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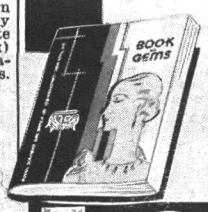

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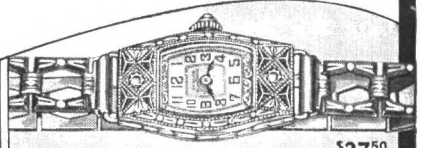

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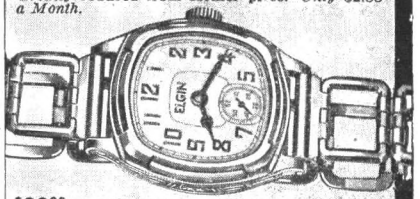

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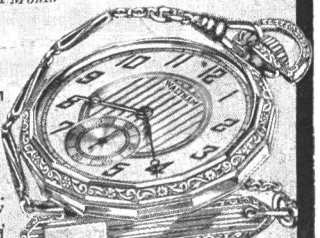

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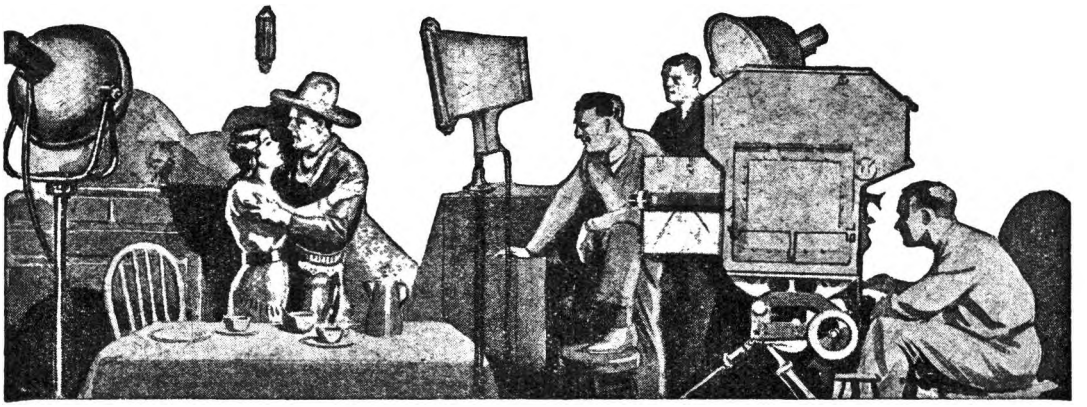

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GYM FIGHTER

By

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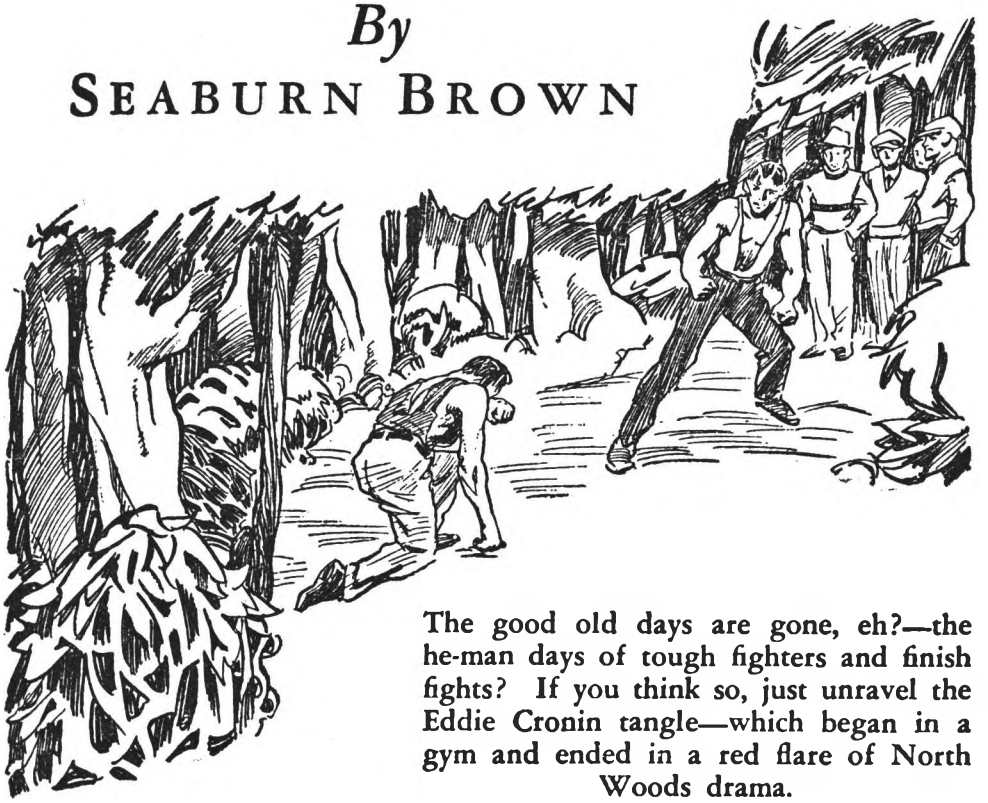


The good old days are gone, eh?—the he-man days of tough fighters and finish fights? If you think so, just unravel the Eddie Cronin tangle—which began in a gym and ended in a red flare of North Woods drama.

IT'S queer to me how a complicated business, like the Eddie Cronin tangle, can have so simple a start. I take a fighter named Johnson out to a little Oregon town from Portland to fill a date there.

Johnson isn't my fighter. He belongs to Wolf Reese, leading promoter of Portland, at that time. Reese hires me to handle Johnson because I'm low on dough and glad to work cheap. Wolf Reese can't bother with such small fights personally.

Anyway, it's a long train ride; and when we get to the burg, Millville, which is a sprawl of houses clustered around two huge sawmills, Johnson is stiff and wants a workout. We go to the I. O. O. F. hall, where the fights are to be held and a ring has been set up.

Johnson itches to box a round or two; and so I plead for a volunteer from the gang of yokels watching us.

There's a great shuffling of feet, and a lot of whispering: "You, Eddie—you do it!"

And pretty soon, peeling off his shirt, out steps a husky young logger. He sure is a picture: One of the brand you don't often see in cities. Graceful as a racehorse, he is, and as strong as a steel bridge. Cabaret night-life hasn't burned the youth out of that kid!

Then Johnson, to his astonishment—and mine—learns that the logger can box! And as plain as the fact that he

can box is the fact that the timber worker has had little or no ring experience.

For he doesn't box scientifically—not as a man is taught to box. He hits and blocks with the natural quickness of an animal. Like a bear; or more with the sureness and deftness of a cat batting at a ball on the end of a string.

Little by little Johnson lets himself out. He gets a real sweat-raising workout from that backwoodsman! Johnson, to be sure, is a man. But he's a professional boxer of ten years' experience.

Of course, when Johnson lets out the last notch, he knows too much for the novice. He feints him into knots, and spins him off balance in the clinches. It's natural, undeveloped ability and class that that kid has—enough to hoist my blood pressure ten pounds to the square inch!

After the workout I corral Eddie. I learn that no one has ever taught him a thing. He has merely put on the mitts occasionally with the other mill boys, battling for the fun of it.

That night, while Johnson is punching another palooka out of sight in four rounds, Mr. Eddie Cronin is in our corner, learning all he can through eyes and ears.

I'm starting him in early; for Eddie Cronin is no longer a logger of the Oregon woods.

He has become a middleweight fighter under the management of Mr. William Burton. Plain Bill Burton, to you.

On the long ride to town, next day, Eddie makes a crack I didn't think of again i.. a long while.

"I told you," he says, "I had no ring fighting. I did fight in a ring for money—just once. It was in Millville. A show got up by us boys for the fire department fund. I was paid fifteen dollars for fighting with ———."

"You sound as if you're confessing a murder!" I cheep. "Put Millville behind you."

BACK in Portland, I'm crazy to get my boy going. But I'm up against it, bad, for money. I hit up Wolf Reese.

"I picked up a live prospect in the tall timber," I urge. "He's a lulu. Too green to start, y'know. If I had a couple of hundred dollars to tide me over till I can train him a few weeks, I know he'll—"

"For your own sake, Bill, send him back," Wolf shuts me off. "Those guys that are gorillas with a peavey in their dukes aren't so hot, nine times out of nine, in the ring."

"But, Wolf—this guy's different. I know he is. I hate to do it, but I'll sell you half his contract for two hundred seeds."

"No."

"For *one* hundred, Wolf."

"No."

And that's that. The kid and I do manage to eat—him especially, as he has to keep up his strength. I've turned fifty years, but I'm a robust old brute; and I got some heavy day labor that gave me many a pain and ache, and also gave us the pennies to keep in fair standing with a cheap restaurant, a cheaper hotel, and a not-so-cheap gymnasium.

I'll bet my left ear that never has a novice soaked up real ring class quicker'n Eddie Cronin did. He only had to do a thing once to learn it—and twice to never forget it! It was a joy to watch him.

Well, this has been going on a few weeks, and I'm beginning to figure I'll try to get the kid a fight shortly, when one afternoon Wolf Reese happens into the gym while Eddie's working full blast.

The boy catches Wolf's expert eye. I see him ask somebody who the kid is. I hike over with my chest out like a pigeon's.

"That's the guy I found out in the woods," I enjoy pointing out. "The one I offered you a half-interest in for two hundred seeds—then one hundred."

"He looks good to me," he cheers. "Sold—at two hundred!"

"Not *now,*" I chill him. "Not for two hundred—nor five hundred."

"Getting independent, huh?"

"You bet I am," I proclaim, "since I've been spraining my back loading ships to get that way."

He walks away, scowling. I figure he's simply annoyed at not having his own way, and'll soon forget Eddie Cronin's alive. But that night he comes to our dingy hotel and talks cold turkey—with Eddie shooed out of the room.

