Richmond beat some of the best men of his time. This is a decided proof that the love of fair play belongs to the P.R., and that country or colour is of no consequence so that a man proves himself an honest man to his backers.

—Pierce Egan, 1845.

If a Dempsey-Wills bout is barred here because of any discrimination in the matter of race, creed, colour, or previous condition of servitude, I will immediately begin the task of abolishing boxing entirely.

—Senator James Walker in the "New York Times,"
February 3, 1923.

WHEN Jack Dempsey loses his title it will possibly be to a coloured man. Ever since he knocked out Carpentier he has been pursued by a negro named Wills, who is said to be an even better man than Jack Johnson. The negro, indeed, has always figured very largely in boxing. The first of any note was Bill Richmond, the "Black Terror." He was an American, and was born on August 5, 1763. This is what Pierce Egan said of him :

"When Sturton Island was taken by the English, young Richmond engaged the attention of General Earl Percy (the present Duke of Northumberland) who took him under his protection as his servant, and after travelling with the Earl abroad for some time, he arrived in England about the year 1777. The Duke, finding Bill to possess a good capacity, and being an intelligent youth, had him put to school in Yorkshire, where he received a tolerably good education, and who afterwards apprenticed Richmond to the trade of a cabinetmaker in the ancient city of York, where he served his time faithfully, and followed his business for a considerable time, not only in the above city, but in the Metropolis, as a journeyman, with credit to himself, and respected by his employers.

"It appears that Richmond is entitled to a respectable niche among the portraits of first-rate heroes of the milling art—both as a theoretical and practical pugilist; that his knowledge of the science is completely intuitive, having never received any lessons from any of the professors, but, on the contrary, has given instruction to some hundreds, not only in various parts of the kingdom, but in the very zenith of competition—London. In the ring, in point of activity, he stands nearly unrivalled and who is considered to excel every other pugilist in hitting and getting away, and dealing out severe punishment with his left hand; and it is also said of Bill that for half an hour there is no danger in backing him for that period with any of the fighting men, although fifty years of age (a length of time that few boxers arrive at). . . . In being a man of colour, from the taunts and insults which he has received upon that account, particularly in his capacity as a publican when he kept the Horse and Dolphin, Richmond must be considered good-tempered and placid even to a degree that could not be expected."

By another historian, Richmond was described as intellectual, witty, and well-informed. Soon after he arrived in England he married a white woman, by whom he had many children. He was a complete Harlequin in the ring, and it was his tricks and dodges that kept him on his feet for one hour and ten minutes when he fought Tom Cribb. He had in all fourteen fights, and was beaten three times. After he retired from the ring he ran a boxing academy at the Royal Tennis Court, Windmill Street, Haymarket, London. He died at Tichbourne Street, London, on December 28, 1829, at the age of sixty-six.

Molineaux, of whom something has already been said, was tutored by Richmond. He had several battles, the chief of which were with Cribb, Fuller, Carter, and Cooper. He was much more sensitive to the prejudices that existed against men of his colour than was Richmond, but it is possible that more success would have come his way if he had been less difficult to control. Molineaux hated anything that savoured of strict training, and it is established that he was never properly prepared for any of his bouts. He weighed fourteen stone, but he was comparatively short, for he only stood five feet eight and a half inches. He had no education and could



WILLIAM RICHMOND
The First Negro Fighter

not write his own name ; he died in poverty in Ireland at the age of thirty-eight. Other pupils of Richmond's were Jim Johnson and Kendrick, but they did not create much stir. In 1830, the chief black pugilist was Jem Wharton (the "Morocco Prince") while Sutton and Robinson were two others who fought with fair success. So as to show that the feeling against coloured men was very great, the following story may be related. Sutton married a white woman, described by one writer as a female of considerable beauty. Sutton himself was moderately popular, but at his death the patrons of the P.R. were so disgusted with his wife's conduct in marrying a black man that when a benefit was announced for her at the Fives Court, they refused to purchase tickets. Sutton won four battles out of five, and Robinson five out of eight.

There was once a black champion of America. His name was George Godfrey, but little is said of him in the records. As a matter of fact, the first of the really great negro fighters was Peter Jackson ; even to-day he is frequently called the whitest black man who ever lived. He was born at Porto Rico, West Indies, on July 3, 1861, but he learnt all his fighting in Australia. He was, perhaps, the cleverest of all Larry Foley's pupils. He was a recognized champion of Australia within a few years of his debut in the ring. He captured this title by defeating Tom Lees after thirty rounds. But prior to that he had suffered a somewhat severe set-back at the hands of one Bill Farnan, who knocked him out in three rounds. The greatness that was in Jackson was not discovered until he visited America. He defeated opponents with such ease—usually in two or three rounds—that he was eventually matched with Corbett. This was in 1891, less than a year before Corbett became the world's champion. Jackson put up a remarkable display. He fought over twenty rounds with two broken ribs, and Corbett was somewhat fortunate when, in the sixty-first round, the referee declared the bout a draw.

Jackson's greatest fight was against Frank Slavin at the National Sporting Club, London. This contest has been described as the second best in the history of pugilism, the one between Sayers and Heenan coming first. The men, who had been rivals in Australia for some years, were splendidly matched. Jackson stood six feet two inches, and Slavin one

inch less. The negro weighed thirteen stone ten pounds, and his antagonist thirteen stone six pounds.

In his book "The National Sporting Club, Past and Present," Mr. A. F. Bettinson (who wrote in collaboration with Mr. W. Outram Tristram) makes this interesting reference to the contest:

"The details of this great battle and its preliminaries are fresh in the memories of all. The men had no sooner gone into training—Slavin at the Cliff Hotel, Dovercourt, under the care of his brother Jack, and Tom Burrows, the club-swinging; and Jackson at Brighton, under the care of Jem Young—than speculation became rife. From the outset Slavin expressed himself confident of the issue. Jackson's native modesty was tuned to a lower key. Asked whether he thought he would beat Slavin, he contented himself with a quiet smile and said: 'He is a very good man. I shall do my best,' and so departed to Brighton unaccompanied by that excess of luggage in the shape of advertisement with which boxers sometimes encumber themselves. The scenes of excitement which ushered in the fight between Sayers and Heenan have been described as not to be surpassed. The event of that day has secured a fixed place in the nation's history. But it will not be overstating the case to say that no fight between two big men has ever created a wider interest than the struggle between Jackson and Slavin. And no fight may be more worthily termed classic, in the truest acceptance of the term. . . . "The scene in the theatre of the National Sporting Club was brilliant in the extreme. At the eleventh hour numbers were disappointed who were ready to pay any price for standing room. The enthusiasm of the spectators reminded old stagers of Evans's, and of the revels celebrated on boat-race night by the rival Blues. . . . As soon as time was called both men were very smart from their corners. It was clear that business was meant. Jackson crouched slightly, panther-like, alert, dangerous. Slavin's onslaughts were continuous and determined, but the black's quickness, long reach, and wonderfully fine straight left enabled him to more than hold his own. The punching may or may not have been terrific. But through the death-like stillness which reigned round the ring, the blows were heard in the club saloon, and some say in Covent Garden."

The men fought with four-ounce gloves for a purse of two thousand pounds. It was a very thrilling struggle. For the first six rounds Slavin had slightly the better of matters. He did most of the forcing, and although many of his blows missed their objective, those that landed caused Jackson the maximum of inconvenience. The black man's footwork was ever so much better than Slavin's, and he was extremely clever in taking punches when he was moving away from them. In the first, second, third and fourth rounds, Slavin did practically all the rushing. The pace was a killer, and in the fifth round both showed signs of distress. Slavin by this time had grown wild, but Jackson, using his long left as though it had been a piston rod, was giving a display of boxing that had never been excelled.

It was pride of race that prompted Slavin to make such tremendous efforts to score a knock-out ; he, like most white pugilists, was strongly prejudiced against coloured men, and it is said that before entering the ring he loudly remarked that he would never be able to look a friend in the face if he fell before the blows of the negro. In the sixth round Jackson was on the very verge of defeat. Chased across the ring, and forced against the ropes, he was dealt a body punch that nearly dropped him. He staggered away blindly, and it is agreed by all the best authorities that if Slavin had had the sense to rush in at once and deliver another blow Jackson would have gone down. Slavin, however, hesitated, and before anything else could happen the gong had sounded to end the round.

That was Slavin's last chance. He was tired and depressed when he came up for the seventh, but Jackson, who had been carefully attended by his seconds, was not perhaps as fresh as a daisy, but he was still more fit than he had any right to be. He boxed on the retreat during the eighth round and so got over his bad period. In the ninth round Jackson became the aggressor. His ring-craft was magnificent, and although his blows were not so powerful as Slavin's, they were more frequent and they scored many more points. It was Jackson all the way in this ninth round. He delivered so many punches on his weary, tottering opponent, that some of the spectators made appeals to the referee to stop the contest.

When the bell rang, Slavin was standing with his arms down to his sides. He was plainly beaten, but he declined definitely and resolutely to give in.

Most of the accounts written after the fight differ as to what happened in the tenth round. Because Mr. Bettinson was in the best position to see, I will again quote from his book :

"Early in the round which was destined to be the last, Jackson, at the end of some fast in-fighting, 'chipped' his antagonist on the jaw. The blow did not seem a decisive one to onlookers. Slavin did not fall; but he was dazed and stood helpless in the left corner of the ring, by the referee. The brutality of boxing, which its designing detractors are never tired of proclaiming, was now illustrated in a remarkable way. Experience has repeatedly shown that there is always a punch left in a big man even when he appears disabled. Dallying at such a crisis is dangerous. Jackson, however, turned round in a most chivalrous manner and looked at the referee. The rules of the game were beyond dispute. Mr. Angle said 'Fight on.' Saying, 'I must finish him, then,' Jackson performed a distasteful duty in the most humane manner. Instead of setting about his dazed, but still dangerous opponent, with all his might, Jackson administered a series of short left and right hook hits till Slavin gradually dropped on his knees. Jackson was proclaimed the winner and the referee's announcement was received with great applause."

The question whether Mr. Bernard John Angle said "Fight on" or "Box on" is not of great importance, but it is perhaps worth recording that the phrase he used was the latter. I once asked him the question, and he told me that the word "fight" is never used at the National Sporting Club.

Jackson's main assets were his excellent behaviour and his sportsmanlike qualities. He was never known to boast. After defeating Slavin he returned to America, where he was put up as a sacrifice to Jeffries. He was in consumption at the time, and a little while afterwards he died. It would be exaggeration to say that he was the greatest of all the black fighters, but no one will cavil at the statement that he was easily the most popular. It is doing him but bare justice to remark that he fully deserved the adulation that was showered on him.

A person of very different type was Jack Johnson. I met him frequently, and I must confess that he always fascinated me. His knowledge of men and matters was entirely superficial, but he was so clever in answering any kind of question, so adroit in conversation, that he conveyed the instantaneous impression that he was well-informed and well-read. Johnson had very many defects. He was a swaggerer by nature, but this is not altogether surprising when it is recalled that for many years he was an absolute idol. I doubt whether any boxer has been made so much of ; I remember, when he was last in London, that he could not move abroad without being followed by enormous crowds. That his head was turned is certain ; but I sometimes think that Johnson was more sinned against than sinning. If he had not been so insanely pestered by women, and if he had not been so ridiculously flattered by men, he would probably have been a better fellow. But the fact is that Johnson was a tin god on a high throne. He was perched on the heights by people who should have known better. He told me once that he was fully conscious of the fact that his reign would be a short one. That was in a flat he then occupied near Shaftesbury Avenue. The occasion is easy to recollect because I was compelled to force my way into the building past crowds of women who were obstructing the passage-way. Johnson, that day, was clad as he always was when he was receiving visitors—in a pair of well-creased brown trousers, brown socks, patent leather slippers, and an armless white silk vest. The latter was worn so as to show off his fine proportions. Our conversation was remarkable ; it ranged from politics to astronomy, and it ended with Johnson requesting me to strike him with all my might in the stomach. This came about as the result of a paragraph he had read in one of the newspapers that morning. Allusion had been made to an alleged weakness in his mid-section. Johnson strenuously denied that he was weak anywhere, and he was particularly emphatic in stating that he could take any kind of blow on or in the neighbourhood of the mark. He requested me to judge for myself by punching him. I did so ; striking his stomach was like hitting a piece of corrugated iron. I have no wish to pose as an advocate of Johnson. He did things that were frankly bad ; but in

assessing him it must, of necessity, be recollected that he was spoiled by the crowds who for ever chased and surrounded him. In private, I found him no better and no worse than other boxers I have known. He was knowledgeable of his own importance, he was addicted to brag and bounce, but there were times when he could conduct himself with admirable decency. He was firmly convinced that he had a mission in life. He told me this in so many words—he believed that it was his duty so to “lift” the black race that it would be superior to the white. It was Johnson’s ill-fortune to transform a thin colour line into a colour bar that has become as wide as a continent. He did considerable harm to boxing, but the men to whom he rendered the greatest disservice were pugilists of his own hue. After he defeated Jeffries, racial riots swept the United States like miniature cyclones. On July 5, 1910, it was reported that as a result of these disturbances nineteen people had been killed, two hundred and fifty-one seriously injured, many hundreds more slightly injured, while over five thousand cases of disorderly conduct had been dealt with by the police courts in the various cities.

Johnson was born at Galveston, Texas, on March 31, 1878, and it is his own statement that when he was a lad he intensely disliked fighting. He lost his first contest to another black pugilist called Klondike. He was beaten on points, and in 1901, two years after he had become a professional, he was knocked out in three rounds by Joe Choynski. His career after that was more successful. In the main he fought men of his own colour, but he also defeated white men of doubtful ability like Ben Taylor, Victor MacLaglen, Jack Munroe, and Tony Ross. One of his really big battles was against Stanley Ketchel, an exceptionally good middle-weight; and one which he nearly lost was that against Frank Moran, in Paris, in 1914. After being beaten by Willard, he fell from the top of the ladder to the very bottom. He visited Spain, where he fought three second-raters, and he finally vanished from public view in the late days of 1920, after he had out-pointed a novice known as Topeka Johnson at Leavenworth, U.S.A. More recently still he surrendered to the police on a charge that had been levelled against him many years before, and served a term of imprisonment. He still talks of coming back

and regaining his lost laurels, but there is not much fear of that happening. With all his faults, Johnson was a wonderfully fine boxer. He was not far short, indeed, of being one of the most skilful ever seen in the ring.

Contemporary with Johnson were three other blacks of outstanding ability. They were Sam Langford, Joe Jeannette, and Sam McVea. The former was perhaps the best of the trio, and in addition he was more modest than are most of his kind. He weighed over fourteen stone, but his height was only five feet six inches. He fought dozens of battles with Jeannette and McVea, some of which he lost, and the majority of which he won. In 1911, at Olympia, London, he took part in a bout which stirred London to its depths. His opponent was the Australian, Bill Lang. This contest was boomed to such an extent that it was the only thing talked about for weeks. Lang had arrived in London with the reputation of being a world-beater. The truth is he was nothing of the kind ; he was scared stiff when he entered the ring, and his display would not have done credit to a schoolboy. He lost on a foul in the sixth round. Langford's record is an extremely long one. His fights run into hundreds, but I believe he is still exhibiting somewhere in America.