"I like that boy, Bill," he speaks bluntly. "He's a comer. And I'm the guy that can help him. I pretty near run the fight game in this neck of the woods, don't I?"

"No argument, Wolf. You do."

"Well, Bill," he proposes, "I'll pay you, right now, one thousand *cash* for a half interest in Eddie. Three-year contract."

"Three-year contract!" I sniff. "And when the three years are up, you'll freeze me out of my half on a new contract. Nice!"

Wolf's face goes ugly. "You'll take that," he grates, "and like it. See? Or you won't get nowhere with him. You won't box in Portland at all, and in other places I'll see your luck is none too good. I've got influence—"

Wolf stopped talking because I made a social error. I didn't know it then, but I learned since that it's all wrong, when a guy is visiting you in your room, to bust him in the beak and break it.

I SPILLED the whole story to Eddie.

"Whatever you do is okay with me," he says. "Maybe, though, you should 'a' grabbed that thousand. I may be a flop."

"You might be *here,* just now," I concede. "Wolf Reese is a big shot here, but only a name other places. We're grabbing a train for Seattle tonight."

In Seattle, getting a fight was simple. Eddie worked out a time or two, at Austin & Bishop's; and the class he showed would've got him a special event at nice money!

We didn't take it. I wanted to break Eddie in on a slow and sure basis. I took the lowest bout on the bill at thirty bucks. And we were perfectly satisfied to find ourselves settled in a corner of the great Seattle Ice Arena ring, set to pry the lid off a show versus another thirty-buck fighter: the Bellingham Kid.

There was only one drawback crimping the Bellingham Kid's ring career, namely and to wit: He couldn't fight. The melancholy cast of countenance of his manager testified that he was in on the knowledge.

"Eddie," I croon, "this guy's rotten. We're using him to make a hit. You're going two rounds with this tramp. First round, you *box* 'im. Step around; show your speed; make him miss. Second round, you'll step out and knock him stiff. That's the program that sends the fans home talking."

"All right, Bill," he says, and his voice is tense and sharp. "You bet."

"Don't be nervous," I warn. "He's nobody. He's—"

The gong cord is pulled. Eddie's out like a deer—popping three beautiful lefts to the Bellingham Kid's map before that truck-horse knows what's coming. And the Kid covers too late to muff Eddie's right cross—it spins the Kid half around, off balance.

The crowd comes to its feet with a booming roar—which it always does when the opening bout starts off in a tornado of action. The building quivers!

And then I yell, *"Look out!"*

Eddie seems strangely bewildered. He stops short, right when he should have piled in. He stares—hesitant. And the Bellingham Kid, who's as strong as he is slow and dumb, awakes to his chance and fetches a fierce haymaker from the floor. It lands flush on Eddie's unguarded face.

I can't believe it! The referee has to whoop at me twice to climb in and get my kayoed logger.

I GET Eddie downtown and to bed. I don't ask a single question, leaving it to him to pick his own time to talk. He does, next morning, haltingly, in a voice as flat as a cracked bell's:

"I should've made you listen to me before, Bill. I haven't been fair to you —when you could've got a thousand for half of me. I've always loved to box, ever since I was a tiny kid. And I always could lick any kid my size. I could give away age and weight, and lick nearly every kid I knew. Just had a knack for it. . . . About three years ago—I was eighteen—us volunteer fire department boys in Millville put on a boxing show to raise money. That was the show I tried to tell you about. I boxed in the main event with another young guy who worked in the mill: Jud Crain. . . . Crain and I had boxed a dozen times, for fun. I had it on him. He was heavier-built, but I was so much faster and could guess his moves ahead so easily that I knew I could always lick him in a real battle for blood. . . . The boys put up a fifteen-dollar prize for the main event winner. Well, the minute I got into that ring, with everybody in the whole country there to stare at me, I began to get nervous. . . . When the fight started, with all those people bellowing at us, I just went to pieces—blew up like a baseball pitcher. Just couldn't fight a lick. Jud Crain simply beat the tar out of me. . . . I felt terrible about it—more because I got kidded a lot. I thought maybe I was yellow, and that made me feel like killing myself. To settle that in my mind, I took the first chance to put the gloves on with Jud Crain again, out in my dad's garage, with nobody to see us but a couple of young fellows. . . . I asked Jud to cut loose and try to lick me. And, Bill, I licked him easy! He couldn't lay a glove on me square enough to hurt me. And I wasn't the least bit afraid of him. . . . I knew then that I wasn't yellow, but that the crowd had got my goat. After that I steered clear of any public boxing. When you came along and wanted to sign me, I felt like telling you this. You didn't want to listen —and it wasn't anything I craved to talk about. . . . Tonight, Bill, the same feeling got me. I could take that awful palooka I fought out behind the hall and lick him with one hand behind my back. But the crowd licked me—all *he* had to do was push me over. . . . Did you ever hear of such a thing, Bill?"

Had I? Plenty of times! Though I didn't tell Eddie that. I'd seen plenty like Eddie. Gymnasium fighters, we call 'em. Guys who are world beaters in the gym, but flops in the actual ring of battle.

That's why smart gamblers never pay much attention to how a fighter looks in training. What counts is how he fights in the *ring*. It isn't yellowness. Not a bit of it! It's something else. And it's generally considered hopeless.

"I guess," Eddie concludes miserably, "I'm a failure. I'd better pack my grip and go back to the old sawmill."

"Pipe down on that talk, son," I snap him up. "It'll take us a little time, but we'll get you over it. Nothing so funny about your trouble, Eddie. Nearly all stage actors, I hear, get bothered something fierce with stage-fright in their early days. They just outlive it, you might say—train themselves out of it. That's what you're going to do."

I talk so boldly I nearly convince myself!

FIRST off, Eddie Cronin, fighter, and Bill Burton, manager, just naturally vanish out of the Pacific Coast fight picture. Easy to do. We don't leave much of a vacancy.

A month later, in a middle-sized Montana burg, Eddie boxes again. But he's wearing a new name. We call him Johnny Smith. This is Eddie's first fight since leaving Seattle. We're fighting before a little crowd of less'n two hundred, for the price of three medium-sized bags of peanuts, against a terrible mug.

I'll never forget the tense feeling I had before that fight started. Eddie was

going red and white by turns, he was that scared he'd go paralyzed.

"Easy does it, boy," I soothe him. "Nothing to get in a sweat about in this village. Just a handful of roughneck miners. They don't know who you are —don't care. No more people than you'd have watching in a gym. You're fighting a tramp. Just a workout!"

He swallows, trying to speak.

And the bell rings—and I have to push Eddie off his stool.

He goes out, stumbling—and I groan, for he *is* paralyzed!

He throws up his hands mechanically and heaves a punch, but the act is so forced and sluggish that the mug he's fighting dodges, making Eddie miss by a foot, and busts Eddie one in the mouth that jars him back on his heels and sends a trickle of blood down his chin.

Eddie covers, and the mug drives him into the ropes, dropping a right to the mid-section that forces a grunt from Eddie.

Desperate, Eddie breaks through and clinches. They wrestle around, the mug crazy to throw Eddie off and finish him. The ref pushes between 'em.

Frantic—scared—Eddie strikes out blindly. One of his wild wallops thuds alongside the mug's dome. The guy hits the deck and rolls over.

Waiting for him to get up, Eddie seems to shed a mite of his stage-fright. The sight of an opponent on the floor somehow steadies him. And Eddie begins boxing—uncertainly and erratic-like, but still consciously *boxing*—when the sobered mug comes up and at him again.

By the end of the round, Eddie is commencing to take hold of the situation.

"Good boy!" I praise him.

He leans back, draws a gusty breath.

"I thought I was a goner," he says, weakly. "Lucky he didn't finish me before I got untracked! I think I'm set, Bill. It's like swimming in icy water—an awful shock at first, not so bad when you warm up to it."

"Sure, Eddie—now show this punk how to fight."

Which Eddie did. And how! In the second round his nervousness pretty well wore off. He lost his stride a time or two when the little crowd got extra fiery and loud, but he carried the fight to the mug and handed him a nifty lacing.

In the third Eddie was almost his old gymnasium self. In other words, the bout ceased to be a contest. Eddie hammered the poor fellow to death, and the referee stopped it.

That gives you the idea of the system of cure. The next six months in our lives can be boiled down to a sentence: Eighteen fights, each one a little stiffer, before a crowd a little bigger than the previous one.

The eighteenth fight was in San Francisco, with Eddie boxing in the semi-windup of an important card, before a thumping big crowd of whooping fans—and, believe me, the San Francisco fans can whoop.

The ordeal didn't raise Eddie's pulse a single beat. Cool, crafty, with his mind on the business in hand, Eddie didn't seem to hear the mob, nor to notice its size at all. At one point the mob thought Eddie had fouled his man—though he hadn't—and they gave him a fierce razzing. Even that didn't faze him!

Incidentally, Eddie was boxing six rounds with Lew Teagle, a New York flash rated as tough meat for any middleweight. Eddie snared four of the six heats, winning without a dissenting vote.

"Kid," I sum up happily, "I'd say you're cured of the buck fever, or whatever ailed you. You won't fight guys much tougher'n Teagle, anywhere; you won't face audiences much bigger and noisier—anywhere. To my notion, you're ready to fight anybody, any time, any place."

"Didn't somebody say once"—Eddie's eyes are dancing—"that we couldn't hope to fight in Portland—ever?"

"Wolf Reese," I grin, "should have a chance to make that good, Eddie."

BACK in Portland again—under his right name—Eddie sets the rail-birds abuzz with his flashy gym work-outs; and he keys up the interest of Ira Payne, who's Wolf Reese's main promoting rival.

Ira invites us to his den, and breaks out the two-bit cigars.

"I want Eddie," he expands, "for a main event. Trouble right now is to find a first-class boy to toss in with him. I don't know just where to— Excuse me, gents," he breaks off, as the phone jangles.

He talks, and listens, and hangs up the phone, smiling oddly.

"That was Wolf Reese, boys," he says. "He knows you're here, and he's coming over."

Well, I look for Wolf Reese to do anything but the thing he does when he arrives: He eats humble pie most gracefully!

"Hello, Bill," he purrs. "Howsa boy, Eddie? Hope you don't nurse a grudge over the little spat we had once. You know—a man will lose his temper. I don't blame you for hooking up with Ira, here, 'stead of coming to me. I'm not here to try to entice you away. Here's *my* problem: Ajax Sherman—you know, the great New York promoter—is sending a high-class boy out here for a series of bouts. Wants me to handle him while he's on the Coast. The boy is Bud Snow. I've been trying to think up a good match for him here in Portland. Stuck for another real main-eventer. Then I hear Bill and Eddie are in town, ready to work for you, Ira. I thought maybe you'd like to match Snow with Eddie. Fine with me if you'll use Snow in one of your shows. I'll get my cut out of his purse."

Ira lifts his shoulders. "Seems to solve our problem, too, if Bill is agreeable."

They look at me. I've never seen Bud Snow, but I've read a bit about him in the papers and seen his picture. I know he's a good fighter, but no better'n Eddie.

"Suits me, I guess," I agree. "Business is business."

When we scrambled through the ropes for the Bud Snow brawl, it thrilled me to see how Eddie's rep had helped fill that arena to the rafters! He was an audience-pleaser, that kid. And Eddie's marvelous spirit gave me a far keener thrill. He hardly glanced at the boisterous mob; just sat down in our corner, completely relaxed, eyes half closed.

We were in the ring first. Snow came along promptly. I recognized his bullet head and thick shoulders from newspaper photos.

"This'll be too hot a night for Snow; he'll melt fast," I wisecrack to Eddie. "I bet we— Why, what's the matter?"

Eddie's eyes were bulging, big as duck eggs.

"*Snow!*" he yelps. "Who said that guy is named Snow? That's—that's Jud Crain, Bill. The Millville logger. The bird I fought with in the ring back home. I know him."

"He may be Jud Crain," I explain, worried, "but his ring name is Snow, Eddie. I remember his picture."

"He always said he'd be a fighter," says Eddie, sort of recovering his poise. "I haven't seen him in three years, I reckon. I guess he went East, got started, and stayed there till now."

"Eddie," I demand, "is this going to bother you tonight?"

"Not by a little bit, Bill! If Wolf Reese has stuck his nose into my past and schemed this to get my goat, he's in for a sweet evening. I'll knock Jud Crain into his lap!"

THE first bell proves both of 'em as bold as brass—and eager to have at it. It's a grudge fight before the round's half gone! Eddie takes the play at the start. Snaps two jaw-lefts quick as a wink—and as quick as a wink Eddie knows he's in there with a dangerous playmate.

Jud Crain—it was Crain, right enough—wasn't a pretty fighter, but he was a mean one to work on. He had shorter

arms than Eddie, and so worked in close; but could hit with gosh-awful force and blinding speed.

Eddie thought he had slipped out of reach after his second jab to Crain's face. Yet Crain's lashing right counter caught Eddie in the ribs and knocked him down. Knocked him down clean!

Eddie bounced up, not hurt at all. That little experience demonstrated that Crain moved mighty fast—for all that he didn't look it—and that he was the kind of fighter the word "tough" was invented for.

They don't come along faster than Eddie Cronin. And Eddie was hard put to hold his leeway for long-range boxing. He peppered Crain's map plenty with his educated left. But Eddie simply couldn't hold him off all the time, or outrun him.

They had some rousing blizzards of infighting toward the close of the canto. The crowd screeched whenever Crain got inside, figuring he'd tear my slimmer boy to pieces.

But he didn't. Eddie tied up Crain's arms pretty well in the clinches, and got home his share of bread-basket nudges. And Eddie, I hope I've given you to understand, could punch, himself.

It was some round! When the bell sent the boys to their corners, everybody in that hall knew a *fight* was in progress.

I was in the ring with Eddie's stool before the echo of the gong died away. I hadn't once, since we'd entered the ring, looked behind me. And so it surprised me when Eddie, coming toward me, pointed over my shoulder.

"Look there, Bill," he says. "Look at that whole block of empty seats behind our corner, all in a bunch—thirty of 'em, if there's one. And the rest of the hall's filled!"

I'm not impressed. "A gang of pals have bought seats together, and they're late," I comment. "What's the difference? How's the legs, Eddie? Lemme work on 'em. You've got to keep stepping with this guy!"

I massage the pins; and Eddie oozes confidence: "Crain's sure learned a lot, and got stronger, since we were kids," he tells me. "But I'll lick 'im again tonight."

"Don't get careless," I caution him. "That guy's got steel springs in his knees and dynamite in his dukes."

"I've got as good a chance as he has, maintains Eddie.

And so Eddie did have, until the bell rang. During the rest period, unobserved by us, that block of thirty seats had filled. The instant after the gong lifted Eddie off his seat, a concentrated yell burst from the newcomers:

"Cronin!" they howled. "Hey, you—Eddie Cronin!"

Eddie glanced back, startled. His wide eyes took in the faces of thirty of his old home-towners.

"Look out for Jud!" screamed the loudest-voiced. "Look out! He'll lick you again!"

Eddie hadn't time to look out for Jud—he turned to face a man who had been coached for that very situation. Jud had had time to lope across the ring, to set himself, to unleash the power in one of those thick shoulders. And Eddie spun about into the stunning shock of Jud Crain's right hand.

The poor kid was unconscious, I guess, before he hit the floor. He was unconscious, I don't have to guess, for quite a while after I lifted him off that floor.

WHILE I'm treating the boy's ghastly headache, Ira Payne storms into our dressing-room, so mad he just splutters.

"You snakes!" he rages. "You faked—and don't hand me any alibis. You've boxed in a show of mine for the last time. The fans will hold this against *me* for months."

He beats it, refusing to listen to me. Poor Eddie is all broken up.

Then a messenger boy brings in a note: "When I say I'll get a guy, I go to enough trouble to get him." It's un-

signed, but we know Wolf Reese wants the full satisfaction of our knowing he's the guy who's crimped us.

It was certain Reese had kept closer track of us than anyone would have suspected. Evidently he'd learned all there was to be found out about Eddie; and then, when—by what chance I don't know—he got wise that Bud Snow and Jud Crain were the same guy, Wolf was quick to take devilish advantage.

No doubt it was mighty easy to get a gang of Millville gazabos to march in behind our corner between rounds, and yell all together on signal, in return for free seats and their railroad fare.

It seemed the worst had happened—but we had one last pill to swallow: Just before we were ready to leave the dressing-room, in came Abraham Martinsen. Abe Martinsen was a millionaire sportsman. A boxing enthusiast, and absolutely on the square. Crooked boxers feared him, and honest boxers respected him. They had to—he was chairman of the state boxing commission. A power unto himself.

"I'm not here," he says harshly, "to condemn you men as much as I am to pity you. Let me tell you that you won't box again in Oregon so long as I'm commission chairman. I intend to communicate with the boxing authorities of other states. I will endeavor to have you barred nationally."

It was a threat to make a man shiver!

Yes, sir!

He turned to go—and then said, almost sadly: "I was old enough to appreciate fights in Sullivan's day, and Corbett's and Jeffries. I guess my generation has gone. The game is a business, now. Fights are pre-arranged. I've known the day when a man could bet his last cent on an admired fighter, knowing that while his man might be beaten, he wouldn't fake. He'd get an honest run for his money."

I tried to argue, but he walked out on me.

Eddie doesn't like to admit it, now, but he cried like a baby half that night. I felt like it, too, only I couldn't take the time out. Somebody had to do some rocky pondering.

I GAVE Abe Martinsen a day to cool off, then crashed the gate to his big downtown office.

"No use crawling to me," he snaps. "You know how I feel."

"Who's crawling to you?" I come back. "I've been thinking of your big beef: You moan over the good old days—huh? The he-man days of tough fighters and finish fights—huh? You mourn the days when a red-blooded sport could back a red-blooded glove hero with his coin, and have the thrill of a real bet on an honest fight—huh? Well, Martinsen, I'm here to drag one of the old days to you, down through the years. Will you back Eddie Cronin, for ten thousand dollars, against the fighter known as Bud Snow, in a private fight?"

He smiles wryly. "And Eddie can lose, and split with Snow the money I drop?"

At that, I cut loose and spill the whole yarn about Eddie, about as I've told it to you to this point. When I get through, Martinsen's very white but very strong hands are gripping his desk.

"If I can be sure," he says fiercely, "that you're on the level, I'll back Eddie Cronin in a finish fight for twenty thousand dollars—for fifty thousand! The money's nothing; I've got more money than I'll ever need. And I've been longing for years to see two modern fighters forget business and fight it out!"

"You can't be sure," I say flatly, "that I'm on the level. I can't prove it. That'll have to be part of your gamble."

He sits still a minute, frowning. Then he jumps up. "It's on," he says. "Let's go see Wolf Reese."

Boy!—that Martinsen was an energetic go-getter. Reese is staggered by the size of the proposal—fifty thousand. It'll pinch him to raise it; but his fox mind concludes it'll set him on easy street to win it.

"We'll draw a contract, sign it before a lawyer and notary," Wolf says. "The contract has got to say that I'm in charge of arrangements. That I name the place and the time to fight. That private fight means that there has to be not more'n fifty and not less than fifteen people to see it, outside of us and the fighters. Got to have official witnesses, y'know."

Martinsen shies. Taking me aside: "He wants to make suckers of us," he whispers. "Make Eddie fight in front of that goat-getting gang of home birds!"