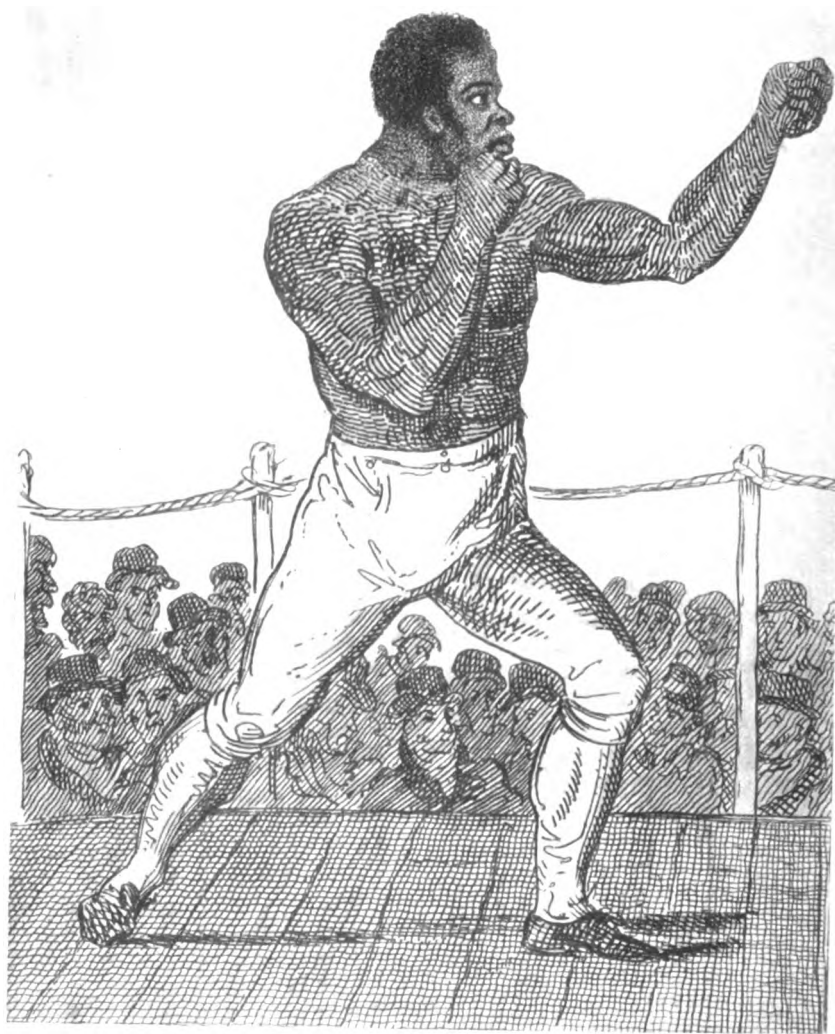
McVea was not nearly so skilful, but he was quite a clever tutor. He was one of the ugliest men I ever watched, but he was extremely popular in Paris when he started a school there in 1905. Jeannette had a good deal to do with the early training of Carpentier. He, again, was a big and powerful negro, with natural boxing skill. He fought with Carpentier in 1914, and won on points after fifteen rounds. At the same period there lived and battled a really wonderful black welter-weight boxer called the Dixie Kid. His proper name was Aaron Brown. At his best he was the cleverest man of his weight in the world. It never made any difference to him whether he was over-matched or not ; he fought heavy-weights with the same readiness that he fought light-weights. I saw him in many stirring contests at The Ring, Blackfriars Road, London, as well as at Liverpool, Plymouth and Paris. He was one of the neatest of knock-out artists, but he remains particularly memorable because of the variety of tricks he employed while fighting. He was as swift on his feet as a

flash of light, but he was never so dangerous as when he was hanging on the ropes, whilst he could simulate grogginess with an expertness that was positively uncanny. He won many of his fights at the very instant when he had taught his opponents to believe that he was on the very brink of collapse. He resembled, in his trickiness and in his unorthodox methods, Frank Craig, who will best be remembered as the "Coffee Cooler." The latter was a distinctly able pugilist, who could box as well as fight. The last time I saw him was on the stage of a fair-ground booth. He must have been nearly sixty years of age, but he was still fighting all comers.

There have been many other black pugilists of note, but limitations of space prevent mention of their names. It is enough to say that, from the very dawn of boxing, coloured men have occupied positions of more or less eminence. The most-talked-of black men at the moment are Harry Wills, the American, and Battling Siki, the Senegalese. The former has not received the publicity that has come the way of the latter, but many things are more unlikely than that he will one day win the heavy-weight championship of the world.

Wills, according to those who know him best, is a new Peter Jackson. He was born at New Orleans, U.S.A., in 1892. He stands six feet three inches in height, and weighs fifteen stone six pounds. He started boxing in 1911, and up to date he has only been beaten four times. In 1916 he was knocked out in the nineteenth round by Sam Langford, whilst he has also been beaten on points by Langford, by McVea, and by Jim Johnson. The majority of his opponents have, of course, been coloured men, but his standing as a pugilist is best illustrated when it is stated that he has won, up to the present, nearly eighty fights. Whether he will ever be matched with Dempsey is doubtful, but if he is there is no absolute certainty that Dempsey will win. Wills is not only powerful, swift, clever, and hard, but he has also a simply terrific punch.

Battling Siki was practically unknown until he fought Carpentier. He was a second-rater who was content to figure in any sort of bout so long as he was guaranteed a small purse. His real name is Louis Phal, and he was born at St. Louis du Senegal, on September 10, 1897. Before he found that he could fight he was a dish-washer in the kitchen of an hotel



THOMAS MOLINEAUX
The Negro who Fought Cribb for the Championship of England

on the French Riviera. He is built on the same lines as Sam Langford—lean, finely muscled, and long-armed. His weight is a little over twelve stone, while his height is five feet ten inches. His earliest fights were in 1913, but from 1914 to 1919 he was fighting for France in the war. Among the decorations he gained were the Croix de Guerre and the Legion of Honour. He was discharged from the army towards the end of 1919, and at once went back to fighting. All his battles, however, were against men of inferior quality, and the majority of them were staged in Holland, Germany, Belgium and Spain. When he was matched with Carpentier, in 1922, the boxing enthusiasts of Europe sniggered loudly and significantly. There was scarcely a person in the world who thought that Siki had a dog's chance of winning. The contest is dealt with elsewhere, and all I want to say here is that it was the most sensational, the most thrilling, the most astounding, and the most ghastly in my experience. I question, indeed, whether anyone has seen anything quite like it. I can only speak of the Sayers-Heenan and the Jackson-Slavin fights from hearsay, for both were before my time, but both, it seems to me, pale into insignificance when compared with the extraordinary affair that took place at the Velodrome Buffalo, on the outskirts of Paris, on Sunday afternoon, September 24, 1922.

Siki is a blend of animal and human being. He is more closely allied to a primitive cave-man than any other I ever met. I happened to be in Paris two or three days before his fight with Carpentier, and I was then told that his manager, M. Hellers, had publicly stated at a dinner party that he had set out to find a pugilist who was part ape and part man. That M. Hellers succeeded goes without saying. I feel a very definite sympathy for Siki, for I have come to the conclusion that he was born long after his time; he should have lived when the world was very young. He is possessed of fighting mentality; but when that is said, everything is said. All sorts of reasons have been adduced to account for his victory over Carpentier, but I am as certain now as I was on the day of the contest that he would not have won if he had not been sent back to what can only be described as an elemental state. For nearly three rounds Siki was merely a poor play-

thing for his more famous opponent ; for the remainder of the fight he was an absolute savage. He went back, it appeared to me, at least a thousand years. He was a primitive man, and his lust was for conquest. Next day I sat with him in the demonstration room of a moving picture company. He was dazed, bewildered, and entirely off his balance. I asked him many questions, but he was too slow of thought to think out replies. Before the end of the week, however, he had drunk deeply of the cup of popularity, and it was then that he lost his head. For a month or so he was extremely difficult to handle, and he wound up by creating a real sensation—he made a public declaration that his contest with Carpentier was faked. This resulted in an inquiry being held, but after hearing all the evidence the Committee decided that the negro's accusations could not be believed. Meanwhile he had been suspended from boxing, and had also been barred from fighting in England. A match had been made for him with Beckett, the British champion, but before either man started training the Home Secretary caused it to be known that the fight would not be permitted. The suspension was lifted in February of 1923, and Siki was thereupon signed up with Mike McTigue, an Irishman who had lived most of his life, and had learnt all his fighting, in America.

I never expect to attend another fight like that. The boxing itself was ludicrously poor, but the "atmosphere" was of a kind that defies adequate description. The venue was a small cinema theatre off Sackville Street, Dublin. It was built to accommodate three thousand people, but it was no more than half full when the men took the ring. For hours before the contest the hall was surrounded by military and police, and those ticket-holders who were late arriving were forced to fight their way through a mob of bystanders who were for all the world like corks in a troubled sea. There were guns and revolvers and armed men everywhere, and just before the big bout started a land mine was exploded within a few yards of the building.

Much difficulty had been experienced in inducing Siki to leave France. He is very much of a child and is subject to wilful spasms that, to say the least, are embarrassing to those who have taken on themselves the task of managing him.

At almost the last moment he refused to leave his dogs. He had, of course, to be conveyed to Ireland direct, for the authorities had declined to allow him to land in England. I was told by the man who succeeded in getting him out of France that for many hours prior to sailing Siki was handcuffed to one of his attendants, whilst his intellect was also dulled by frequent libations of wine.

He lost the fight on points. I was one of many who thought he had won, for he did all the attacking, while those of his blows which landed were infinitely more damaging than were those that were flicked in by McTigue. The decision, however, was immensely popular, which is partly explained by the fact that it was the evening of St. Patrick's Day. The fight did not interest me at all, but some of the incidents that happened during the time it was in progress were so noteworthy that they call for mention. There was a period, for example, when I really thought that Siki was about to leap out of the ring to attack one of McTigue's seconds. There was also another moment when he looked menacingly at Carpentier. The latter was occupying a seat on the stage. He was annoyed by something that was said by a spectator sitting behind and turned to make a retort. This was heard by Siki, who instantaneously forgot that he was fighting McTigue. He never really "descended," as he had done in Paris, but there were two or three pulsing moments when anything seemed possible.

The person deserving of most praise is Mr. Jack Smith, the referee. But for him, the contest would not have reached the full distance of twenty rounds. I have never seen a fight better handled, and it is my firm opinion that if a less capable and strong man than Mr. Smith had been given charge of the bout there would have been scenes that would have disgraced pugilism for ever. Many people have disagreed with the verdict given by Mr. Smith, but it ought to be allowed that he was of infinitely more importance to the fight than either Siki or McTigue. He kept it going when it was any odds that the negro would lose command of himself, and his occasional admonitions were so admirably voiced as to subdue Siki's rising temper. If a book is ever written on referees, Mr. Smith will have to figure in the first chapter. He has been the third man in the ring on very many occasions, but

the best service he ever rendered boxing was on that memorable night in Dublin when "the game" was in danger of being dealt a blow from which it might never have recovered.

What will become of Siki is more than I can say. He is certainly a phenomenal fighter when roused, but he hasn't a notion of boxing. He is thoroughly unorthodox, for he invariably leads with swinging rights, while it is his habit to hit out from the wrong foot. He is purely and simply a fighter of the ancient type, and I will be surprised if he does not fade out altogether.

CHAPTER XV

BOXING IN FRANCE

*The sons of France their pistols use,
Pop, pop, and they have done ;
But Britons with their hands will bruise
And scorn away to run.
And a boxing we will go, will go, will go.
And a boxing we will go.*

—"Boxiana," 1818.

'You do not count efficient French boxers on one hand as you used to do ; they are splendidly numerous, and I think it will be conceded that as a whole they are not lacking in style, that they have been well taught.—Georges Carpentier, 1920.

FRANCE, so far, has only produced three fighters who can justly be called first-class. They are Georges Carpentier, Charles Ledoux and Eugene Criqui. The belief, however, that fighting was practically unknown in France until the Americans Willie and Harry Lewis, and the negroes Langford, McVea and Jeannette, settled there about 1900 and opened schools and academies is a quite erroneous one, for William Fuller was a tutor and professor at Valenciennes in 1816. Two years later Carter, Gregson and Cooper (as was noted in an early chapter) made a tour of the country with a boxing booth, and thus advertised themselves when they reached Aix-la-Chapelle :

MM. CARTER (Champion of England)

Cooper and Gregson, the first English boxers, being now at Aix-la-Chapelle, have the honour of informing the public that, on Wednesday, the 7th of October, 1818, at eleven in the morning and three in the afternoon, and on Thursday at the same hours, they will exhibit two grand set-to's in boxing, in the Hall of Vieille-Redoute, rue Compesbad, in this city. They have had the honour of exhibiting

themselves before the first personages in Europe. Price of admission, 5 francs each.

N.B.—Messrs. Carter and Gregson, at the same time, offer their services to those amateurs who wish to be instructed in their art. Terms : 5 francs for each lesson ; 20 francs entrance.

The "first English boxers" were not too well received. A day or so after their arrival at Aix-la-Chapelle the following paragraph was published in one of the Paris journals :

"Yesterday there was a grand exhibition made by the English boxers. This hideous spectacle attracted but few spectators. The two champions, built like Hercules, and naked to their waists, entered the lists, their hands guarded with huge wadded gloves. One might imagine that we beheld the ancient athletic games of Greece and Rome. After a severe contest, one of the boxers, more adroit than his rival, struck him so violent a blow on the breast that he fell and victory was thus decided."

The original French boxer appears to have been Pettit, who fought Slack in 1754, but the first of the modern school—or at any rate one of the first—was Marcel Moreau. He was a middle-weight, and he came into prominence in 1902. He was a good deal better than are some of the French middle-weights of the moment. Among the Englishmen he conquered, between 1905 and 1911, were Harry Duncan, Jack Palmer, Arthur Warner, Jack Meekins, and Dick Bailey—all moderately good men in their way. Another very handy performer with his fists at this time was Henry Piet, who scored victories over many Englishmen and Americans. Piet was one of the first Frenchmen to visit America ; but boxing in France, at this period, was more of a jest than a serious proposition. Englishmen who fought in Paris were not always given their deserts, and some of the rules that were introduced—frequently in emergencies—were grotesque in the extreme. It is obviously impossible to give a complete list of all the French boxers who are worthy of inclusion in this volume, but the best of those who have come under my observation are Badoud, Barnard, Bernstein, Dastillon, Demlen, Hogan, Legrande, Marchand, Poesy, Til and, in more recent days, Papin, Nilles, Journee, Charles, Prunier, and Fritsch. Except for Carpentier,

Ledoux and Criqui, France, however, has failed to give to the boxing world any men of great ability.

Ledoux, just before the war, was one of the best bantam-weights in the world. He was one of the most furious little fighters ever seen. He had boxing intelligence, too, but it was his ferocity that brought him so many victories. He was born at Nieve, on October 27, 1892, and he held the bantam-weight championship of Europe for several years. He had—still has, for that matter—the instinct of the fighter, and if he had grown as did his compatriot Carpentier, he might easily have won even greater renown. His most memorable fight was with Jim Driscoll at the National Sporting Club, London, in October of 1919. He was out-boxed and out-pointed for fourteen rounds, but then, when the veteran Driscoll's strength had failed, Ledoux dashed in and snatched a thrilling victory. The American style of fighting did not suit him so well. He made two trips to the United States, but he was defeated on more occasions than he was successful. A fine little fighter was Ledoux when he was in his prime. He did almost as much as Carpentier to make boxing one of the chief sports in France.

Criqui was longer in blossoming. He was born in Paris on August 15, 1893, but it was not until the war had ended, and when part of his jaw had been shot away, that he really came into his own. In 1919 he fought eleven times, and was beaten twice—by Tommy Noble, the Englishman, and by Pal Moore, the American. In 1920 he journeyed to Australia, where he won seven big fights in succession. Then, soon after his return, he gained the feather-weight championship of Europe by defeating Joe Fox, the British champion. Criqui is a man of one punch, and he is content to receive all kinds of punishment while he is waiting to ram it home. That he is able to take blows at all is extraordinary, for the wounds he received in the war were very severe. He is beginning to get on in years now, but he still has an eye on the world's championship. He may acquire it before he finishes.*

* A few weeks after the above was written Criqui won the feather-weight championship of the world by defeating Johnny Kilbane. A month or so later he lost his newly-acquired title to the Italian-American, Johnny Dundee.