"Leave it to me," I plead. "I've got one ace to play."

Martinsen gives in. No quitter—that guy!

"Wolf," I debate, "you're getting your way almost a hundred per cent. Is it clear that the fight is to be to a finish, without rounds—no time out? They fight till one or the other can't continue?"

"Just the way we like it," Wolf agrees.

"One more thing," I propose: "I don't trust you—you don't trust me. Now, after the fight's over, one of us is likely to crab that some rule wasn't carried out. Let's put a final clause which says the fight is on, and that the bets stand, so long as both fighters, both managers, and Mr. Martinsen, all declare they are ready and willing to fight?"

"We'll put that in," he answers, cunningly, "providing the witnesses, not less than fifteen, are present."

Which was the best I could do.

And which left Abe Martinsen worried.

EDDIE trains in Portland, at the gym of a private club to which Martinsen belongs.

Jud Crain and Reese fade out.

Eddie looks good and feels so great that Martinsen quits fretting. Eddie knows the only thing he can't whip is a crowd.

So, when the blow falls, it's *wicked*. White-faced, Eddie comes to me one evening with a letter. His hands shake so he can't read it aloud to me. I snatch it. Cute of Wolf Reese to have written the thing to Eddie personally! Reese says:

DEAR EDDIE:

Having charge of arrangements, I've tried to please us all. I know you'll be tickled to box in the old I. O. O. F. hall, in your old home town of Millville, before a little group of fifty official witnesses who are your old neighbors. The date, the fifteenth.

WOLF.

"He's got us," groans Eddie. "The contract we signed is with him. He knows he can get my goat. I think—"

"Stop thinking," I order. "That's the manager's business. You pack your grip, while I phone Martinsen."

The evening train carries a heart-sick boxer, a despondent backer, and a just so-so cheerful manager toward Millville.

When we got there, I almost wished I hadn't forced that move. Reese had dished a lot of dirty propaganda—for the little kids in the streets curled their lips as we trudged past. Poor Eddie!

We settled for the night in a cabin I had rented on the outskirts of town. To say much in few words, nobody slept.

Eddie's up first. He goes to the door and throws it open for a lungful of air—and the wild-Indian yell he lets out jerks Martinsen and me from our cots.

Eddie is pointing to a square yard of cloth, draped on an evergreen tree thirty yards from the cabin. The banner is yellow—a sickly yellow. On it are painted letters in darker yellow:

A FLAG FOR EDDIE
IN HIS OWN COLOR
FROM HIS OLD PALS

"Yellow! They're calling me yellow!" shrieks Eddie. "Everybody in town! It's Reese's work. His and Jud Crain's."

He whirls on Abe Martinsen: "Go call off your bet," he raves. "Call off the fight. I can't fight Jud Crain in *this* town, before the people of this town—

with everybody jeering at me. I can't! I'll blow up!"

"Eddie," I remark calmly, "we're doing road work this morning."

He subsides, gloomy but obedient. After a bit, when we're ready, "Coming, of course?" I ask Martinsen.

"I guess not," he sighs. "I don't feel like—"

"So you want to quit, too!" I sneer. "You with your bold talk of the old *game* days."

Flushing, he pulls a sweater over his head. We set off.

I lead the way, on a course which leads downhill the first few hundred yards. We start off easy. No one has drawn a deep breath when, on rounding a turn in the path through the trees, we all stop short as if we'd brought up against a fence.

It was more of an obstacle than a fence: We had come face to face with a party of three men, who also had been running, and who stopped as suddenly as we had. They were Mr. Jud Crain, Mr. Wolf Reese and a third party—a trainer.

We all stand and gaze, like strange bird-dogs. I grab the spotlight. I pull from inside my sweater and unfold a square of cloth—it's the yellow sign off the evergreen tree.

Eddie goes crazy! He tears the cloth from my fingers, rips it to bits—and winds up by leaping on Wolf Reese and ramming a shred of the yellow material into his mouth.

"Eat it!" he screams. "Eat it, or I'll—"

What an uproar that started! Jud Crain sprang on Eddie, hurling him off Wolf Reese. Reese, spitting out the cloth, was so mad he just wheezed and bleated.

"Kill 'im, Jud!" Reese bawls, finally. "Tear his head off!"

And Eddie, still madder at being shoved about by Crain, inflames that guy by slapping him across the mush.

I leap between the squared-off fighters.

"Hold on!" I holler. "Reese—wait! These fools may hurt each other. I want no lawsuits for assault. Are you willing for Crain to fight?"

"Want 'im to fight?" rails Wolf. "I want 'im to *kill* that—"

"Let 'er go!" I hoot, scuttling out of the way. "Okay."

"Hurray!" whoops Martinsen.

"You've been honing to see an old-fashioned fight, Abe," I yell in his ear. "Well—look your head off; you're seeing one!"

AND maybe he wasn't! Like rabid wildcats the two slashed and tore at each other—ripping, slugging. Toe-to-toe stuff—never breaking apart. A full minute they went that way, I reckon, with no show of science beyond their quickness at seizing openings and the hitting power which comes of ring training.

We were in a little natural clearing in the forest: a circle, about thirty feet in diameter, with a mossy floor, level as a ring platform.

Brutal fighting it was—no sight for a woman, or a weak-stomached man. Their bare-knuckled fists cut and broke the flesh, gashing the skin over cheek-bones and eyebrows, raising ugly welts on the body.

It was fighting neither had experienced in the ring, and which neither could endure for long.

The first mad rally ended when a solid lunge to the body drove Eddie back several faltering steps. Crain followed—but slowly. Both were gasping for breath.

Then science began to show. Eddie realized he could not beat Jud Crain on main strength alone. He began to box. He kept Crain at arm's length with snaky lefts, while he stepped swiftly around, getting the feel underfoot of the spongy ground.

The ground was treacherous. Morning dew had made it slippery. Twice Eddie slipped. Each time Crain hurtled into him; but once Eddie ducked a hard swing and slithered clear, and the sec-

ond time he slipped a head punch and clinched.

It was the kind of fighting that keeps your breath tight.

Wolf Reese called shrewd encouragement: "Keep on him all the time, Jud. Boxing points ain't anything in a finish fight."

Eddie smiled grimly. He knew, as I knew, that he had to knock out Jud Crain to beat him—and *how* Eddie wanted to beat him!

A shiver of doubt went through me. It was only too certain that Eddie would tire the earliest, under the strain of taking two steps to Crain's one, eluding his bull rushes.

Then Eddie spoke: "Jud," he inquired, bitingly, "remember how I always licked you, when we fought *this* way?"

Jud said nothing. Eddie blocked a hard swing, leaped away, and barked tauntingly: "Remember, once, Jud, how I beat you by punching your eyes shut, Jud, and licking you blind? Right now, Jud, I'm going to step in and swell your right eye shut with one punch. Watch this!"

And he moved in, feinting rapidly. Crain shifted quickly, set to block a head punch, his own left dropped slyly for a vicious counter. I yelled to warn Eddie he was walking into one—but he struck too soon!

A flurry of fists—a curse—and the tough Jud Crain was flat on his back from the effect of a fearful right hook squarely over his heart. Eddie had crossed him—kidding him into leaving his heart region open to a right.

Eddie stepped back to let Crain get up.

"Stay down as long as you feel like it, Jud," Reese shouted, sensibly. "No time limit, y'know."

But Crain was too sore at the trick to use sense. He struggled up and flung at Eddie. A mistake. The heart punch had taken something out of Crain. Hurt, slowed for the moment, he was a mark for Eddie's one-two.

Jolted to his knees, Crain bellowed hoarse defiance, but this time he was ready to rest and let his head clear and his laboring pump get going. Eddie stood looking down at him, his skinned hands on his hips.

"I'm licking you," says Eddie, deliberately, "like I've always licked you, when we've fought it out, man to man, away from the crowd. You know I'm licking you. You know I'm the best man. That's that. I've got your goat. I'll always have it. As soon as you get up, I'm going to knock you down again."

Wolf Reese tumbled to Eddie's smartness. The man was scared stiff. If Jud Crain got up too soon, dizzy, Eddie would beat him to pieces—and if Crain stayed down long enough to recuperate, Eddie would talk him out of the fight! No doubt about it.

"Get up, Jud!" Reese barked his decision. "Knock his words down his lying throat. Keep right on 'im—no let up!"

Jud heaved up to follow orders. He fought well enough to have deserved a better fate. He crowded Eddie, hit him plenty—hurt him plenty. But it was Eddie's fight. He outscored Jud two to one. He was fresher, and he stayed fresher.

Little by little Jud's legs failed him. He needed the rest he didn't dare take. Eddie maintained his deadly pace—leaping in, knifing home punches, leaping away, ahead of Crain's lusty counters, out-stepping, out-boxing, out-thinking his tired opponent.

It was only at the very end that I realized the gameness of Eddie Cronin—after he had knocked Jud Crain so cold with a terrific hook to the chin that even Wolf Reese was convinced.

"That's enough," Wolf conceded sourly. "Crain's done."

And then—right then, Eddie Cronin kneeled over in a faint. A faint of dead exhaustion.

And I hadn't suspected he was even badly tired!

ABE MARTINSEN let out a breath he'd been holding since the middle of the fight.

"I'm satisfied," he says. "This'll be the real fight to me, no matter if we lose in the official fight next week. I've had my money's worth!"

Wolf Reese, working on his senseless man, looks up.

"Lucky you liked it, Martinsen," he growls. "You won't see anything you like when that punk gym fighter gets up in front of a gang of—"

"The fight next week?" I cut in. "Don't be saps! The fight has just been held—here. The private fight we agreed on."

"Are you *crazy?*" Reese is on his feet. "Doesn't the contract put arrangements in my *sole* charge. Haven't I arranged for the fight next week in the town hall? Think I'd bet fifty grand against Eddie Crain less'n I *knew* I could put him on a spot where he wouldn't have a chance? Think I'm a fat-head?"