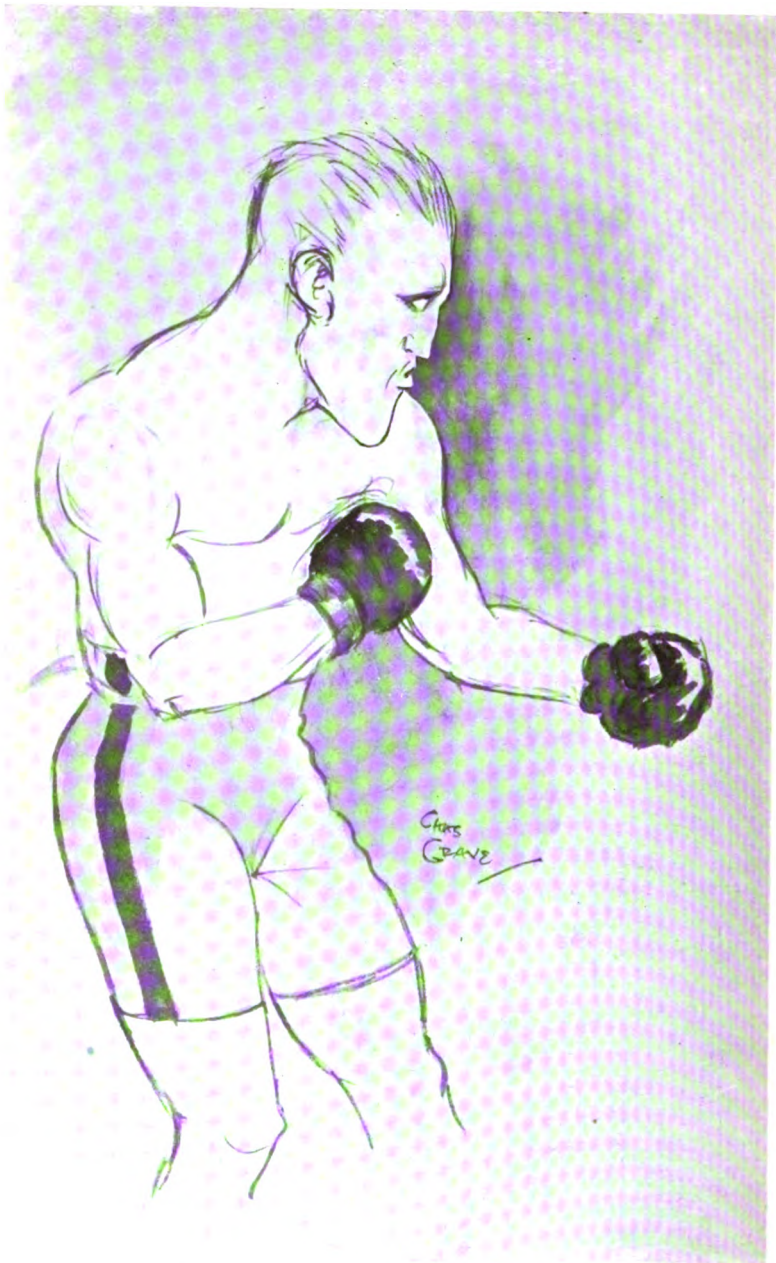
When I first met Georges Carpentier I formed the impression that he was surly, ill-tempered, and not too well-mannered. The occasion, however, was singular ; it was the day before one of his important contests. Like the majority of boxers, he is not at his best when he has a fight on his mind. Certainly he does not want to be bothered by visitors, and that, perhaps, is the reason why he has fallen into the habit of training secretly.

Months later, I met him under more favourable circumstances, and I found him—after the ice had been broken—to be one of the most entertaining companions I had ever encountered. He speaks English comparatively well, but what astonished me was the discovery that he was able to see an English joke the moment it was told. He is, I suppose, the most cultured of present-day pugilists. He is exceedingly well read, and he does not pose nearly so much as is generally supposed.

Whether he prefers quietness to excitement is not for me to say ; but once, travelling with him and his party from Holyhead to London, I observed that he soon grew weary of the crowds who mobbed him at every stopping place. Carpentier has been an idol since he was sixteen years of age, so that he has had his fill of hero-worship. But he is still a very human sort of man, and he has traits which distinguish him peculiarly. He has few mannerisms, and few affectations, when he is out of the ring. When he is in his fighting kit, he, of course, plays the part that has really been assigned to him by the public.

No man has had a more romantic career. At the beginning he was a pit boy at Lens, France, where he was born on January 12, 1894. In "My Fighting Life" he thus speaks of his early days :

"My father was employed at one of the local collieries. His lot was a common one, our home little and modest. When scarcely more than a baby, I was earning a franc a day as a bicycle messenger. . . . It was a peep which I took into one of these travelling circuses that had nearly all to do with shaping my career. For as I beheld a man, whom I decided was the most remarkable of all performers on the trapeze, I sought on many days afterwards to get the consent of my



CARPENTIER'S FIGHTING FACE
Specially drawn by CHARLES GRAVE

parents to join a troupe of acrobats, for already I had acquired the art of tumbling, and I was counted by my friends to be a contortionist of uncommon ability. . . . It chanced one day that a travelling boxing booth was pitched at Lens. The proprietor of it was a hardbitten fellow ; in his troupe were several much-battered English boxers. . . . I yielded to the invitation (to box) though I had not only never seen an English boxer, but I had not even handled a boxing glove. What precisely happened I shall never know, but after I had had my fight I was asked to become one of the troupe."

Many months after that, Carpentier met Professor Descamps "a teacher of *la boxe Anglaise*." He has had amazing luck, but that was the biggest stroke of good fortune that ever came his way. Without Descamps there would have been no Carpentier. Of that I am thoroughly convinced. Descamps not only fashioned him in the image of a fighting man—taught him, trained him, laughed with him, wept with him, fought for him, defended him, praised him ; every mortal thing that can be conjured up—but he also made possible some of his most splendid victories. It is impossible to speak of Carpentier without bringing in Descamps. They are so closely allied that they resemble the Siamese twins. Where one is, the other may be found. There has never been a companionship like it, but it has had much to do with Carpentier's phenomenal rise.

I have said that he has been lucky. I would go even further than that ; would say plainly that he is the luckiest fighter the ring has known ; he is, to give him a new title, the Fortunate Youth of Pugilism. He had the wonderful luck to be born at the very time when the people of France were turning eagerly to boxing ; when they were searching for a new god ; when they were anxious to pour praise on any one of their own race who could stand up against an Englishman or an American. He had the still more wonderful luck to be born in France ; but the greatest stroke of all was his meeting with M. Francois Descamps.

Suppose he had been born in New York, or Philadelphia, or San Francisco. What then would have happened to him ? Would he have been given the opportunity of leaping over the heads of his fellows ? It is very doubtful. Carpentier's

earliest opponents were carefully picked for him ; they were nearly all Frenchmen up to 1910, but it is significant—and this point will be emphasized if the records are searched—that whenever he met an American fighter he was rather badly thrashed. One of his first real fights was in 1908, and his opponent was a jockey named Salmon. According to what Descamps once told me, the purse was four pounds. In 1908 he had six contests, winning three, losing one, and drawing two. In 1909 he was knocked out by Gloria, and in 1910, after beating a number of second-rate Englishmen, he was very badly whipped by Ted Broadribb, who at the time was known as "Young Snowball." In 1911 he was defeated by Piet and the Dixie Kid, but he also scored capital victories over Sid Burns, Young Joseph, Harry Lewis, and Jack Goldswain. In 1912 he was thrashed to a standstill by the Americans Klaus and Papke, but in 1913 he won the seven fights in which he was engaged. In 1914 he won six fights and lost one, but in July of that year his boxing career was temporarily stopped by the war.

It is appropriate to mention here that Carpentier has won more championships than any other boxer, living or dead. He has held every title in his own country ; he has been the welter-weight, the middle-weight, the light heavy-weight, and the heavy-weight champion of Europe, and he has also been the light heavy-weight champion of the world. Had he been an Englishman, he would probably have set up a record by winning a Lonsdale belt for every weight. He has overthrown all the English champions who have been sent against him. He started doing this in 1911, when he defeated Young Joseph, who was then the welter-weight champion of Great Britain. One year later, at Monte Carlo, he won the middle-weight championship of Europe by defeating Jim Sullivan in two rounds. About eight months after that he became the heavy-weight champion of Europe at the expense of Bombardier Billy Wells, whom he knocked out in four rounds at Ghent, Belgium. But this is not by any means a complete list of the British champions he has beaten. There must be added the names of Pat O'Keefe, Dick Smith, Joe Beckett, and Kid Lewis. As a destroyer of British hopes, he stands absolutely by himself.

It is not universally agreed that he is fully entitled to his tremendous reputation. People can be found in plenty who say that as a boxer or as a fighter he is not in the same class as Fitzsimmons, Corbett, or—to go back a few years—Mace or Sayers; but to attempt to compare him with men who fought in days when boxing was entirely different from what it is to-day is, of course, farcical. Carpentier is as much an inventor of style as was Jeffries, or Sullivan, or even Mendoza. He has his own methods, which he has thought out for himself, and I am prepared to state that no man has ever wielded a more powerful right hand, or boxed with more grace. His personality and his good looks have very materially aided him, but the fact should not be lost sight of that in Europe, for at least seven years, he was head and shoulders above all other pugilists. The wonder is that he has lasted so well. He was fighting hard battles when boys of a similar age are at school, and I know few men who could have taken such severe hidings as he received from Klaus and Papke without going to pieces. He was only seventeen when he fought the Americans, which, when all is said and done, is no age for a pugilist. I have a very distinct memory of the battle with Klaus. It took place at Dieppe, and it lasted nineteen rounds. Carpentier was beaten and bashed beyond belief, but his courage was splendid even when Descamps surrendered for him. Those who aver that Carpentier's reputation rests on a false foundation should remember that these fights, when he was still growing, might easily have broken his spirit. They would have completely settled nine boxers out of ten.

His contest with Wells, at Ghent—and his astonishing victory—was the circumstance that definitely placed him on his pedestal. He was one of Wells's sparring partners in 1912, and when the match was made with the lanky Englishman, superior folk said that the whole thing was a commercial proposition that had nothing to recommend it. Carpentier was only eleven stone six pounds, while Wells was over thirteen stone. Scarcely anyone thought that Carpentier would win, but in the fourth round, after he had himself been down four times for long counts, he sailed into Wells and knocked him out with a right-hand punch to the jaw. Carpentier has told me that the blow he took from Wells, in the first round, was

the hardest he ever experienced. It was even stiffer than the punch landed by Dempsey, and much more painful than any of those flung in by Siki. He looked to be so badly beaten and so pitifully out-matched in the first and second rounds that the spectators howled for the contest to be stopped. Descamps was hissed, Carpentier's seconds were hissed, and so was everyone else connected with the fight. Carpentier, helpless, hopeless, floundering, and with hardly an ounce of strength left in him, tottered up to Wells in the third round and practically offered his face as a target. But Wells's temperament had by that time got the better of him. He could never look at a beaten man without feeling anguished. He stepped away, refused to deliver a finishing blow, and so made it easy for Carpentier to climb from comparative obscurity—for he was not then world-famous—into the full blaze of notoriety. Wells has offered himself as a step-ladder to many boxers, but the one who owes him most in this respect is undoubtedly Georges Carpentier.

His second fight with Wells, at the National Sporting Club, London, in December of 1913, was a farce. It was all over and done with in seventy-three seconds. All that Wells did was to shuffle out of his corner and accept the punch which levelled him. The contest with Gunboat Smith for the light heavy-weight championship of the world, at Olympia, two or three weeks before the outbreak of war, was a vastly different affair. For four rounds it was anybody's fight, but then Carpentier fainted with his left and drove his right forcefully to the American's jaw. He went down like a sack, and simultaneously Mr. Eugene Corri, the referee, and Mr. Hulls, the time-keeper, started to count. The latter was the first to finish and rang the bell. Mr. Corri, however, argued that as he had been given full charge of the counting it was for him to decide. There was a moment of tumult, the time-keeper loudly declaring that thirteen seconds had gone by, but then the referee brought the argument to a close by declaring that the fight must go on.

In the sixth round, when Carpentier was weakening, he was heavily hit on the jaw and went down to his knees. After a few seconds had elapsed he made a movement as though to rise, and Smith, thinking he was off the boards, rushed in and

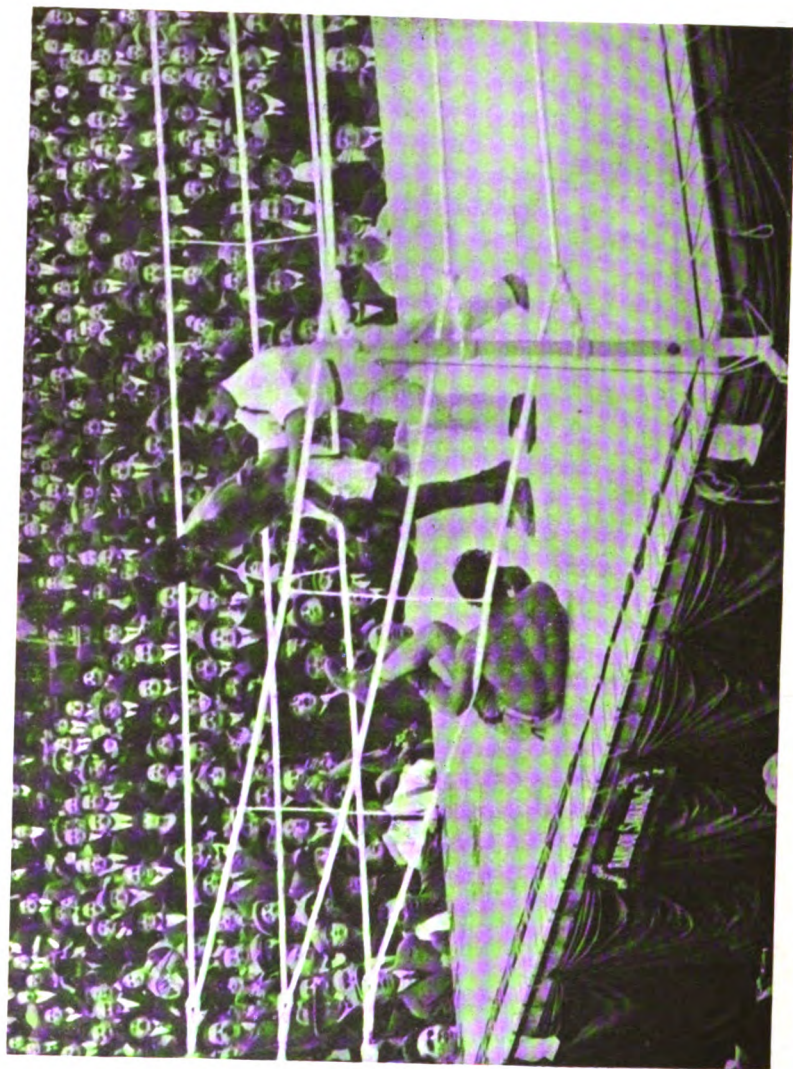
dealt him a blow on the neck. It did not seem to be a hard punch, and in any case Smith made a gallant effort to pull it back after he had started it. But it landed—it was not much more than a graze—and as Carpentier rolled over on to his back, his excited attendants claimed a foul. Mr. Corri, without hesitation, disqualified Smith; and the scene of uproar that followed was as noisy as it was dangerous. The finish was a thoroughly unsatisfactory one. I am not at all certain that Carpentier would have won if the fight had lasted a little longer. My seat was immediately below the ring, and I was in an excellent position to see, and it seemed to me that when Carpentier fell he was perilously near to defeat. He weakens after five rounds, as he did that night, and it is permissible to suppose that if Smith had not swung his foul blow he might have won the championship he had journeyed all the way to England to acquire.

Except for a few minor bouts while he was an officer in the French Flying Corps, Carpentier was out of boxing throughout the war—nearly five years. He made his re-entry against Dick Smith, who for some time was the light heavy-weight champion of Great Britain. Carpentier had all the luck that July night, while Smith's supporters had good reason for the complaints they made. Smith was beaten in the eighth round, but Carpentier could not have derived much gratification from the victory. His performance was the poorest of his career, and it was fairly generally agreed that the result was very unpalatable. He made no mistake, however, when he met Joe Beckett at the Holborn Stadium, London, in December of the same year. He knocked out the British heavy-weight champion in seventy-three seconds. The fight was a complete fiasco, and all it did was to prove that Carpentier had recovered his punch. In 1920 he had three fights, two of no importance, and one for the light heavy-weight championship of the world. This took place at Jersey City, on October 12, the defender of the title being Battling Levinsky, who was knocked out in the fourth round.

Carpentier's only fight in 1921 was his world's championship battle with Jack Dempsey, which he lost. In January of 1922 he defeated George Cook, the heavy-weight champion of Australia, at the Albert Hall, London, in four rounds;

and in May knocked out Kid Lewis, the middle-weight champion of Great Britain, at Olympia, London, in one round. Then came his memorable contest with Battling Siki. It has already been pointed out that this match was not regarded with much seriousness either in France or in England; it looked to be such an easy thing for Carpentier that it was impossible to find anyone who was ready to give it a good word. It is my belief that Carpentier signed articles with Siki so as to get back into the confidence of the French public. Complaints had been made that he was doing all his fighting in England and in America. He seems to have realized that his popularity was waning and that he owed something to his own countrymen. I was in Paris for some weeks before the fight and I never met a single person who considered it possible that Siki would last more than four rounds. As a matter of fact, the fourth round was so often referred to that in a very little while the rumour was current that the match would end in that round. Carpentier has strenuously denied that there was any arrangement, while Siki has been equally emphatic in saying that the whole business was a fake. The French Commission appointed to investigate the matter went very fully into it, and their decision that the match was a straight one must be accepted. It never entered into Carpentier's calculations that he would be beaten. He looked upon the contest as he would have viewed an exhibition; he did no training, and the consequence was that when he climbed into the ring he was in a very poor condition. Like everyone else, he regarded Siki as a second-rater who could be knocked out with one punch.

The attendance created a record for Europe. The big enclosure at Montrouge was completely filled, so that there must have been between fifty thousand and sixty thousand people present. When Carpentier appeared, he was given a reception that was positively tumultuous. Siki was awarded a few hand-claps that could hardly be heard. He was plainly nervous, and his apprehensiveness was increased by Carpentier's playful conduct in his corner. The champion simply exuded confidence—as well as contempt for his black opponent. He got over the preliminaries as quickly as he could, for, as was afterwards admitted, he was afraid there would be a downpour



CARPENTIER KNOCKED OUT BY BATTLING SIKI at Velodrome Buffalo, Paris, September 24th, 1922
Photograph by Victor Console. Reproduced by special permission of the Editor of *The Daily Mail*

of rain, and he had no wish to get wet. The first round was the silliest ever witnessed. It was not even a passable exhibition of boxing. Carpentier pawed the coloured man as a cat paws a ball of wool. Most of the time he was looking up at the moving-picture operators, and when he was not doing that he was smiling over his shoulder to his friends. Midway in the round, Siki went down without a blow. So disgusted were some of the spectators sitting around the ringside, that they read newspapers in preference to looking at the absurd spectacle. The second round was no better. Carpentier was still play-acting, while Siki crawled about, sank to his crab-like stance, or made use of the ring. Carpentier did little else but miss. His belief in himself was as strong as ever; there were times when he threw out blows knowing full well they would not land on anything more substantial than air. Let me quote from the story I wrote for "The Daily Mail" immediately after the fight.

"Came the third round. It opened with a thrill. Siki, rushing in, collided with a thump to the chin that put him down for seven seconds. The fight looked to be all over, but almost as he rose, the negro swung out with all his force and clipped Carpentier fairly on the point. It was a blow of the lucky variety, but it had strength behind it, for Carpentier sagged at once and remained down for five seconds. That was when his star commenced to fade. When he arose, his face was drawn, and there was an expression of anxiety in his eyes. He glanced at Descamps, who was gesticulating furiously, and made the mistake of inviting a bout of in-fighting. It was a prodigious error. Siki had become confidence itself, and he welcomed this priceless opportunity of snapping in short-arm blows to the head of an opponent who had been staggered.

"Carpentier fought with a wildness that was entirely foreign to him. There was no method in anything he did; indeed, had Siki been less crude, had he been more knowledgeable, he could have ended the bout there and then. At times, Carpentier was as wide-open as a barn-door. He must have known his strength had gone, must have known, too, that defeat was perilously near. He flung over his right with venom, but it never connected. Siki was not only elusive,

but he was smashing in all the blows that mattered. Long before the end of the round, Carpentier was bleeding. There was a lump under his right eye the size of a small egg, and his left was rapidly closing. He returned to his corner in the manner of one whose hopes had been splintered. The weariness of the ages was on his shoulders, the expression of the disillusioned was on his face. Sixty seconds after the fourth round started he was in a terrible condition. His features had been transformed; they were gory, almost horrible to behold. Siki, no longer crouching, no longer apprehensive, plastered him with blows, and Carpentier, nearly too weak to stand, accepted them because he could not avoid them.

"The fifth round was of the sort I never wish to see again. Carpentier was not only loudly cautioned by the referee for butting, but also roundly hooted by the crowd. I doubt whether the offence was intentional. He was merely making the final effort of the man reduced to desperate straits. He charged in blindly, head down to his chest, his arms whirling. It so happened that Siki was plunging too; the heads met with a crash, and the coloured man went headlong against the ropes. The sixth round lasted one minute and twenty seconds. It represented a lifetime of thrills. Carpentier had to be thrown out of his stool; Siki left his with the violence of a gale. He was, so far as I could see, unmarked. Carpentier was beyond description. It is better, as a matter of fact, to gloss over his state. All that needs to be said is that his eyes were gone, his lips were twice their normal size, he was covered with blood, while his stamina had reached the vanishing point.

"But for eighty seconds he fought with the fury of a savage. No boxing this; it was the kind of thing that must have been popular when men settled their disputes with stone hatchets. It was primeval, a throw-back to earliest days. Siki was in his glory. He had forsaken defence. He was drunk with the prospect of victory, and so he fought madly, terrifically. The end came when Carpentier suddenly collapsed and settled on his side. He fell like a chimney. One leg—the left—was hoisted in the air. So he remained for many, many seconds, the very embodiment of tragedy. He was quite unable to move, for his limbs and his brain had ceased to function. He was eventually carted to his corner, a sad heap. I stood

beneath him, and looked up into his face. It was very terrible. Followed tumult. A rumour was born that gave rise to commotion. Siki, it was said, had committed a breach of the rules. The notion had scarcely travelled when confirmation arrived. From the ring it was announced that the negro had been disqualified for throwing. Carpentier, partly recovered, was seen to be removing his right boot. His ankle was unquestionably hurt. Then came the definite verdict. Siki disqualified. Carpentier *vainqueur*."

The passionate scene that was caused by this announcement will never be erased from my memory. I fought my way out of the ground in company with one of the judges—Mr. B. Bennison, the Sporting Editor of "The London Daily Telegraph." But it was not until darkness had settled on Paris that I heard that the decision of the referee had been reversed. The remaining judges, apparently, had met and had come to the conclusion that the referee had made a mistake. Siki, after being the loser for more than an hour, became the conqueror.

Carpentier has not fought since,* but I cannot imagine that he will ever be the same again. Men do not quickly recover from two such hammerings as he took from Dempsey and Siki. He will, in my opinion, always defeat Beckett and other Englishmen, while it is more than probable that if another match is made he will revenge himself on Siki. But his chances of becoming the heavy-weight champion of the world have gone for good. He is still young—twenty-nine years of age—but his boxing life is the equivalent of at least fifty years. It was his intention to retire before he was defeated by Siki, but now his one ambition is to wipe out the worst stain on his record. His career has no counterpart in boxing, and it is likely that future historians will select him as the most remarkable boxer of the years between 1880 and 1923. Personally, I would not go so far as this. Instead, I would say that he shares with Bombardier Wells, Jimmy Wilde, and Jack Dempsey the distinction of being one of the outstanding boxing personalities of the last fifty years.

* In May, two months after this was written, Carpentier defeated Marcel Nilles at the Velodrome, Buffalo. He was only a shadow of his old self, but his knock-out punch was one of the finest of his career.

CHAPTER XVI

MEN OF MARK ; AND CLUBS AND RESORTS

Well do I remember this Hall (the National Sporting Club) when devoted to other uses, and a man with a fiddle was the entertaining subject. Everybody is now pleased to see it used for more suitable purposes. Magnificent specimens of humanity and well-trained athletes are constantly taking part in a noble game and affording amusement for the community. If I were to exempt the great use to our country of this gallant and noble game it would be unfair and unkind, for its usefulness is unbounded. The Club has contributed largely to a much-needed want, and long may it continue to show its members and guests good sport.

—Lord Wolseley, at the National Sporting Club,
March 27, 1899.

SHORTLY before this book was commenced I asked Mr. A. F. Bettinson, the manager of the National Sporting Club, London—who has witnessed as many fights, and known as many fighters, as any man in the world—to give me the names of the cleverest boxers he had seen during his lengthy career as an exponent of the art, as a promoter, and as the chief official of the most celebrated of all sporting clubs. In his day, Mr. Bettinson was an extremely skilful amateur pugilist. He fought for the love of fighting, both with his knuckles and with gloves ; but it is as a match-maker and as the controller of the famous resort in Covent Garden that he is best remembered by the present generation. His replies, which are of much interest, were as follows :

Fly-weights. " There has never been anyone quite like Jimmy Wilde. He is entitled to all the praise that has been lavished on him. He is, of course, a bit of a freak. It is his reach, and his phenomenal punching power, that gets him there—but he is alone as a fly-weight. Years ago, however, there was a knuckle-fighter named Simon Finighty. He was no heavier than Wilde, but his abilities were almost as remarkable. In Finighty's time, fly-weights were not recognized as

they are now, but I have no hesitation in placing him next to Wilde."

Bantam-weights. "The best I ever saw was Tom Hill, an amateur who defeated every professional with whom he fought. He was an exceptionally clever man. In 1881 he took part in a competition at Lillie Bridge, and was victorious over the best of the professionals. Billy Plimmer was also exceedingly good, and so, for that matter, was Joe Bowker when he won the championship. It was his bad luck to lose his health when he was in his prime."

Feather-weights. "No one in my recollection ever approached Jim Driscoll. He was a master of every move. One of his finest displays was given when he defeated Jean Poesy, the Frenchman. That was an exhibition of tactics that should for ever remain memorable. Driscoll was one of the truly great."

Light-weights. "I never saw Gans or Griffo, but Sam Baxter was a real phenomenon. He was a sickly man, and he never weighed more than nine stone, yet he rarely had difficulty in beating opponents of eleven stone and over. Packey McFarland, the American, was another Driscoll on a bigger scale. There were times when he was quite as clever as Driscoll."

Welter-weights. "I sometimes think that Tommy Ryan was the cleverest boxer I ever watched. As a general rule he fought middle-weights, but he was a natural welter. He was remarkably skilful, and it will be a long time before we see another like him. Johnny Basham, the Welshman, was another splendid welter-weight. I doubt whether Kid Lewis would have beaten him when he was in his prime."

Middle-weights. "Very little is heard these days of Toff Wall, but even Pedlar Palmer was no cleverer as a tactician. Wall had a fighter's head, and he was always thinking out something even when he was most strenuously engaged. But the greatest of all middle-weights—easily the best who ever lived—was Fitzsimmons. Jim Hall, who fought Ted Pritchard, was also decidedly good, and so were Dan Creedon and Kid McCoy. Then there was Mr. John Douglas. There has never been a better amateur middle-weight. I believe he was a more able boxer than his son, J. W. H. T., the famous cricketer."

Light heavy-weights. "As Charles Mitchell, at his best, was really only a light heavy-weight, he must, in my opinion, be given pride of place. He was an uncommonly fine fighter. But we mustn't forget Bat Mullins. He wasn't a light heavy-weight, or anything like it. He weighed ten stone, but he was never defeated, either with the knuckles or with the gloves, and that despite the fact that he repeatedly met men much heavier than himself. Mullins once challenged all England for five hundred pounds a side."

Heavy-weights. "Jem Mace was the best boxer-fighter of his or any other age. Jem Smith was for some reason underrated, but this was not doing him justice. He was a magnificent pugilist. Peter Jackson, who took part in the greatest fight I ever saw—the contest with Slavin—would have beaten Jack Johnson. I must also mention the 'big four'—Harry Dearsley, Reg Wakefield, George Vise, and Frost Smith. Dearsley was thought good enough to fight John L. Sullivan, while Wakefield might have become the champion of the world if he had turned professional. The 'big four' deserved the title that was bestowed on them."

It was my original intention to deal at some length with clubs, resorts, and halls, but unfortunately it is not possible, in the space left at my disposal, to do more than very briefly refer to them. The first club—known as The Pugilistic—was formed by John Jackson. Its members were men of the highest rank. It came into existence as the result of a discussion at Jackson's rooms in 1813, but the earliest meeting of which there is any record took place at the Thatched House Tavern, St. James' Street, London, on May 22, 1814. The chairman was Sir Henry Smith, and among those who spoke was Lord Yarmouth. The boxers who were invited to the dinner—and subsequently to state their views—included Jackson, Cribb, Gully, Oliver and Tom Belcher.

Originally there were one hundred and twenty members, and it seems that the chief purpose of the club was to collect sufficient money to purchase ropes and stakes, to promote matches, and to offer prizes, which varied from ten to fifty guineas. Every paid-up member had the right to wear a special uniform—a blue coat and a yellow kerseymere waist-

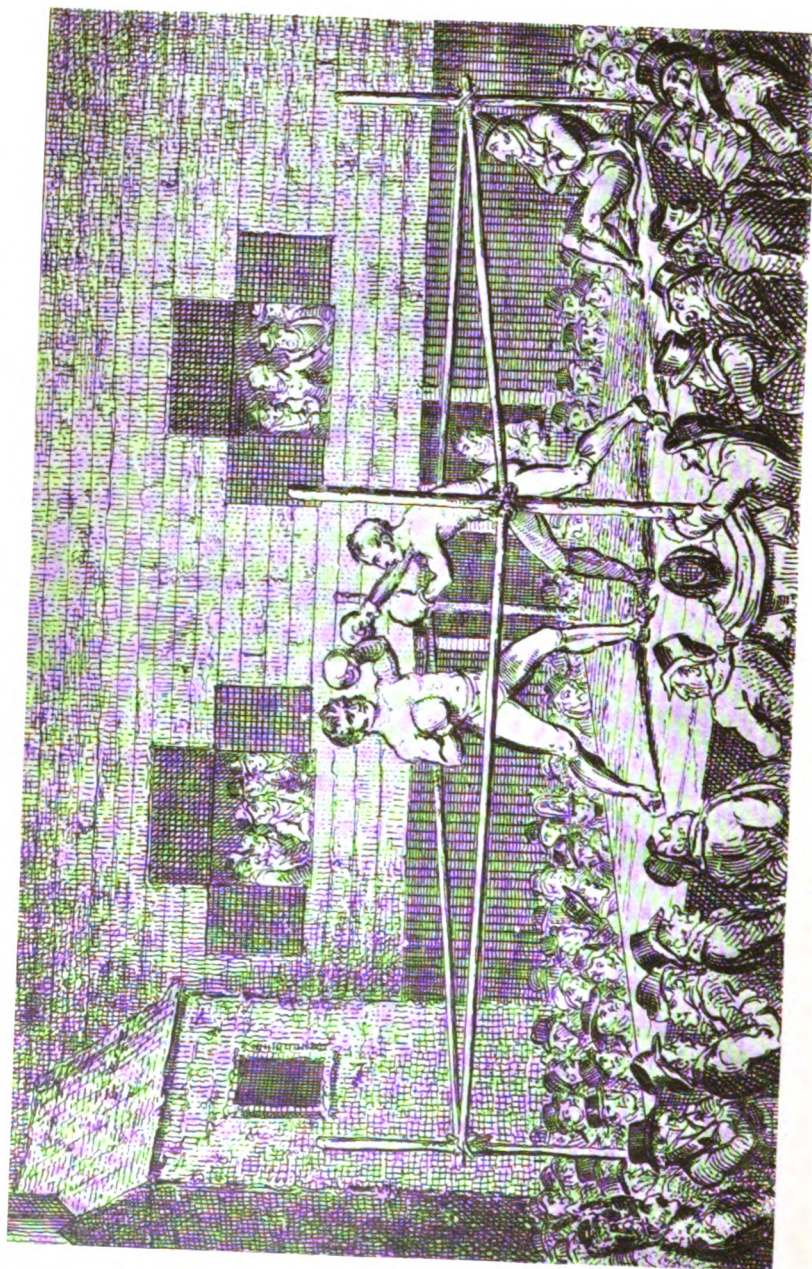
coat, on the buttons of which were engraved the letters P.C. It is impossible to believe that the Duke of Clarence and the Duke of York ever wore this spectacular outfit, but among those who undoubtedly did were the Earl of Albemarle, the Earl of Sefton, the Duke of Beaufort, the Marquis of Tweeddale, Lord Craven, Lord Barrymore, Lord Pomfret, and Lord Somerville.