"Sure, you're a fat-head," I carol. "I believe I had a final clause tacked onto that contract, which provides that this private battle may be held, with the bet legal and binding, at any time and place agreed upon by both fighters and both managers and Mr. Martinsen. When the lads squared off, didn't I ask you and your battler, point-blank, if you wanted to fight, to a finish, here and now? And didn't you both—"

"Bunk!" he scoffs. "I only lost my temper."

"And I," I snort, "am the bozo who arranged this little business, and timed our run so we'd meet you here—and saw to it that you *did* lose your temper."

He is genuinely startled. Then, "Slick!" he jeers. "Very brilliant, Bill. Only not quite brilliant enough. I think that wise final clause of yours includes something about not less than fifteen witnesses."

"Fifteen?" I echo. "Reese—I'm no piker." I let go a shrill whistle. From the woods around us, from behind trees, and from behind the great Northwest woods ferns that are as high as a man, pour a crowd of witnesses. Fully forty of 'em! All citizens of Millville, Oregon, except one guy, who is the stake-holder of the bet.

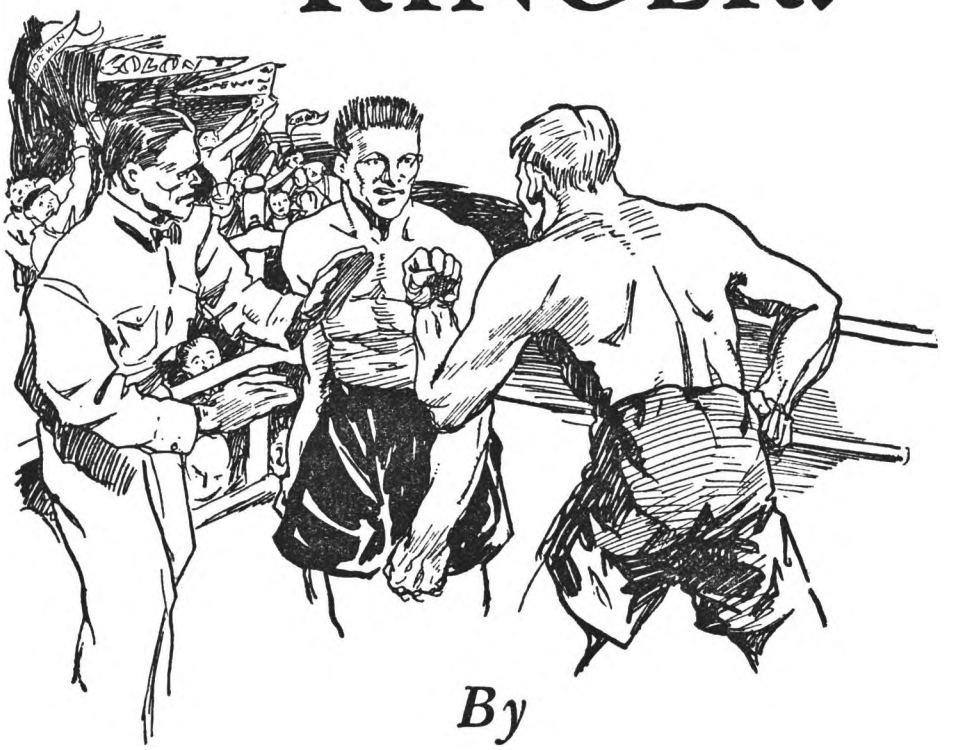
"Here are your witnesses, Wolf," I croon. "You gave me the idea of having Eddie box before his old cronies; and I had to prevent your welching. . . . And, Abe," I turn to our backer, "you'll have to fork over a coupla thousand seeds to these gents. I guaranteed 'em fifty bucks apiece to see the fight and keep their mouths shut while it was on. I expect a clean bill of health with the boxing commission for Eddie and me. The remaining forty-eight thousand is your reward for giving us this opportunity; and I sure do thank you."

"Thank *me!*" squalls the millionaire. "I thank *you.* You've shown me that all real fighters aren't dead, and that all the real fights haven't been fought years since! The forty-eight grand? Heck—I don't want it. You and Eddie plunk it into the company sock. You've earned it. And if my influence means anything, you can fight in any ring in the country. And if Eddie's only a gym fighter, and the public gets tired of him—he can fight all he wants in my gym!"

And that's all there is to that story, except for one little thing, which I didn't tell Abe Martinsen for a year or more, and which I never have told Eddie Cronin: That yellow sign which Eddie spied on the evergreen was painted and hung there by yours truly.

As Napoleon said, sour ills require sour remedies!

RINGER!



By

PASCHAL N. STRONG

Good old Cyclone Sox, pugilism's pride, wends his way to college to demonstrate that the shortest distance between two points is a smack on the jaw.

"SOX," says Gyp to me one day, "did you ever think of going to college?"

"I thought about it for years," I tell him, "but, when I heard that a guy had to go to high school first, it sort of disgusted me. But one of the things my host of admirers like about me is my kind of clean-cut, collegiate appearance, and I shouldn't wonder if they took me for a college man every time I step into the ring."

"Or every time you step out of the ring," says Gyp, which shows that he, too, thinks I'm the college type. "Come into the office and I'll introduce you to a chap who's interested in your higher education."

Now Gyp manages our stables, and, except for his prize heavyweight, I'm his white hope. Of course, Joe, my sidekick, thinks he's the one that Gyp is pinning his hopes on but Gyp and I understand each other, and so it surprises me that he wants me to go to college. When we get to his office, he introduces me to a fine collegiate-looking man whose name is Wade. Mr. Wade is from Hopewin College.

"A mighty fine little college," says Mr. Wade. "A mighty fine place. Just the place which a clean, young man like yourself should attend."

"I once knew a college yell," I tell him, so he wouldn't think I never had any yearning after the better things of life.

"Great!" says Mr. Wade. "Splendid! Wouldn't you like to try a few weeks at Hopewin?"

"I'd sure like to, but I guess Gyp couldn't spare me just now. I got to keep in training for a fight he may get."

"Now isn't that a happy coincidence!" exclaims Mr. Wade. "It just happens that this is the height of our boxing season, and you could join the squad and perhaps participate in our annual meet with Colon Institute. You could keep in training and acquire that indefinable college touch at the same time."

"Don't they have such things as eligibility rules at Hopewin?" asks Gyp.

Mr. Wade looks at Gyp with the scorn which Gyp deserves. "Eligibility rules," he explains, "are for those colleges whose ethics are so low that they have to confine themselves to rigid regulations to keep themselves straight. At Hopewin we require a high scholastic standard of our athletes, and pride ourselves on never paying them."

"You never pay them?" There's a large question in Gyp's voice.

"Never," insists Mr. Wade. "Of course, we meet all legitimate expenses. We naturally wouldn't expect Sox to come up and pay his own way. And perhaps we could extend him a—er—scholarship loan, you understand."

"Sure," says Gyp. "I understand." But I see that he doesn't understand at all. Gyp never had much contact with intellectual life, and he thinks that everybody has the same sordid commercial motives that he has.

"We'd appreciate a splendid young boxer like Sox at Hopewin," continues Mr. Wade. "A boxer we could really call one of our own boys. And isn't it a stroke of luck that we happen to meet Colon Institute so soon? You may not know it, but Colon will stop at nothing to win that meet. They always get some heavyweight mug to pose as a student—absolutely no sense of ethics. But, with a fine chap like Sox in our student body, we feel we can meet them on even ground this year."

"Sox," says Gyp, "there's the lay of the land. If you want to go collegiate, get packed up and Mr. Wade will take you along."

"Don't my sidekick come too?"

"Joe is up-state on another proposition," says Gyp. "Can you survive a week without him?"

"It's tough on Joe," I remind Gyp, because Gyp knows that, without my experience in the ring to help Joe, he is apt to go to pieces.

"Under the circumstances," says Gyp, "Joe won't want to interfere with your college career." He won't say what the circumstances are, but there's a wicked leer in his eye, and I wonder if Joe has been double-crossing me.

"While you are getting packed," says Gyp, "Mr. Wade and I will talk over this matter of the—er—scholarship loan."

HOPEWIN is half a day by rail from the city, and, by the time we get there, Mr. Wade has told me all the secrets of campus life that are hidden from the great, ignorant masses. He tells me so much about the college, which he calls "dear old Hopewin," that I feel I've been going there all my life.

When we finally arrive at Hopewin, he takes me to a room in a real dormitory, and there are regular college pennants on the wall, and pictures of college athletes, and even some books. Mr. Wade is sort of worried about the books.

"Don't let them bother you," he tells me. "They're used by the chap who's your roommate."

"But don't I need books? I got to go to classes and such don't I?"

"Of course, of course," says Mr.

Wade, hastily. "That is, I've got a class card all fixed up for you in case anyone wants to see it. Naturally, however, we're lenient with new students, and, for the first week—say until after the match with Colon—you can just roam around the place and take things easy."

"Now, Mr. Wade, you wouldn't expect me to do a thing like that, would you? I come to college to learn, and I can't let athletics interfere with my studies."

Mr. Wade laughs at this and pats me on the back. "We wouldn't think of such a thing, would we, Sox, old man?" he says, and gives me a wink. "I'll send your class card around tomorrow, and if any snoopy reporters come around, you show it to them. Jack Rivers, your roommate, will bring you around to the gym tomorrow afternoon."

So he leaves me alone in my college room, and I wish I wasn't in training so I could smoke a pipe with a silver H on it that I saw on the table. After a little while another college chap comes in and introduces himself. He is Jack Rivers, and from the way he's glad to see me I know that I'm the real college type.

"Aren't we going to show Colon a thing or two!" he says, as he feels my muscle and looks me over. "We'll teach them to put in ringers when they come up here."

"I'd like to box against Colon," I says. "Just for the sake of dear old Hopewin. D'ye think Mr. Wade will let me?"

Jack looks at me sort of queer, then he breaks out laughing. "That's a rich one," he says. "That's great. You're a good egg, Sox."

"But Mr. Wade says Hopewin makes all its athletes keep a high grade in their studies. My grades mightn't be so good at first, seeing as I've been out of school for a long time."

Jack laughs again at this, and some of the other fellows come in to meet me. They give me an earful of some of the tricks Colon has been using for years to lick us at boxing, and I can tell you it made my blood boil to hear of that low-life Institute importing all sorts of mugs just to get the upper hand on us.

"There are five weights," says one of my classmates. "We're sure of carrying away two, and they're just as sure of another two. That makes the unlimited the deciding match."

It appears that Hopewin hasn't won a heavyweight match since the Pampas Bull knocked the Mauler out of the ring, and, from the way they talked, I guess they were going to let me fight that weight for them, and I told them that, if they did, I'd unleash my famous right punch and lay out that Colon impostor in the first round. "That is," I added, "if my grades are good enough to let me box."

Everyone laughs at this, and someone asks me if I'm really going to attend classes. I guess they thought from my looks that I had had all these studies or something, but I said yes, I was really going to attend and see if anything new had turned up since I left school. Jack Rivers suddenly stops laughing.

"Look here, Sox," he asks, "you aren't serious about going to classes?"

"I sure am," I tell him.

A sudden silence falls on the room, and everyone looks as though the end of the world had come. "What's the matter?" I want to know.

"Well, it's like this," they explain. "Some of the profs aren't quite in on this boxing scheme, you know, and they might wonder why you're starting classes two weeks after the semester began."

"Listen, fellows," says Jack. "Sox doesn't know our rule about not letting new men attend classes the first week they are here. You chaps run along and I'll take care of Sox."

Now I can see right then and there that there's a conspiracy to keep me away from classes so I'll fall down in my grades and won't be able to box. They don't want me to oust their regu-

lar heavyweight. So I keep mum, and don't let on that I'm going to classes the next day if I have to knock down every alleged boxer on their squad.

The fellows leave, and Jack takes me around what we college men call the campus, and gets me a sweater with a big red H on it. He takes me to supper to some club with a Greek name, and I guess he comes from a large family because he's got a lot of brothers there, and after that we hit the hay.

AFTER breakfast the next morning, Mr. Wade comes around and gives me a card. "It's your class card, Sox. It shows you're really a *bona fide* student. Some Colon fellow might be prowling around and ask you about it."

He runs along, and Jack, who had stepped out for a moment, returns. I show him the card. "Did you tell Mr. Wade you were really going to class?" he asks.

"Don't be foolish, Jack. Mr. Wade knew I was going to class or he wouldn't have brought me this card."

Jack sort of groans and takes a look at it. "Geometry 1, French 3, History 2, Sociology 1," he reads out loud. "Well, I've got Geometry 1 this morning, Sox. You might as well come with me. But for Pete's sake don't speak unless the prof spots you and wants to know something. And then tell him you were sick and couldn't prepare the lesson."

"Do you think he'll give me a poor grade?"

"I'm afraid to think at all," says Jack, and he sounds awful miserable.

I guess Geometry 1 was a popular class, because there were lots of fellows there when Jack led me in. The prof, as we call the professors, looked as if he'd been picked off a lemon tree, and Jack looked as though he'd been squeezed through a lemon squeezer.

"You shouldn't have worn that varsity sweater, Sox. It makes you too conspicuous."

"That's all right. I don't mind."

A bell rings and the prof calls the roll. But he doesn't call my name, so I jump up to tell him about it when Jack and a friend grab hold of me and yank me down. The prof peers over my way and says something about having a review. "And our first proposition is that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points. Will that young gentleman in the sweater go to the board and prove this."

Jack groans again, and everybody looks at me. Now one of the things that make me so dangerous in the ring is my poker face. I can bluff. So I go to the board and look at the prof with my poker face.

"Well," he says, "go ahead."

"Go ahead and what?"

"Go ahead and prove that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points."

"Between what two points?"

"Between any two points," he says, impatient like, and puts two dots on the blackboard. He marks A after one and B after another. "Now prove that a straight line is the shortest distance between A and B."

"Why, anybody can see that," I tell him. "All you have to do is to look at it."

"Perhaps," he says coldly. "But it is susceptible of geometric proof."

"You don't have to prove it," I tell him again. "Any poor nut can tell it's so."

The class laughs and the prof gets red and bites his lip. "Suppose," he says, "that for the sake of argument I say it's not so."

"You say that a straight line is not the shortest distance between A and B?"

"For the sake of argument, yes."

"You can't pick an argument with me. If you don't know that a straight line is the shortest—why, if it wasn't, everybody would be using detours instead of the main road."

I get a large hand at this, and turn around and mitt the crowd. The prof

draws himself up like a little traffic cop who's almost been bumped by a bus, and roars at me, "Young man, do you know what a proposition is?"

"Sure I do. I came here on a proposition."

"You—you colossal ignoramus," he stutters, but I edge up to him and tell him where to get off. "Listen, bo," say I. "I came here to learn something, not to be insulted by a two-by-four who don't even know that a straight line is the shortest way from where you start to where you're going. And one thing more—" But I never got to tell him that one thing more. Jack and three or four other fellows surround me and haul me out of the room, out of the building, and there we are on the campus just like a bunch of college fellows going somewhere.

"I'm through," I tell 'em. "I don't have to come here to learn something I already know, and to be insulted by a runt who don't know that a straight line is shorter than a detour. I'm leaving."

"But, Sox, you wouldn't let us down, would you?" pleads Jack.

"Watch me," I answer.

"Sox, look at these venerable old buildings, at this noble campus. This is our school, Sox. My school and your school. It has sent her sons into the world to carry on for generations. Can we do less, old man? Can we, her sons of today, let the torch die out? Can we let her glorious banner trail in the dust? I ask you, Sox, can we?"

I gulp. Somehow I hadn't thought of it just that way. Jack's voice gets low and solemn all of a sudden.

"This is our *alma mater,* Sox. Its old graduates have hewn the way for us, the way to a cleaner and finer life. After us come unborn generations. Shall we let them say that in her hour of need we failed our *alma mater?* Shall we let them point the finger of scorn at us for quitting under fire, for surrendering the citadel without a struggle? Can we, Sox, old man?"

I grip his hand. "I'll stay, Jack," I tell him quietly. That's all. Just a plain "I'll stay, Jack." But I guess Jack sensed the restrained feeling behind it, for he claps me on the back, and the other fellows shake my hand and call me a true son of dear old Hopewin. And only you fellows who have been to college can know what that means. So I pull out my class card to see where I go next. Jack snatches it from me.

"No more of that," he says playfully. "I see it all now. There's a conspiracy here, Sox. All of the profs in your classes are graduates of Colon. They'll flunk you if you give them the chance. They don't want you to fight in that bout next week. No, no, Sox. You've got to obey our rules here and stay away from classes for the first week."

"But Mr. Wade says we athletes have got to keep a high scholastic standard."

"Now don't worry about that, Sox. You come over to the gym this afternoon and I'll see that you get a chance to make the squad."

JACK is a good guy, all right, so I leave things in his hands, and that afternoon we go over to the gym. Mr. Wade is there and introduces me to the boxing coach. "A new candidate for your unlimited class," he says, and it seemed to me that he winked at the coach. "Maybe you can use him against Colon."

"We'll give him a chance," says the coach, and they both laugh.

I get into my togs, and the coach introduces me to Bill Hoag, the Hopewin heavyweight. "Would you two like to spar a little?" he suggests.

Bill doesn't look a bit enthusiastic, and I reckon he's afraid I'll take his place in the big meet with Colon. But he puts on leather—and, when you put on leather in college boxing, you put on plenty of it—and we step through the ropes.

All the boxers from the 115-pounders up gather around, and I guess they expect to see their prize heavyweight do

me up right. So I get down to business right away, and, after slipping a couple to the bread basket to get Hoag's guard down, I drive in a bell-ringer to the button and they carry him off the canvas. The coach is sort of peeved.

"Listen, you mug," he says. "How are you going to keep in practice if you knock out the only guy who can spar with you?"

"Practice for that Colon simp?" I ask, contemptuous like.

"If you think the Institute is going to have some amateur set-up in the unlimited, you're going to get fooled," he says. "I don't know who they'll have, but he'll be plenty good."

"Listen, bo," I tell him. "I'm Cyclone Sox, and, if you've never heard of me, you've no business running a college stable. Don't you worry about that unlimited class."

The coach takes a look at Hoag, who is just seeing the light of day again. "Maybe you're right," he admits. "You stick around and keep away from the profs."

That's just what I do. I decided my higher education can wait until I get through with that Colon impostor, and Mr. Wade seems to feel the same way about it, too. In the mornings I get kind of lonely for Joe, who's away somewhere without me to advise him, but in the afternoons I help the coach with the four fellows who are fighting in the lighter classes, and spar a little with Hoag.

The college is just about going nuts over the fight, and it sure makes me proud to know that my classmates are looking to me to uphold the honor of dear old Hopewin. It sort of gets under a guy's skin, this love for his *almer mortar,* and I know in advance it's just too bad for this heavyweight from Colon. It's a tough break for him that Hopewin has a *bona fide* student like myself to wear her colors.

The fight is scheduled for Saturday night, and the Colon squad pulls in that morning. But they hustle 'em all over to a hotel, and we turn the gym over to them in the afternoon, so I don't get a chance to look over their ringer who's in for such a terrible evening. He doesn't appear when the match starts, so I figure he's just a cheap grandstand fifth-rater who likes to make a spectacular appearance just before his fight begins.