The majority of matches made after the formation of the club had its sanction and countenance. It is stated in one old book that there was also a smaller club at Moulsey Hurst, where many tremendous battles were fought. The meetings were held at Bushy, the residence of the Duke of Clarence, but it is permissible to suppose that these were merely gatherings of members of the Pugilistic Club. The Duke of Clarence, of course, was a great patron of the ring. "Under his fostering wing—for he was frequently present at the mills," said a celebrated writer of the period, "the more immunity was enjoyed from interference, etc."

The Fives Court, in Little St. Martin's Street, came much later. It was, to all intents and purposes, a fashionable club, or, as one chronicler has put it, "the 'high change' of milling circles, both Corinthians and Patricians." A large, oblong court with high walls, and covered with network, it was only used for prize-fighting on those occasions when benefits were taken by public favourites. The stage was erected in the centre of the court, and it was about four feet from the ground; to its right was a small elevated room, which was the 'box' reserved for the aristocracy. The regular price of admission was three shillings, but persons of rank were expected to contribute at least one guinea. The *beneficiare* usually saw to this, for he stood at the entrance with a money-box.

"The sports," we are informed, "started with the third and fourth rate performers, with an occasional display between two novices, who indulged the spectators with a glove fight, 'drawing corks,' and administering contusions, which frequently led to remunerating showers of copper, often agreeably relieved by the lights and shades of silver."

It is extraordinary how little boxing has changed since the time of the Fives Court. The above, indeed, might well serve—if the reference to "drawing corks" be omitted—as a



A SPARRING MATCH AT THE FIVES COURT

present-day report of the proceedings at The Ring, Blackfriars Road, London. The customary method of showing approval there is by throwing money at the fighters after a contest. But the bout must first satisfy the onlookers. It was apparently the same at Little St. Martin's Street.

The Fives Court had a monopoly of boxing for some years. Then, in consequence of a quarrel, a rival establishment was started at the Tennis Court in Windmill Street. It prospered for a while, but, as time went on, "there was a gradual falling off in the character of the exhibitions. Men were announced to set-to who never made their appearance; a contemptible spirit of rivalry arose, the competitors were unequally matched, gentlemen disposed to uphold the principles of boxing became disgusted, and gradually withdrew their patronage; the boxing men suicidally destroyed the goose which laid the golden eggs, and at last benefits ceased to be profitable, and the Tennis Court having been let by the proprietor for the purposes of a theatre of another description, the milling fraternity lost their local habitation and almost their name—a result attributable solely to themselves, a fitting issue to a false pride, which the generous indulgence of their patrons but too frequently engendered."

One very curious organization was the Fair Play Club. It was established, according to one claim made for it, to resume the regularity of olden times. It failed because its members lacked influence. In the main they were the ragtag and bobtail of the fighting profession. That boxing was in a terribly bad way at this time (1830-1850) will be seen from a perusal of this cutting from "The Sporting Magazine":

"In the old days the Fives Court, both as regarded its amateur attendance and the ability of the professors in pugilism, was a far differently conducted thing to what it is now. Formerly, when the Marquess of Worcester strolled in arm-in-arm with Cribb, and the first scions of our noblest nobility were thickly sprinkled amongst the almost bewildered mobility, and when carriages out of number were to be seen setting down their labelled *distingues* at the top of the lane on a grand sparring day—then truly all went 'merry as a marriage bell'; pugilism was put on the same level with racing, fox-hunting, and other first-rate sports; and the prize-

fighters themselves looked happy, sleek and respectable on the sovereign applauses of their envying countrymen.

"Alas, it tells a different tale nowadays—a most 'musical and melancholy' affair it is. In lieu of the shining faces of the nobility and country gentlemen, you must behold the rouged and villainous countenances of the brothel-bully, the saloon girl's fancy man, or the wary and well-dressed figure of the swell pickpocket. . . . Scarcely could the good conduct and splendid abilities of a second Spring arouse the higher classes from the apathy, not to say disgust, which mantles in the 'dunest smoke' the once favoured achievements of the ring."

In 1840 the principal resort was the National Baths in Westminster Bridge Road, London. It was partly a club and partly a loosely conducted public boxing hall. It accommodated nearly five thousand people, and the stage was fixed in the centre of the swimming pool. Run by an association of pugilists—the chief of whom were Cribb, Spring, Peter Crawley, Deaf Burke and Tom Oliver—tournaments were promoted once every fortnight. Patronage was asked for on the grounds that the "Pugilistic Association supplies a most gratifying contrast to assemblages elsewhere, at which sedition and treason usurp the call to harmless national sports." It had a short life, and on its demise various small clubs were born in public-houses.

Nat Langham's Rum-pum-Pas Club was simply a means to an end—it was instituted to attract customers to the Cambrian Stores. Langham was not over-scrupulous, for he had a pretty knack of getting people to subscribe towards a purse, from which he would then deduct at least ninety per cent. for himself. He was pleased to call this a legitimate commission. The first president of the Rum-pum-Pas, and the custodian of the records, was Mr. John de Rougemont. Meetings were held every Wednesday evening, and the members dined inside a twenty-four feet ring. "They sat late, did these jovial Rum-pum-Pas, and the artful Nat frequently beguiled them into an all-night session by promising them a merry little mill in the morning between two lads well matched in weight. As these all-night sittings led to the consumption of much champagne at the good old prices, the wily Nat made

a handsome profit out of the Rum-pum-Pas." After Langham's death the club removed its quarters to the Three Tuns, in Soho, but it was then on its last legs. It went the way of all things in 1879.

In more recent days the most celebrated boxing club was the Pelican. It was from this that the National Sporting Club sprang. To relate the latter's early history is to deal with a very fascinating period. The building was erected in the time of Charles I, and its first tenant was the Earl of Stirling. Other celebrated people who lived there were Sir Henry Vane, Sir Kenelm Digby, and the Earl of Orford. In 1773 it was converted into an hotel, while in 1880 it became known as The Star. Later still its name was changed to Evans's Hotel, Supper Rooms, and Music-Hall. After that (to quote Mr. Outram Tristram) the character of the house changed. "The erstwhile town house of Sir Kenelm Digby, and the Admiral of the Fleet, passed by a transition perfectly natural into a noted sporting tavern, where fights were arranged, great wagers laid and paid, and the toils of a busy day rounded melodiously in a Cave of Harmony."

The doors of the present National Sporting Club were first opened on March 5, 1891. The manager at that time was Mr. John Fleming. He died on the premises on November 15, 1897, and was immediately succeeded by Mr. Bettinson. The programme was a distinctly interesting one. Among those who sparred exhibitions were Charles Mitchell and Frank Slavin, while the referee for the first contest was Mr. B. J. Angle. He awarded the verdict to Alf Suffolk. In the second bout a decided sensation was caused by the defeat of the well-known Bill Baxter. He was outpointed by William Reader.

The National Sporting Club has had many memorable evenings since then, but it would be merely repetition if I were to refer to any of them. There have been published two admirable books which deal with practically every fight since 1891, and all that remains for me to say is what has been said many, many times before: The National Sporting Club is not only the headquarters of boxing, but it is also one of the most excellently conducted places of its kind in the world. It has one English rival, and one only—the new Stadium

Club, in Holborn, London. Equally well managed, and somewhat more luxurious than the N.S.C., it caters exclusively to amateurs. Perhaps the two ought not to be compared at all, for they differ so widely. The Stadium Club is to boxing what Ascot is to English racing. The National Sporting Club, because of its wider appeal, and also because it finds room on its tiny stage for the democracy, is—to use the same simile—Epsom on Derby Day.

CHAPTER XVII

SOME IMPRESSIONS

I, Elizabeth Wilkinson, of Clerkenwell, having had some words with Hannah Hyfield, and requiring satisfaction, do invite her to meet me upon the stage, and box me for three guineas, each woman holding half-a-crown in each hand, and the first woman that drops the money to lose the battle.

I, Hannah Hyfield, of Newgate Market, hearing of the resoluteness of Elizabeth Wilkinson, will not fail, God willing, to give her more blows than words—desiring home blows, and from her no favour; she may expect a good thumping.

—A challenge from a female pugilist, and the reply,
published in 1722.

WERE it not for the fact that every author is expected to wind up his book with whatever conclusions he may have formed, I doubt whether I would have the courage to follow precedent. I have been watching and reporting boxing—studying it, too—for twenty-five years, during which time I have seen the majority of the world's best; but I do not claim to be either an inspired critic or an infallible judge. I am so conscious of my limitations, indeed, that it is with considerable diffidence I set down here some of the impressions I have gained since I witnessed my first fight. If, therefore, there is a suspicion of egotism—and I devoutly hope there is not—I ask to be pardoned.

Mr. Bettinson has selected Jimmy Wilde as one of the greatest boxers of all time. Undoubtedly he is right. I am even prompted to say that he is *the* greatest. Consider his handicaps. He weighs less than a schoolboy, he is as thin as a lath, as frail as a reed, as weakly-looking as an invalid. His strength does not appear to be sufficient to dent a hole in a pat of butter—yet I have seen him crumple bigger men with punches that were like the kicks of a mule.

Wilde is the very antithesis of the boxer of fiction. In appearance he more resembles an anæmic student than a

fighter. He is pale and painfully slender ; his arms and legs are hardly thicker than pipe-stems ; his body is that of a child—one would think, simply by glancing at him, that a really strong breeze would carry him off his feet. Yet this curious little man with the high-pitched voice and the eyes of a dreamer has knocked flat something like two hundred opponents. Before he became famous—this was when he was working as a miner in the Rhondda Valley—it was his daily habit to engage in six or eight contests after leaving the pit.

His first sparring partner was his wife. Mothers, as will have been gathered from earlier chapters, have had much to do with the education of their sons as fighters, but Mrs. James Wilde, so far as I know, is the only lady who helped to transform her husband from a collier into a world's boxing champion.

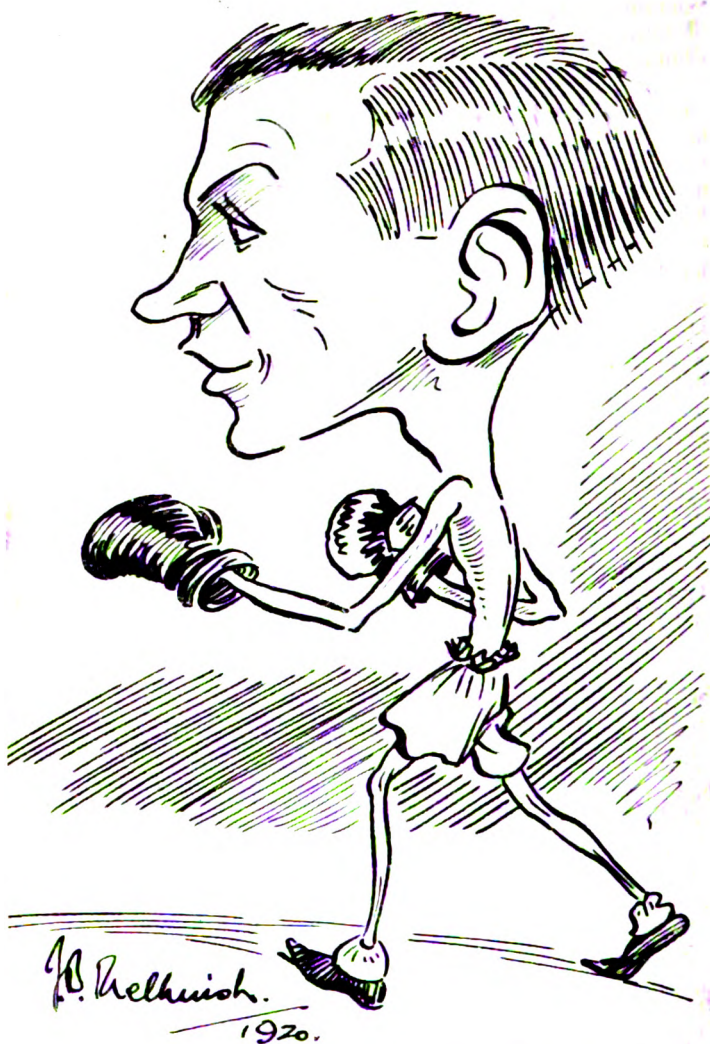
"We used to spar in the bedroom or in the kitchen," Wilde said to me on one occasion. "She'd lead at me, and I'd dodge the blow."

"But did you ever hit back?" I asked.

"Oh, no," replied Wilde, "but even if I had she'd have been nimble enough to get out of the way. She knows as much about boxing as I do."

I happened to be present at Wilde's London debut. It was the kind of noteworthy occasion that leaves a lasting memory. A little while before he climbed into the ring (to be laughed at by a crowd who were later petrified with amazement) I was introduced to him by Mr. Teddy Lewis, his manager. I can see him now—a shy, miniature man, twirling a cheap cane, and attired in a suit of rusty black. The biggest thing about him was his cloth cap. I remember I chuckled when Mr. Lewis, with all the gestures and all the enthusiasm and all the earnestness of the Welshman, told me that Wilde was a world-beater in embryo. The statement, it seemed to me, would have carried more weight if the tiny hewer of coal had not been on view. "But he has been knocking them out at the rate of three and four a day down in the Valley," insisted Mr. Lewis. "There's no one left for us in Wales, and that's why we have come to London." Wilde's sole contribution to the conversation, from what I can recollect of it, was an

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JIMMY WILDE
Fly-weight Champion of the World

Drawn by J. B. Melhuish, and reproduced by special permission
of the Editor of *Sporting Life*

occasional "Ai, indeed," or "there 'u are." His Welsh accent is still very pronounced, but it could be cut with a knife that day when I talked with him in a newspaper office near Fleet Street.

The name of his opponent has long since left my memory, but I do know Wilde defeated him in almost quicker time than it takes to tell. His extraordinary gifts, however, were not recognized until he was given a match at the National Sporting Club with a Frenchman called Husson. Wilde knocked him out in the sixth round, and his display was such as to induce many of the newspaper writers—myself included—to go into hysterics. From that evening (March 30, 1914) Wilde has had the fly-weight field all to himself.* He has been beaten, of course, but usually by men to whom he was giving away pounds of weight. He was badly defeated by Herman, the American, but that was a match that should not have been made. It is common knowledge now that Wilde would not have taken the ring had it not been pointed out to him that among the audience were members of the Royal Family. He fought for "the good of the game," as his action has been termed; but he was very ill-advised. The evening, to the overwhelming majority of the spectators, was one of crushing sadness.

Wilde's principal asset is his unorthodoxy. He has torn to pieces every textbook ever written. There isn't a principle that he hasn't stamped on deliberately and with malice aforethought. He has no guard, no defence, yet he is—or was, for he has not boxed for two years—as difficult to hit as a moving shadow. Watch him when an opponent is striving to be aggressive, and you will see him shuffle backwards or sideways inches at a time, and you will also observe—probably to your consternation—that punches are grazing his nose or his jaw. He does not move his head so much as slightly jerk it; a fraction to the left, a fraction to the right, or a fraction forward. When he performs the latter movement he resembles a bird, pecking. His sense of distance is uncanny. He can stand within range of a blow when it is started, and then—

* In May of this year Wilde lost his world's championship to Pancho Villa, the Filipino. The fight took place in New York, and Wilde was knocked out in the seventh round.

hey, presto! a dart, a jerk, and the delivery has skimmed his face. There is no man on earth who can escape punishment with such nicety of judgment.

Now glance at him as he is preparing to finish a fight. He is a little higher on his toes, he is better poised, his body is almost imperceptibly executing a wave-like motion. His gloves are on his hips—there is no semblance of a guard—his knees are slightly bent, his left foot is turned in, pigeon fashion, while it is a million to one that his eyes are anywhere except on the spot he has made up his mind to hit. He usually feints before he lands his final blow. He does something which looks crude and which tempts his antagonist to lead—and it is all over from that moment. There is the flash of something that moves with the rapidity of a chameleon's tongue, and which is not much more substantial, and all that remains is for the time-keeper to intone the passing seconds. For a man of his weight and size, Wilde has the heaviest punch in the world. Where he stows away all the power he puts into it has never been explained.

But he is not a conscious boxer. Practically everything he does is subconscious. When he throws back his head or steps away from danger he is simply responding to some instinct that has given him a warning signal. But for this hidden quality he would not have climbed to such renown as a boxer. There are men in England and in America equally good in attack, but what they lack is Wilde's phenomenal knowledge of what is about to happen. He is like a chess player; he can visualize the thing that is bound to occur; he can look ahead; he can see a move before it is properly created. Wilde is a master because he is aided by a wonderful attribute that no other boxer possesses. There is a compartment in his brain where nestles the instinct that guides his every action, that tells him what to do, that prompts and instructs him throughout a contest. If this subconscious sense—this miracle—ever leaves him, his day will be done. He will become an average fighter. Of that I am absolutely convinced.

There have been other Welshmen of remarkable ability. But not many. The list, indeed, may be reduced to five. Wilde comes first, but after him I would place Jim Driscoll, Johnny

Basham, Freddy Welsh, and the late Tom Thomas. There is apparently something in the air of Wales that is helpful to men of moderate weight. The little Principality has bred and produced fly-weights and bantams and feathers and lights by the score, but she has not yet given the boxing world a heavy-weight clever enough to be ranked with the good second-raters. This is a peculiar fact that defies explanation. All the boxers who learn the tricks of their trade in the Rhondda Valley—which is the gymnasium and the training camp of Wales—are not little men. Many are of fine physique; quite a number have the qualifications which make the ideal heavy-weight, but I cannot think of one who even threatened to lift himself out of the ruck. The Welsh heavy-weight, when he is fast on his feet, is more often than not slow of brain; when he has imagination and quick mental processes he lumbers about in the manner of a cart-horse. The heavy-hitting Welsh heavy-weight has a body or a jaw of tissue paper; the big man with endurance generally starts his punches from somewhere in the neighbourhood of his dressing-room. Every valuable asset is discounted by at least two defects, but I have never been able to understand why it is that the Welshman of decent proportions hates punishment as he might be expected to loathe poison. He is happy enough so long as he is laddling out punches, but the moment one lands on him he cracks on principle. It cannot be absence of courage, for the average Welsh Rugby forward, who is quite frequently a fighter, takes more rough handling in one Saturday afternoon than he would do in three ring bouts.

The last heavy-weight from Wales who showed any promise at all was David St. John. He died at Belmont, South Africa, in much the same way as Shaw, the Lifeguardsman, died at Waterloo. That was in 1899; since that time there hasn't been a Welsh heavy-weight worth his salt. Middle-weights have been equally scarce, but Tom Thomas, who captured one of the first Lonsdale belts, was on a level with some of the best Americans, and but for the fact that he was struck down with chronic rheumatism when real distinction was within his grasp he might easily have gained the championship of the world. He was one of the earliest Welshmen to mix boxing with fighting. He had a capital left hand, while he could

take blows as well as administer them. It was he who started the boxing epidemic which swept South Wales from end to end ; curiously enough, there has never been a boxer of note from North Wales. Ned Turner was the father of Welsh boxing, but Thomas founded the present school. He wrought better than he knew.

Freddy Welsh (his real name is Thomas) had a long and very successful career. He won the championship of England in 1909 by defeating Johnny Summers, and acquired the world's light-weight title by outpointing Willie Ritchie in 1914. In a strict sense, he was not a good boxer. He was too fond of little introductions that were totally unnecessary. His defence, however, was magnificent ; he so perfected it that to strike him a really telling blow was a feat in itself. He was a British boxer only because he happened to be born at Pontypridd. His style was American, his fighting mentality was American, while he made his home in the United States for many years.

He was nothing like so good an exponent as Johnny Basham. (Has there ever been a more appropriate name for a fighter ?) He crouched—but Basham stood bolt upright. He swung his punches—but Basham hit straight out from the shoulder. Basham, in my view, is one of the few men who can be set up as a model. He is finished now, but when he was in his prime he could always be watched with the maximum of enjoyment. His methods were so clean, so crisp, so splendidly thought out. He was the typical British boxer from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head. He made the mistake of going on too long, but even when he was lashed into impotence by Kid Lewis he was still the stylist ; still the pretty, almost beautiful boxer. Basham has left a gap that will not be filled for many years.

Jim Driscoll is a very decided part of boxing history. Personally, I have never seen anyone quite like him. He was the perfect example of what a boxer should be. In action he was for all the world like a well-oiled machine. When things were not panning out as he wanted them to, he would compel his opponent to change his tactics by altering his own. He was exceptionally fast on his feet ; but he rarely danced for the sake of effect. When he threw out a punch it usually

landed ; he did not believe in wasting his strength by belabouring the air. If Driscoll's missed blows were counted it would be discovered that they could be crowded through the eye of a needle, without inconvenience to the eye.

He was Mace and Sayers and the Tipton Slasher all rolled into one. His favourite punches were of the short variety ; they were rammed in from a spot very near to an opponent's jaw. Carpentier can shoot over a punch without pulling back his arm, but so could Driscoll. He may not have been the inventor of the darting blow which is now so popular, but he most certainly made it fashionable. The first time I saw him use it was at Cardiff about 1905. He employed it, if memory serves, to knock out a local man named Ivor Thomas.

He must weep when he sees some of the present-day Nijinskys ; the men who are not satisfied unless they are leaping into the air or doing the splits. Had it been necessary, Driscoll could have fought in a twelve-inch ring. His footwork was amazingly clever, but he never needed much room to display it. Even when he was flurried—which was not often—he merely represented the minimum of effort. Tricks and dodges were foreign to his nature ; the only time he ever lost command of himself was when he fought Freddy Welsh in 1910. I am not excusing him, but he was severely provoked. That match was one of the sorriest in my experience. It should not have been countenanced or encouraged, for Driscoll was a feather-weight, whilst Welsh was a heavy light-weight. The very memory of it leaves a nasty taste in the mouth ; but the fights between the attendants and the spectators and even the police, which came as a climax, were in keeping with everything else that occurred.

Driscoll is the owner of a Lonsdale belt. He won it by defeating Spike Robson (twice) and Seaman Hayes. He was also the European feather-weight champion for several seasons, but the American public were not very willing to recognize him as the holder of the world's title. His contest with Abe Attell, which was decided when the latter was the world's champion, was not actually of the no-decision kind, but it was unfortunate for Driscoll that no formal verdict was given. He won, however, by a very wide margin, and it is not stretching

the longbow to suggest that he has never been bettered as a feather-weight.

One of his most terrific battles was with Owen Moran at the National Sporting Club in 1913. He was beginning to feel his age even then, and I shall never forget the sigh of relief that went up when the time-keeper touched the bell for the last time. Moran, vigorous, active, desperate, and punching like a trip-hammer, was all over the Welshman in the last round. If there had been two more Driscoll would have been beaten. His strength had been sapped, his eye had been deprived of its cunning; indeed, it was only his pluck that kept him on his feet. For three minutes Moran—a worthy descendant of the old Birmingham school—fought with a ferocity that roused the spectators to a fever-pitch of excitement. There were those who thought he should have been given the victory, but in my opinion he was flattered when a draw was declared. He was certainly on top during the last few rounds, but prior to that “Incomparable Jim” was undoubtedly his superior.

There is no one to-day who approaches Driscoll in cleverness, ring-knowledge, footwork, or punching power. The present feather-weight champion of Great Britain, Joe Fox, is moderately skilful, but at his best he is but a very dim shadow of the man he has followed. Kilbane, and Dundee, the two Americans who claim the world's championship, and Criqui, the Frenchman, are fighters, not boxers. If Driscoll could be made ten years younger he would beat either of them with his left hand alone. The old spirit is still with him, as I saw the other day. He was seconding a man he had trained, and he fought every round as though he himself had been in the ring. When Kid Lewis lost to Roland Todd, I was sitting so near to him that I couldn't help but watch his movements. He was not still for a single moment; when he was not jabbing the air with left hooks he was smashing it with upper-cuts. Driscoll can no more look at a fight without taking part in it than he can fly. That betrays the fighting strain. Even now, when he is high up on the shelf of retirement, it bubbles in him as boisterously as ever. He ought really to be in charge of a boxing school. This idea of starting an establishment where promising boys could be taught the finer

points, and making him its principal, has been discussed times out of number. The pity is it has never come to anything.

Why is it that Scotland and Ireland have supplied so few boxing champions? This is another problem that loudly calls for solution. There was a time when half the fighters of the world were Irish, but Scotsmen, for some unexplainable reason, have never taken kindly to pugilism. There is not one Scotsman in the long list of heavy-weight champions, and only two have won Lonsdale belts.

The chief fighting races are the English, the Welsh, the Jews, the French, and the Americans. Australia would have figured in the table ten or fifteen years ago, but at the moment her boxers are not of the same stamp as those turned out by Larry Foley. America must of necessity come last. Her best men are hyphenates. Pancho Villa, the chief claimant to the fly-weight title, is a Filipino, and the man who recently defeated him, Frankie Genaro, is an Italian. Joe Lynch, the bantam-weight, is mainly Irish; Johnny Dundee, the feather-weight, was born in Italy; Benny Leonard, the light-weight, is a Hebrew; Mickey Walker, the welter-weight, has Irish parents; Johnny Wilson, the middle-weight, is another Italian (although he was born in New York); Harry Greb, the light heavy-weight, is three-parts German; while Jack Dempsey has many strains in his blood. It is difficult, indeed, to find any American boxers whose immediate ancestors were not Italian, Irish, or German. The Italians, under their own sunny skies, are as poor as can be, but immediately they settle in the United States they develop into world-beaters. No one seems to know why.

The two Scotsmen who captured Lonsdale belts were Tancy Lee and Jim Higgins. The former was an extremely capable fly-weight and feather-weight. In 1915 he staggered followers of boxing by beating Jimmy Wilde in seventeen rounds, but it has to be stated, in fairness to the Welshman, that he was in very bad health on the evening of the contest. Eighteen months later he reversed the decision in decisive fashion. Lee then moved up to the feather-weight division, and made the feather-weight belt his own property by knocking out Charlie

Hardcastle and Joe Conn, and by outpointing Danny Morgan.

Lee is easily the best fighter Scotland has yet produced. He was not particularly graceful, but during a bout he was like a blob of mercury. He was never known to stand on one spot for more than ten seconds at a time. Higgins can only be described as a flash in the pan. When he arrived in London, in 1920, to fight for his first Lonsdale belt, he was absolutely unknown. He had had a few contests in Scotland, but the details had not travelled across the border. In less than twelve months, however, he was the owner of the bantam-weight trophy. He thus created a record that is likely to stand for many a long day. If Higgins had been more carefully nursed he might have gone on piling up triumphs. He had more than an average amount of skill, but he was rushed too hard. He was sent against Ledoux, the Frenchman, when he should have been picking up experience in small halls. He was well beaten, but the reverse that had most to do with terminating his short career was the one he suffered at the hands of Herman, the American.

With the exception of Mike McTigue there are no outstanding Irish boxers. Even he has America to thank for his present prominent position. He has been fighting since 1913, but his first British appearance was delayed until 1922. Up to date he has had three contests in England and one in Ireland, but his full record totals considerably more than one hundred bouts. He is too light ever to win the world's heavy-weight championship, but it is quite possible that he will acquire the championship of Great Britain. He is a clever tactician, an excellent boxer, and—when he is warmed up—a furious fighter. Against Battling Siki he was disappointing, but there was so much at stake on that occasion that he wisely declined to take risks. Ten years ago there was another Irishman—Packey Mahoney—who threatened to do big things, but he had the bad luck to be matched with Bombardier Wells when the latter was worked up to a pitch sufficiently feverish to make him fight as well as box. Mahoney was punched to a standstill; his jaw was broken, some of his ribs were fractured, and his face was pounded almost to a jelly. He never fought again.

The Jew, as a boxer, occupies a height which is sky high. He appears to possess all the essentials. He is crafty, speedy, powerful, and everything else that can be mentioned; but his most tremendous asset is a ring brain which apparently is not given to other men. What is more, he takes his profession seriously. He is in deadly earnest from the time he commences to train to the instant when the gong is struck for the last time. The Jew is also extraordinarily courageous. He rarely thinks of surrendering, even when the odds are overwhelmingly against him. But he is an apprehensive fighter. There is always an expression of dread on his face; he conveys the impression that he is searching for something that is about to bite off one of his arms. I have frequently thought that this scared look is part and parcel of a reasoned plan of campaign; in any case, all the Jews have it. It must be valuable, or it would have been discarded long ago. The Hebrew boxer never retains anything that is not of service to him. But it is curious to reflect that the Jew, the pluckiest of all boxers, oftentimes makes the onlooker believe that his heart is sinking into his boots.

Those who have watched Kid Lewis, once welter-weight champion of the world, will not need to be reminded that throughout a fight his features are creased with doubt and anxiety. I have seen him look so thoroughly frightened that I have been made to wonder whether he was on the point of bursting into tears. I am sure this is a cultivated mannerism, for no one in his senses would accuse Lewis of lack of courage. He is one of the very best boxer-fighters of the last thirty years.