The gym is packed with students from both Hopewin and Colon, and even if I weren't a son of Hopewin I could tell that the Colon aggregation was a lot of tramps and such, hardly worthy to be called collegians. Their fighters, too, were of the same low class. If we hadn't been handicapped by our high scholastic requirement, we could have won the match before the unlimited started. But we only won two of the first four matches, so it was up to me to carry forward the torch of the old school.

I get into the ring and wait for the Colon heavy to appear, and the Hopewin fellows stand up and nearly raise the roof with their cheering.

Someone taps me on the shoulder, and, when I turn around, there is Joe staring me in the face. "Holy Mackerel!" I exclaim. "What are you doing here?"

"Same thing you are, I guess," he grins. "I'm fighting for Colon."

It takes me a moment to find words. "Joe," I say, and there's more sorrow than anger in my voice, "do you mean to stand there and tell me you're a ringer for that cheap bunch from Colon?"

"Look here, Sox," he says, flying off the handle for no reason at all, "I'll have you know that Colon Institute is one of the best colleges in the East. You and your low-lifers at Hopewin think you can put in a professional and lick us, eh? We'll show you a thing or two."

"I'm a regular student. D'ya get that?" I retort, sticking my fist under his nose. "I attend lectures and what all, and if you think Colon is in the same class with Hopewin, I'll knock your thoughts right."

"Here, here," interrupts the referee. "You chaps get back to your corners

and put on leather. This is a boxing match, not a prize fight."

"Huh," says Joe and I in the same breath.

We go back to our seconds, and soon the fight is ready to begin. The whole gym is keyed up, and half the fellows are going to have light pocketbooks when the fight is over. It's too bad for Joe that he had to be up against me, and I would have let him off easy if he hadn't insulted old Hopewin. But no man can get away with that sort of thing when good old Cyclone Sox is around.

WHEN we start the first round, I see that Joe is good and mad and that's just like Joe because he always gets mad for no reason at all. Now, one of the things that makes me so dangerous in the ring is that I can play the other fellow's game, so, when I see that Joe is going to put on a crude exhibition of brutality, I crawl into my arms and elbows and let the storm break.

The Colon mob starts cheering, which is very poor college etiquette because you only cheer between the rounds, and, anyway, it shows how little they know about boxing because Joe's not doing a thing except losing his energy on my guard and maybe getting in one or two good licks at the most.

Joe doesn't know any better than to keep on fighting this way, so I finally go into a clinch to show him he can't hammer a veteran pugilist like myself. He is still feeling nasty, and says so while the referee tries to pull us apart. "And besides," he adds, "I think Hopewin College is the last word in nothing at all. Hiring a professional to lick us!"

Now that was where Joe made a mistake. If he wanted to keep this fight on a nice, gentlemanly level, he shouldn't have said that. He should have known that Hopewin was dearer to me than honor itself. So I break out of the clinch and show him what a great place Hopewin is.

I smash a battering ram to his jaw and wing over a wicked hook with the southpaw. He comes back with a couple of jabs and a belly-buster, but I take 'em in my stride and resume operations on his torso. I pound a few to the short ribs, slip another left to the ear, and wind up with a navy double which leaves him the worse for wear.

In the excitement, the Hopewin fellows forget a little college etiquette, too, and shout for me to finish the Colon impostor. But I can't forget the years that Joe and I struggled together until at last came success, so I ease up, hoping that Joe now understands what a fine place Hopewin is. But Joe always has been stubborn, and, just as soon as I back-pedal, he takes advantage of my leniency and rushes in with his arms working like runaway pistons.

It doesn't take me by surprise, exactly; I just wasn't expecting it, and, before I can cover up, I have a sudden feeling that the map of my face is going to need certain revisions. That makes me mad, so I stand up on my toes and arch my body and let loose blows from all directions. Joe has a similar idea, and for one wild moment we forget we are brothers-in-arms and try to murder each other.

The gong puts an end to this misunderstanding, and, when I get to my corner, I notice that the whole crowd is on its feet, whooping it up like mad. Jack Rivers hops up beside me.

"That Colon chap packs a mean one, doesn't he?" he remarks, looking at my map.

"I'm just leading him on," I tell him.

"Remember," he says, "it's all for dear old Hopewin."

"I won't forget," I promise him.

"Of course," he adds, "there's a little matter of shekels. There won't be a cent at Hopewin if you don't win. But you understand, of course, it's for the honor of the school. Who cares for the money so long as Hopewin wins?"

"That's right," I agree. "It's all for the sake of old Hopewin."

It makes me proud to think that, al-

though the sons of old Hopewin had bet their last greenback on this fight, still it was only their love of the college that made them want to win. I tell you, it's something like that that gets a fellow.

JOE and I both start the second round easy. It looks for a while like a real prize fight instead of a college boxing match where the boys don't have any technique and just get in the ring to soak each other. We engage in some sparring that would have done the Georgia Peach proud, and our footwork is something to remark about. But the Colon rooters don't understand the finer points of boxing, and yell for their heavyweight to rush in and finish me. Even the Hopewin fellows get contaminated by the bad influence of the Colon roughnecks, and act a little impatient. But Joe and I are getting on swell, and, if the Colon rooters hadn't been so coarse, we would have passed a very peaceful round.

"It's disgraceful," I tell him during a brief clinch, "to listen to those hoodlums from Colon."

"How d'ya get that way?" he demands. "Just looking at those punks from Hopewin is hard enough on a man."

"One more crack about Hopewin, you big stiff, and I'll lay you through the ropes."

The referee gets us apart just then, and Joe's answer is a crude sock to the jaw. I let the blow detour, and decide that the fair name of Hopewin demands that I finish this fight then and there. And I would have, too, if Joe hadn't started on one of his temperamental moods and begun slinging blows right and left, completely forgetting all the advice I used to give him about covering up. The only thing that kept me from taking advantage of him was that I was too busy avoiding his senseless blows.

The ignoramuses from Colon actually think that Joe is knocking me groggy, and, when I happen to slip down by the ropes, half the house clamors for my finish. It almost makes me laugh to hear them. While waiting for the referee to count nine, I decide that I have given Joe enough rope and that he must learn to respect old Hopewin. But luckily for Joe the bell sounds at the count of eight, and so he is saved for another round.

Both Mr. Wade and Jack are in my corner when I get there. I guess neither of them knew much about boxing, for they both look terribly worried.

"See here, Sox," says Mr. Wade, "if you don't win this fight it's going to be hard for you to get that—er—scholarship loan."

"Listen, Mr. Wade," I tell him, although I ought to be saving my wind, "can you talk about money at a time like this, when old Hopewin needs the support of every loyal son?"

I guess he had never looked at it that way, for he's so surprised he can't open his mouth, and Jack pats me on the back.

"Atta boy, Sox," he says. "Go back in there and lick the stuffing out of that ringer from Colon. Put old Hopewin on the map. But for Pete's sake, Sox, don't lose any more rounds. If you do, you'll have to land a haymaker to win."

I got to laugh at that. "Why, I can lay that guy cold any time I want to. I've only been playing with him. Watch me this round. Just watch me."

"I'll watch you as long as you last," says Mr. Wade, without enthusiasm.

Just then the splendid young chaps on the Hopewin side of the floor give a long college yell, and, when they get through, they shout. "Sox! Sox! Sox!" I can tell you it makes a fellow mighty proud to have his college mates come out with something like that. I don't feel half as winded as I did, and I want that gong to sound so I can show those loyal rooters that good old Cyclone Sox never yet let anyone down.

WITH the very first tap of the bell, I'm over in Joe's corner before he knows what's going on. He looks surprised, and tries to cover up. But Joe

never was much good at that, and I drive him to the ropes with a one-two, and plunk a few on the bread-basket.

By this time Joe realizes that the old Sox himself is in there, and it must have taken a lot of nerve from him. He rushes out to the center of the ring to hide his fears, but I stop him with a left, and then he tries to stall. But Joe's got me good and mad, and I remember all the things he's said about Hopewin, and bore in with some jabs that don't help him a bit. He tries to counter rush, and I let him chase me around the ring for a little while.

Then I hear my name in a yell again, and I harden my heart to Joe, and stand up and arch forward from the hips and lay in enough punches to kayo a champion. But Joe hasn't got enough sense to know that he shouldn't stop those kind, and gets stubborn and tries to outslug me. Tries to outslug Cyclone Sox! It almost makes me laugh, and I got to fall into a clinch to get control of myself.

While the referee is trying to yank us apart, the Colon gang gives a yell for Joe. Joe is childish enough to get all pepped up over that one poor yell, and, when we separate, he renews his ill-advised attack and forces me to hammer in some vicious clouts to keep him away. But Joe never did have much strategy in the ring, and the poor mug keeps driving in for more punishment until I can hardly stand up for socking him so much.

But Joe is just as badly off, and all because I've been so relentless with him. One eye is closed and his nose has been re-located, and it's almost all up with him. He's crouching now, for one last attempt to knock me out before the birdies chirp over him, and, when he comes in, I figure that either he or I are going to listen to a long count before the gong sounds.

I hate to have to do this to Joe, but he brought it on himself, so I let loose my terrible right with all the tiger-like ferocity which has made me so famous, and it would have knocked Joe clean through the ropes if just at that moment he hadn't made a clumsy left pass which accidentally clips me just as my punch lands on his button. We fall toward each other as if about to clinch, then we fall on the ropes, then we pull ourselves up to see what's going on in the gym.

Something terrible must have happened, because no one is looking at us and everybody is rushing to one end of the gym where a great commotion is going on.

"What's happened?" I ask the referee.

"Search me," he says. "Have you boys declared an armistice, or are you waiting until the crowd gets back?"

"There's a fight down there," exclaims Joe, suddenly. "There's a fight between a Colon and a Hopewin boy. Look at 'em!"