Benny Leonard, who has been light-weight champion of the world since 1917, is perhaps the finest all-round Jewish pugilist since Mendoza. I realize that this is a bold statement, for there have been other Hebrews who have been equally successful. But Leonard, since he won his title, has fought with great frequency, and it is a tribute to his worth when it is said that he has not, of late years, been beaten by a man of his own weight. His record is an astonishing one. He is only twenty-seven years of age, yet he has had over two hundred and fifty contests. Many of them have been exhibitions or of the no-decision kind, but he has won over sixty

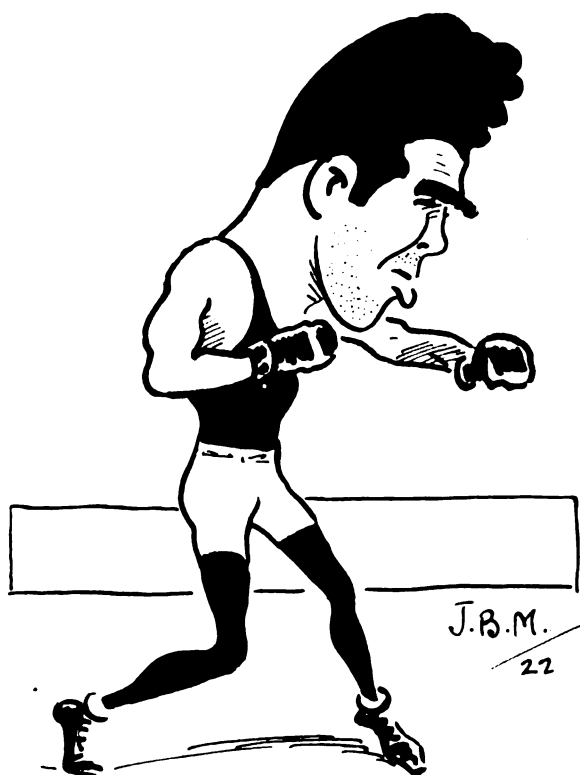
by knock-outs, while he has only been defeated three times. His last big fight was against another Jew, Lew Tendler. It drew the second biggest audience in the history of boxing—sixty thousand spectators paid for admission to Boyle's Thirty Acres—and the gate receipts were the largest ever derived from a light-weight battle. It was not in the power of the referee to give a decision, but it was generally agreed that Leonard scored the majority of points. There has never been a finer light-weight. Battling Nelson was good, and so were McFarland, Britt, Gans, Welsh and Ritchie, but neither bettered the standard that, since their day, has been set by Leonard. He will probably continue to occupy his throne for some time to come.

There are few Jewish heavy-weights of note in America, but there are platoons of smaller men. Tendler, Bartfield, Seigel, White, Friedman, Benjamin, Jackson and Mossberg are the chief welter-weights and light-weights; Chaney, Bernstein, Michaels, Rice, Beecher, and Kaplan are the principal feather-weights; and Wolfe, Gordon, Hausner, and Burman are among the leaders of the bantam-weight division. The most promising boxer in Great Britain, Jack Bloomfield, is also a Hebrew. He only needs ordinary luck and brainy management to gain a world's championship.

It is not possible to speak of all the English boxers who have figured in the public eye since Charles Mitchell won a heavy-weight competition at St. George's Hall, London, in 1882; the majority who come under review can only be awarded a few sentences. Mitchell was at his best when he fought with bare knuckles, but it is not generally known that he only had five important contests in England. The bigger part of his fighting life was spent abroad. His record shows that he had no less than thirteen drawn battles. He was beaten three times—by John L. Sullivan, Dom McCaffrey and J. J. Corbett.

Pedlar Palmer was deservedly called the "Box of Tricks." He was an exceptionally clever little fellow, but it is doubtful whether he was more workmanlike with his fists than Billy Plimmer, or Harry Ware, or Digger Stanley, or Ben Jordan, or Joe Bowker, or Cockney Cohen. All these were capable men, if some were not actually brilliant. The same remark

[illegible]



JACK BLOOMFIELD.

Light Heavy-weight Champion of Great Britain

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is true of Young Joseph (the first winner of the Lonsdale welter-weight belt), Jack Goldswain (ex-light-weight champion of England), Sid Burns (a Hebrew middle-weight who gave Carpentier one of the hardest fights of his career), Seaman Hayes (a very talented feather-weight), Johnny Hughes (a hard-as-nails fly-weight), Pat O'Keefe (three times winner of the Lonsdale middle-weight belt), Jim Sullivan (middle-weight champion in 1910), Johnny Summers (welter-weight champion in 1912, and the pugilist who is said to have fought all his fights with a rosary in his sock), Ben Taylor (the well-remembered "Woolwich Infant," who had thirty-seven contests and lost seventeen), Matt Wells (the ex-amateur who defeated Freddy Welsh), Bill Ladbury, Percy Jones, Bill Beynon, Alec Lambert, Johnny Condon, Sam Kellar and Owen Moran.

Which brings us, by the short route, to Bombardier Billy Wells—the complete enigma. What the writers of 2023 will say about him is hard to guess, but I regard him as the most remarkable—certainly the most interesting—boxer who ever pulled on a glove. I have never attempted to disguise my partiality for him. He is nearer to my conception of the thorough sportsman than any other fighter I have met. He is one of the very few whose methods have not been questioned, and I am convinced that he would rather lose a contest than indulge in tactics that were not strictly fair. Wells, almost from the beginning of his career, has been a sad disappointment. He has failed time and time again; but no man has done more to raise the tone of pugilism. In this respect he is easily the most important boxer in the world.

His record is not nearly so bad as sometimes is made out. He has had forty-five contests, of which he has won thirty-four. His knock-outs came from Georges Carpentier (twice), Joe Beckett (twice), Al Palzer, Tom Kennedy, Gunboat Smith, Frank Moran, Gunner Moir, Frank Goddard and Jack Bloomfield. He has thus been beaten eleven times. Carpentier, who has had many more bouts, has been defeated on a similar number of occasions, while Beckett has lost eight fights. So that Wells, when everything is taken into consideration, has nothing to be ashamed of.

His "lapses" have decidedly overshadowed his victories,

but he has his astounding popularity to thank for that. Wells has been "coming back" since 1911, yet he is as much a public favourite to-day as he was when he made his first professional appearance. That was in the early summer of 1910. He was then a lanky, smiling, long-armed, finely muscled young giant, with the face and the wavy hair of the matinee idol. He is much the same to-day, except that he is a trifle more rugged of aspect. But the cauliflower ear, and the bent nose, and the puffed lips, and the scarred cheeks are all conspicuous by their absence. Wells does not carry a single mark of his trade. How he has managed to dodge them is beyond me to explain, for it is a fact that he has accepted punishment that should have left him severely branded. Gunner Moir only hit him once, and then on the body, but Carpentier (at Ghent) and Goddard (at the Crystal Palace, London) delivered a sufficient number of blows to his face to give it all the pugilistic tokens it could accommodate. There are many reasons why Wells deserves to be selected as the greatest boxing personality of his age, and his success in preserving his handsome appearance is to my mind one of the chief. It is almost as mysterious as his unhappy knack of stepping away, or of curling up, when all that separates him from success is another punch on his reeling opponent.

Wells might have won the heavy-weight championship of the world if he had been born with a less kindly disposition. The thing he has had to fight hardest against is his own friendly heart. It beats with compassion whenever an antagonist is sinking down to defeat ; it is the softest and the most prodigiously generous heart ever presented to a pugilist. The time to look for Wells's defeat is when he is touching victory ; when his opponent is staggering back towards the ropes or blindly seeking a clinch. As though at command he compresses his lips, half closes his eyes, and drops his guard. He loathes the spectacle of a tottering boxer, hates the taste and the sight of blood. That is why he should never have been induced to make fighting his profession.

Wells is a square peg in a round hole. I once saw him fight (against Goddard) with the same vigour and the same savage directness that usually characterizes Dempsey. But that was only for three minutes—and what is three minutes in a career

of thirteen years? What he lacks is enthusiasm, a love for the business of fighting. In his make-up there is no venom; he is too gentle, too refined, too imaginative. Yet he is possessed of all the essentials save the two of most importance—the requisite temperament, and the passion for jumping in and turning himself into a battering-ram. He doesn't exist as a fighter, simply because the spirit is absent, but as a boxer, solely and simply, he has never had a rival.

He himself attributes his comparative failure to the circumstance that he has been too versatile. I am inclined to agree with him. When he was much younger he was a first-class footballer, a champion runner, a clever cricketer, a splendid swimmer, and a moderately good oarsman. To-day he is a scratch golfer. But I do not believe that his early defeat by Gunner Moir had anything to do with the creation of his much-discussed temperament. It was there long before Moir slung in his lucky round-arm punch. The very first time I saw Wells (at Wonderland, London, in 1910), he was licking his dry lips as he licked them immediately prior to his second contest with Carpentier. He has always been jumpy, and fidgety, and nervous, but the suggestion that he is a coward—and it has been made—is too monstrously unfair and untrue to allow of discussion.

I am at one with those who assert that he is ill fitted for boxing; that is common knowledge, but to deduce from it that he is "yellow" is utter nonsense. He is, however, extremely sensitive. Many years ago I wrote an article in which the word "temperament" was freely employed. It made Wells very angry, and my failure to define the word to his satisfaction did not improve matters. He felt that I had doubted his pluck, and it required much argument to convince him that all I had tried to point out was that he was temperamentally unsuited for fighting. That, I think, has been proved since.

The most significant statement he ever made to me was just before his fight with Albert Lloyd, the Australian, at the National Sporting Club, in 1922. "It isn't winning so much," said Wells, "as the *manner* of winning that's worrying me." That tells the whole story of Bombardier Wells. He is a worrier by nature; he worries when he is training, he worries

himself into a state of exhaustion in his dressing-room, and he worries when he is fighting. But he has another huge defect ; before a contest he maps out a plan of action, which he sticks to like grim death whether it is serviceable or otherwise. He seems to be unable to change his methods. He boxes when he should be fighting, retreats when he should be attacking. He is a bundle of jangling nerves, with a fatal habit of doing the wrong thing.

The fight that had most to do with wrecking his career was the one at Ghent, when Carpentier, his ex-sparring-partner, was his opponent. Victory would have gone to Wells on that occasion if the Frenchman had not been made to look a hopeless wreck. It has already been said that Wells's tiny fighting spirit evaporates altogether when his opponent starts floundering or falling. He becomes paralysed, the urge to go in and finish the job disappears, his friendly heart takes command and compels him to conduct himself in a way that—in a pugilist—is positively ludicrous. He had Carpentier beaten to the world for two rounds ; yet, when the odds on him were a hundred to one, he allowed his smaller and terribly battered adversary to rush in and knock him out of time.

It was the same in New York in 1912, when he met Palzer. He hit the American so hard with his right that the latter went down in a heap. Here was a priceless opportunity of gaining lasting renown, but Wells did not embrace it. Instead, he partly closed his eyes, gazed at the (to him) pathetic spectacle of a boxer in the grip of semi-insensibility, and so invited the blow that crumpled both him and his reputation. He has told me that the expression on Palzer's face had a phenomenal effect on him. It caused him to forget that he was in a ring, engaged in a fight. Whenever people talk about Wells nowadays they invariably preface their remarks by saying : " Ah, yes, but if—" That explains him. Wells is the " if " of pugilism.

He won his English title by defeating Iron Hague in 1911. Hague was a slow-moving, slow-thinking, cumbersome man who would have done better if it had been possible to make him understand that training is a very serious business. His condition, for almost all his battles, was poor beyond belief, but that was not the fault of his supporters. Hague simply

would not take the trouble to get himself into reasonable shape. A lengthy stretch of the imagination would be required to describe him as a good champion, but he could fight strenuously when he was in the mood. He knew next to nothing of artistic boxing.

Petty Officer Curran, Fred Drummond, Sergeant Sunshine, Jewey Smith, Dan Voyles, Bill Chase, Bandsman Rice, and Fred Storbeck were all built in the same queer way. They could throw out punches, but they could do little else. Gunner Moir, champion of England for three years (1906-1909), was merely the best of a very indifferent lot. But he was an earnest boxer, and the little fame that travelled his way was well earned. He was so constructed that speed was out of his reach. He was compact, bulky, and slovenly of movement. His one asset was a right-hand punch. He was outclassed by the width of an ocean when he fought Tommy Burns, while his victory over Wells was the sort of thing that is usually reserved for fiction. After permitting his limitations to be clearly displayed for a couple of uninteresting rounds, he then rammed home a body-blow that gave rise to one of the loudest gasps ever heard. Moir had twenty-five contests. He won fourteen, lost eleven, and retired from the ring in 1913.

The principal British heavy-weights at the moment of writing are Joe Beckett, Dick Smith, Frank Goddard and Jack Bloomfield. They rule the roost; they are as much in advance of Arthur Townley, Charles Penwill, Boy McCormick and Trevor Llewellyn (not to mention Horace Jones, the Canadian, and George Cook and Albert Lloyd, the Australians) as Dempsey is in advance of them. The only one who will get within respectable distance of a world's championship is Bloomfield, and even he will have to shed his mannerisms and his peculiarities before he can hope to qualify for a title bout.

But he is undeniably the most promising big man in Great Britain. He has yet to show whether he can rise superior to the flattery that turns the heads of so many boxers—that has been responsible for more knock-outs than all the punishment ever invented—but as he is still quite young there is ample time for him to rid himself of his fondness for posing, to perfect his defence, and to make much more deadly the short snappy punch that is the chief of his armoury of blows.

Bloomfield was born at Spitalfields, London, in 1899, but most of his experience was gained in America. That is in his favour ; he knows how necessary it is to combine power with style. The next twelve months will be the critical period for him. If he is expertly handled, and if he is granted ordinary luck, he should find himself in line with those who have proved their right to a fight for the highest honours.

Smith is too old to do much more boxing. He was the amateur heavy-weight champion of Great Britain in 1912, and turned professional a year later, so that he must be nearing the end of his fighting life. He rivals Wells as an exponent of the left hand, but unfortunately he is not able to hit forcefully enough to hurt anyone. Goddard is an in-and-out performer who sometimes does well but more often does badly. He has beaten men of good class and has been defeated by third-raters. Magnificently made, he failed to realize, when he was hardly more than a novice, that modesty is a very real virtue. He listened much too attentively to the gush that is invariably spilled over young boxers, and was injured and handicapped as a consequence. His record, however, is an excellent one. He has had twenty-six contests, and has only been knocked out three times. As he is now thirty years of age, he cannot be considered as a possible winner of a world's championship. Goddard was at his best during the war. If he had been rightly advised and guided then, if he had kept his belief in himself within bounds—these ifs!—he might easily have been a bigger man to-day.

It can be said of Joe Beckett, without offence, that he is a throw-back to the earliest moments of prize-fighting. He is a natural bruiser, and, what is more, he looks like one. I admire Beckett if only because his boyhood was a hard one. He is not a gipsy, but for twenty years or more he spent practically the whole of his time on fair-grounds. He was denied the opportunities that were his right, but it is due to him to say that he fills the position he has attained with a distinction that does him credit. He is not the courtly, smooth-tongued, handsome fighter of the film theatre, but a rough-and-ready, open-handed, decently conducted pugilist who is two hundred years after his time. I have mentioned that Wells is sensitive. So is Beckett ; more so, if anything.

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JOE BECKETT
HEAVY-WEIGHT CHAMPION
OF GREAT BRITAIN

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of the Editor of *Sporting Life*

He once dictated a celebrated letter to the Press in which he referred to his lacerated feelings, or something of the kind. That was no affectation. Beckett meant every word that was written. He is abnormally touchy, and all his days he has hungered for popularity. Now, after long waiting, it has come his way, and I believe he is satisfied. Well, good luck to him. Any man who can force himself out of the crowd, as Beckett has done, deserves a measure of contentment.

His career is as much a romance as Carpentier's. He was, to start with, a booth boxer. Then he became a preliminary fighter at the small halls. In 1917 he was known only to his own little circle ; in 1918 he won a competition at the National Sporting Club ; in 1919 he jumped into sudden prominence by defeating, in the space of six months, Bombardier Wells, Frank Goddard and Eddie McGoorty. It was no small achievement ; but it is better to draw a veil over his fight with Carpentier. The person who knows least about it is Beckett himself. He probably remembers leaving his stool, but he cannot possibly recollect anything that transpired afterwards. That was a gall-and-wormwood night for Beckett, for he was only on his feet for seventy-three seconds.

He has been called the ablest British fighter since Mitchell. Perhaps he is, but the point is not worth contesting. Admirers of Wells claim that he is not in the same street as the Bombardier ; others remark that he cannot hit so hard as Goddard or box so prettily as Smith. What does it matter ? Beckett has retained his title as British champion since 1919, and that, after all, is the best answer to the many who asseverate that he is made of poor stuff.

The absolute truth is this : Beckett is not a boxer at all. He is a fighter, a bruiser, a slugger—anything you like so long as the word "boxer" is omitted. To ask him to prance about and flick with his left is to ask the impossible. He was not born that way. His methods are those of James Figg, of Tom Cribb, of the Game Chicken. There is no boxing cleverness in him ; but request him to hunch his shoulders and drop his head and dart in with arms swinging and he will supply an entertainment that is at least thrilling if it is not edifying.

His great fault is that he will *not* protect the point of his

jaw. The instant an opponent shakes his shoulders he opens his guard. Carpentier, or any man skilful at feinting, will beat him ten times out of ten. Beckett will cover up until his antagonist executes some slight movement, and then he will throw his elbows apart just as though his life depended on it. He will never be a world's champion. He knows too little of in-fighting to meet American heavy-weights on an equality ; he is too crude at manœuvring for advantages, but his most fatal defect is that for two minutes in every round he is wide open.

The finest thing he ever did was to climb back to his feet after he had been knocked silly by Frank Moran. He fell, seated, on the bottom rope, and it is doubtful whether he would have got back in time if he had not slumped down in such an awkward fashion. His arms were on the centre rope, and he used them to give him leverage. He was upright as the time-keeper was pursing his lips to say "ten," but a few moments later Moran was being assisted out of the ring, blinded. Beckett not only produced proof of his courage that night, but also of his punching strength. He is not a star by a long, long way, but he is infinitely more worthy of compliment than some of his detractors suppose.

Except for Roland Todd, the middle-weight, and Bugler Harry Lake, the bantam-weight, there are no smaller men in Great Britain of particular promise. Light-weights are extremely scarce. James Hall, a thirty-one-years-old sailor, holds the championship, but it would be criminal to match him with men like Leonard or Tendler. Danny Frush, a feather-weight, has done fairly well in America, and Bermondsey Billy Wells and Harry Mason have likewise won many excellent victories, but neither is quite of the class that gets to the top. Todd is the best defensive boxer since Johnson, but he is tremendously deficient in aggressiveness. He can catch blows on his arms with the maximum of ease, he has a guard that appears to be impenetrable ; but defence, without attack, is lamb without mint sauce. He has it in him, however, to go very far indeed. As he is to-day he would defeat most middle-weights, but when he learns how to bore in and land damaging blows he will be a match for any man of his poundage in the world.

I hold the opinion that in a year or so there will be many new champions. The Old Guard are getting on in years, and they cannot last much longer. Prognostics are always perilous, but there are grounds for assuming that the fly-weight title will go either to Villa or Genaro, the light-weight title to Tendler or Tremaine, the middle-weight title to Greb or Todd, the light heavy-weight title to McTigue or Bloomfield, and the heavy-weight title to Louis Angel Firpo or Harry Wills.

The safest prophecy of all is that American fighters will win at least six of the eight.

RULES OF BOXING

**BROUGHTON'S
LONDON PRIZE RING
MARQUESS OF QUEENSBERRY
NATIONAL SPORTING CLUB**

BROUGHTON'S RULES, 1743

1. That a square of a yard be chalked in the middle of the stage ; and every fresh set-to after a fall, or being parted from the rails, each second is to bring his man to the side of the square and place him opposite to the other, and till they are fairly set-to at the lines, it shall not be lawful for the one to strike the other.

2. That, in order to prevent any disputes, the time a man lies after a fall, if the second does not bring his man to the side of the square, within the space of half a minute, he shall be deemed a beaten man.

3. That in every main battle, no person whatever shall be upon the stage, except the principals and their seconds ; the same rule to be observed in by-battles, except that in the latter, Mr. Broughton is allowed to be upon the stage to keep decorum and to assist gentlemen in getting to their places ; provided always he does not interfere in the battle ; and whoever presumes to infringe these rules, to be turned immediately out of the house. Everybody is to quit the stage as soon as the champions are stripped, before they set-to.

4. That no champion be deemed beaten unless he fails coming up to the line in the limited time ; or that his own second declares him beaten. No second is to be allowed to ask his man's adversary any questions, or advise him to give out.

5. That, in by-battles, the winning man to have two-thirds of the money given, which shall be publicly divided upon the stage, notwithstanding any private agreements to the contrary.

6. That, to prevent disputes, in every main battle, the principals shall, on the coming on the stage, choose from among the gentlemen present, two umpires, who shall absolutely decide all disputes, that may arise about the battle ;

and if the two umpires cannot agree, the said umpires to choose a third, who is to determine it.

7. That no person is to hit his adversary when he is down, or seize him by the ham, the breeches, or any part below the waist ; a man on his knees to be reckoned down.

LONDON PRIZE-RING RULES, 1838

REVISED 1853

1. The ring shall be made on the turf, and shall be four-and-twenty feet square, formed of eight stakes and ropes, the latter extending lines, the uppermost line being four feet from the ground, and the lower two feet from the ground. In the centre of the ring a mark be formed to be termed a scratch.

2. Each man shall be attended to the ring by two seconds and a bottle-holder. The combatants, on shaking hands, shall retire until the seconds of each have tossed for choice of position, which adjusted, the winner shall choose as his corner, according to the state of the wind or sun, and conduct his man thereto, the loser taking the opposite diagonal corner.

3. Each man shall be provided with a handkerchief of a colour suitable to his own fancy, and the seconds shall entwine these handkerchiefs at the upper end of one of the centre stakes. These handkerchiefs shall be called "colours," and the winner of the battle, at its conclusion, shall be entitled to their possession as the trophy of victory.

4. The two umpires shall be chosen by the seconds or backers to watch the progress of the battle, and take exception to any breach of the rules hereinafter stated. A referee shall be chosen by the umpires unless otherwise agreed on, to whom all disputes shall be referred ; and the decision of this referee, whatever it may be, shall be final and strictly binding on all parties, whether as to the matter in dispute or the issue of the battle. The referee shall be provided with a watch for the purpose of calling time ; the calling of that referee only

to be attended to, and no other person whatever shall interfere in calling time. The referee shall withhold all opinion till appealed to by the umpires, and the umpires strictly abide by his decision without dispute.

5. On the men being stripped it shall be the duty of the seconds to examine their drawers, and if any objection arises as to the insertion of improper substances therein, they shall appeal to their umpires, who, with the concurrence of the referee, shall direct what alterations shall be made.

6. The spikes in the fighting boots shall be confined to three in number, which shall not exceed three-eighths of an inch from the sole of the boot, and shall not be less than one-eighth of an inch broad at the point ; two to be placed in the broadest part of the sole and one in the heel ; and in the event of a man wearing any other spikes, either in toes or elsewhere, he shall be compelled either to remove them, or provide other boots properly spiked, the penalty for refusal to be a loss of the stakes.

7. Both men being ready, each shall be conducted to that side of the scratch next his corner previously chosen ; and, the seconds on the one side and the men on the other, having shaken hands, the former shall immediately leave the ring, and there remain until the round be finished, on no pretence whatever approaching their principals during the round without permission from the referee, the penalty to be the loss of the battle to the offending parties.

8. At the conclusion of the round when one or both of the men shall be down, the seconds shall step into the ring and carry or conduct their principal to his corner, there affording him the necessary assistance, and no person whatever be permitted to interfere in this duty.

9. On the expiration of thirty seconds the referee appointed shall cry " Time," upon which each man shall rise from the knee of his second and walk to his own side of the scratch unaided ; the seconds immediately leaving the ring. The penalty for either of them remaining eight seconds after the call of time to be the loss of the battle to his principal ; and either man failing to be at the scratch within eight seconds shall be deemed to have lost the battle.

10. On no consideration whatever shall any person except the seconds and the referee be permitted to enter the ring during the battle, nor till it shall have been concluded ; and in the event of such unfair practice, or the ropes or stakes being disturbed or removed, it shall be in the power of the referee to award the victory to that man who, in his honest opinion, shall have the best of the contest.

11. The seconds shall not interfere, advise, or direct the adversary of their principal, and shall refrain from all offensive and irritating expressions, in all respects conducting themselves with order and decorum, and confine themselves to the diligent and careful discharge of their duties to their principals.

12. In picking up their men, should the seconds wilfully injure the antagonist of their principal, the latter shall be deemed to have forfeited the battle on the decision of the referee.

13. It shall be a fair "stand-up fight," and if either man shall wilfully throw himself down without receiving a blow, whether blows shall have been previously exchanged or not, he shall be deemed to have lost the battle ; but this rule shall not apply to a man who in a close slips down from the grasp of his opponent to avoid punishment, or from obvious accident or weakness.

14. Butting with the head shall be deemed foul, and the party resorting to this practice shall be deemed to have lost the battle.

15. A blow struck when a man is thrown or down shall be deemed foul. A man with one knee and one hand on the ground, or with both knees on the ground, shall be deemed down, and a blow given in either of these positions shall be considered foul, providing always that, when in such a position, the man so down shall not himself strike, or attempt to strike.

16. A blow struck below the waistband shall be deemed foul, and in a close, seizing an antagonist below the waist by the thigh or otherwise shall be deemed foul.

17. All attempts to inflict injury by gouging or tearing the flesh with the fingers or nails, and biting, shall be deemed foul.

18. Kicking or deliberately falling on an antagonist with the knees or otherwise, when down, shall be deemed foul.

19. All bets shall be paid as the battle-money after the fight is awarded.

20. The referee and umpires shall take their positions in front of the centre stake outside the ropes.

21. Due notice shall be given by the stake-holder of the day and place where the battle-money is to be given up, and be exonerated from all responsibility upon obeying the direction of the referee ; all parties to be strictly bound by these rules, and in future all articles of agreement for a contest be entered into with a strict and willing adherence to the letter and spirit of these rules.

22. In the event of magisterial or other interference, or in case of darkness coming on, the referee (or stake-holder in case no referee has been chosen) shall have the power to name the time and place for the next meeting, if possible, on the same day, or as soon after as may be. In naming the second or third place, the nearest spot shall be selected to the original place of fighting where there is a chance of its being fought out.

23. Should the fight not be decided on the day, all bets shall be drawn, unless the fight shall be resumed the same week, between Sunday and Sunday, in which case the referee's duties shall continue and the bets shall stand and be decided by the event. The battle-money shall remain in the hands of the stake-holder until fairly won or lost by a fight, unless a draw be mutually agreed upon, or, in case of a postponement, one of the principals shall be absent, when the man in the ring shall be awarded the stakes.

24. Any pugilist voluntarily quitting the ring previous to the deliberate judgment of the referee being obtained shall be deemed to have lost the fight.

25. On an objection being made by the seconds or umpires the men shall retire to their corners, and there remain until the decision of the appointed authorities shall be obtained ; if pronounced " foul," the battle shall be at an end, but if " fair," " time " shall be called by the party appointed, and the man absent from the scratch eight seconds after shall be deemed to have lost the fight. The decision in all cases is to be given promptly and irrevocably, for which purpose the umpires and the referee should be invariably close together.

26. If a man leaves the ring, either to escape punishment or for any other purpose without the permission of the referee, unless he is involuntarily forced out, he shall forfeit the battle.

27. The use of hard substances, such as stones or sticks, or of resin in the hand during the battle, shall be deemed foul, and on the requisition of the seconds of either man, the accused shall open his hands for the examination of the referee.

28. Hugging on the ropes shall be deemed foul. A man held by the neck against the stakes or upon or against the ropes shall be considered down, and all interference with him in that position shall be deemed foul. If a man in any way makes use of the ropes or stakes to aid him in squeezing his adversary he shall be deemed the loser of the battle, and if a man in close reaches the ground with his knees, his adversary shall immediately loose him or lose the battle.

29. . All glove or room fights to be as nearly as possible in conformity with foregoing rules.

MARQUESS OF QUEENSBERRY RULES

1. To be a fair stand-up boxing match in a twenty-foot-long ring, or as near that size as practicable.

2. No wrestling or hugging allowed.

3. The rounds to be of three minutes' duration, and one minute time between rounds.

4. If either man fall, through weakness or otherwise, he must get up unassisted, ten seconds to be allowed him to do so, the other man meanwhile to return to his corner, and when the fallen man is on his legs the round is to be resumed and continued until the three minutes have expired. If one man fails to come to the scratch in the ten seconds allowed, it shall be in the power of the referee to give his award in favour of the other man.

5. A man hanging on the ropes in a helpless state, with his toes off the ground, shall be considered down.

6. No seconds or any other person to be allowed in the ring during the rounds.

7. Should the contest be stopped by any unavoidable interference, the referee to name time and place, as soon as possible, for finishing the contest ; so that the match must be won and lost, unless the backers of both men agree to draw the stakes.

8. The gloves to be fair-sized boxing-gloves of the best quality, and new.

9. Should a glove burst or come off, it must be replaced to the referee's satisfaction.

10. A man on one knee is considered down, and if struck is entitled to the stakes.

11. No shoes or boots with sprigs allowed.

12. The contest in all other respects to be governed by revised rules of the London Prize-ring.

NATIONAL SPORTING CLUB RULES, 1923

1. All contests to be decided in a roped ring not less than fourteen feet or more than twenty feet square.

2. Contestants to box in light boots or shoes (without spikes) or in socks. The gloves to be of a minimum weight of six ounces each. Contestants to be medically examined before entering the ring and to weigh on the day of the contest.

Should bandages be agreed to, the length and material of same to be approved and deposited with the management of the club at the time of signing articles. The length of bandage for each or either hand not to exceed six feet, and width not to exceed one inch.

3. In all contests the number of rounds shall be specified. No contest shall exceed fifteen rounds, except championships, which shall be limited to twenty rounds. No round shall exceed three minutes in duration. The interval between the rounds shall be one minute.

4. A contestant shall be entitled to the assistance of two seconds, whose names shall be submitted to the committee

for approval. The seconds shall leave the ring when time is called, and shall give no advice or assistance to the contestants during the progress of any round.

5. In all contests a referee and a time-keeper shall be appointed by the committee. The referee shall award a maximum number of five marks at the end of each round to the better man, and a proportionate number to the other contestant, or, when equal, the maximum number to each.

If a contestant is down, he must get up unassisted within ten seconds; his opponent meanwhile shall retire out of striking distance, and shall not resume boxing until ordered to do so by the referee. A man is to be considered down even when he is on one or both feet, if at the same time any other part of his body is touching the ground, or when in the act of rising. A contestant failing to continue the contest at the expiration of ten seconds shall not be awarded any marks for that round, and the contest shall then terminate.

The referee shall decide all contests in favour of the contestant who obtains the greatest number of marks.

If at the conclusion of any round during the contest one of the contestants should attain such a lead on points as to render it an impossibility for his opponent to win or tie, he must then be declared the winner.

Marks shall be awarded for "attack," direct clean hits with the knuckle part of the glove of either hand on any part of the front or sides of the head, or body above the belt; "defence," guarding, slipping, ducking, or getting away. Where contestants are otherwise equal, the majority of the marks shall be given to the one who does most of the leading off or who displays the better style.

6. The referee shall have power to disqualify a contestant for any of the following acts: For hitting below the belt, for using the pivot blow, for using the kidney punch, for hitting with the open glove, the inside or butt of the hand, or with the wrist or elbow. For holding, butting, shouldering, intentionally falling without receiving a blow, wrestling or roughing, remaining in a clinch unnecessarily, for not trying, or for any other act which he may deem foul. The referee

shall also have power to stop the contest if in his opinion a contestant is outclassed or accidentally disabled.

7. The breaking of any of these rules by a contestant or his seconds shall render such contestant liable to disqualification.

8. A contestant disqualified for any cause whatever shall not be entitled to any prize.

9. The referee shall decide (1) any question not provided for in these rules ; (2) the interpretation of any of these rules.

THE END.

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