Joe's right. The crowd at the end of the gym had cleared an opening, and two students are going at it hammer and tongs. Every living soul in the gym was down there except Joe and me and the referee.

"C'mon," says Joe. "Let's see the fight."

We jump over the ropes and try to force our way through the crowd. Just then someone notices that the ring is vacant, and yells for the students to fight it out up there. Before Joe and I can get back, the crowd is pushing all around us and the two students are lifted into the ring and start smashing away at each other.

"Sox," says Joe in a whisper, "one of those kids is fighting for Colon Institute."

"And one of them," I remark, "is fighting for Hopewin College."

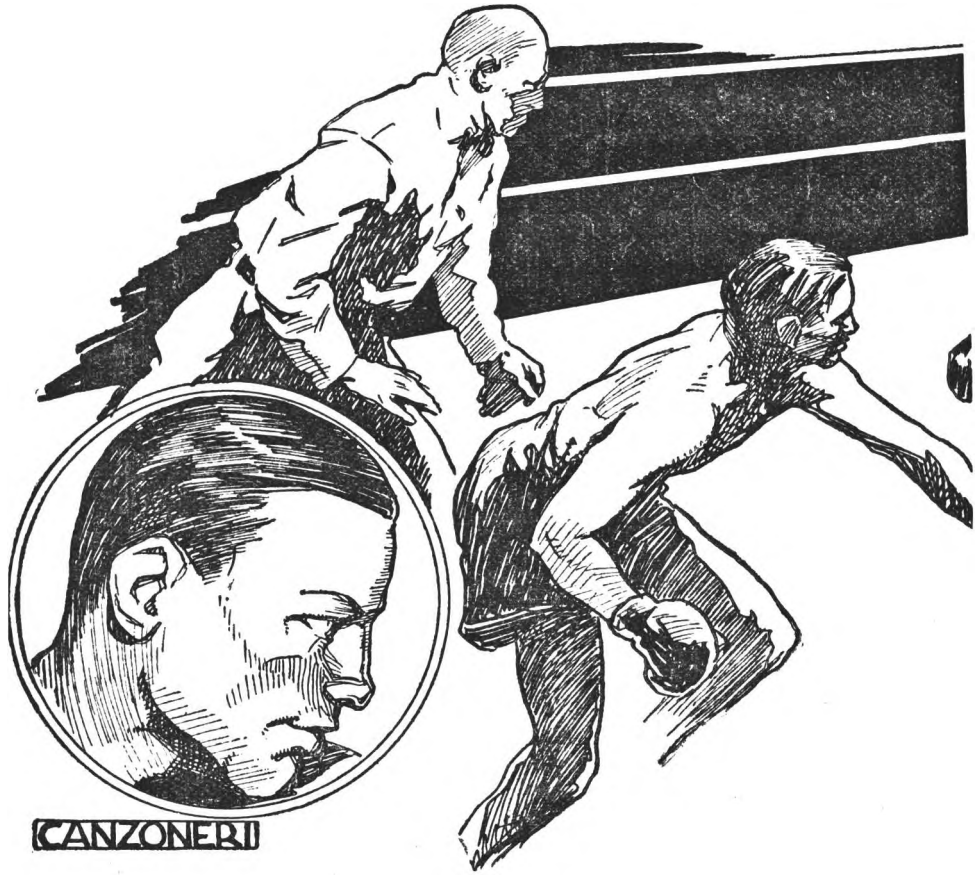
"Do you know which is which?" he asks.

"I sure don't, Joe."

"Then it's no use getting excited over it," he says sadly. "What's the shortest way from here to the city?"

"A straight line," I tell him. But Joe's too dumb to understand.

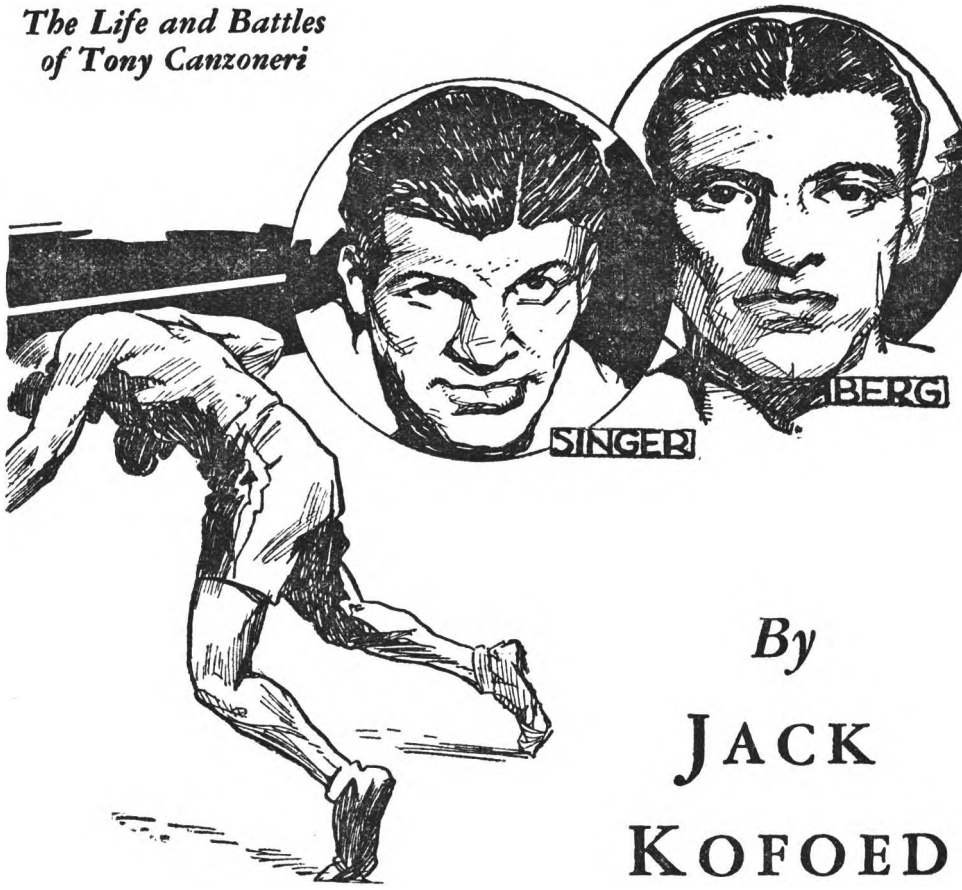
LITTLE DEMPSEY



TONY CANZONERI sat in his corner listening to the whispered instructions of his manager, rotund Sammy Goldman. The lightweight champion of the world expected a tough evening.

Across the ring waited Jack Kid Berg, an English Cockney who had been born with the sound of the Bow Bells in his ears. Berg lacked the dancing cleverness characteristic of most British fighting men. He was rough and tough, a charging slugger who had all the stamina and determination of another Battling Nelson. Experts talk of "class," but Tony Canzoneri had seen too many instances of mauling punchers beating accomplished ringmen to take lack of that asset lightly. Besides, he had a close personal knowledge of Jack Berg. They had met be-

The Life and Battles of Tony Canzoneri



By

JACK KOFOED

He learned to fling fists on the docks at New Orleans, won an amateur flyweight title at the age of twelve, and blasted his way to world supremacy at twenty-two. A grand little battler and a swell kid—that Tony Canzoneri!

fore Tony won the lightweight championship, and all the Canzoneri speed and cleverness were not enough to keep the Britisher at arm's length.

Tony wasn't worried, though. He had a supreme confidence bordering on egotism that must be the stock in trade of everyone who rises to the heights of his profession. Sure, he'd beat Berg! Even the slightly worried expression on Sammy Goldman's face did not dim that certainty in the least.

"I want you to box this guy," said Goldman. "No trading with him, now. Get that! If you do, you're playing right down his alley."

Tony nodded. "Oh, sure! I won't trade with him," he said, absently.

"You can left-hand him to death," Goldman went on, "but if you think you're gonna knock this fellow out by walking in and slugging, you'll wake up with a headache. Take my word for it. Your championship's on the line, kid. Don't toss it away."

The referee called the rivals to the center of the ring to receive their instructions. Canzoneri looked into Jack's

shining black eyes. They were aglitter with determination and excitement. The Englishman hadn't forgotten the decision he had won some months before. Freddie Welsh had been the only subject of His Majesty, the King, to win the lightweight title in many, many years. Berg wanted to be the second. He believed he would be the second. You could see that by the expression on his face.

Funny, thought Tony, that, with all the battering he had taken, Berg hadn't more marks. Why, his nose was as straight as John Barrymore's, and his ears were not cauliflowered at all. No style to him. No real punch, but boy! how he did crowd you. And he could keep up a pace in the tireless manner of Harry Greb.

Sammy Goldman wanted Tony to box and go along carefully and win a decision. But in back of the youngster's mind was the hope that he might score a knockout. Canzoneri wasn't supposed to be a finisher, but, just because this was the current idea, Tony wanted to prove otherwise. Nobody had been knocking Berg off. Folks had come to regard him as being almost invulnerable, so far as punching was concerned—but no one was really invulnerable if he happened to be hit on the right spot.

The men returned to their corners, waiting, a little nervously, for the bell. Those last few seconds before the battle actually starts are the worst in a fighting man's life.

Clang!

Berg came tearing from his corner, swinging both hands. He didn't intend letting Canzoneri box. He'd make the pace so fast that Tony would be swept away by its very ferocity. He was careless of what might happen to him in the process. The little Briton was so sure he could absorb any punishment and keep going in the face of it, that defense seemed a foolish and unnecessary thing.

Tony, keeping Sammy's instructions in mind, boxed coolly, pulling Jackie in with head and body feints, tying him up in the clinches, and in general displaying complete boxing mastery.

Still, the thought of a knockout buzzed in his head. Twenty seconds after the bell sounded he had let go a terrific right-hander. It landed a little high, just above the temple, but it shook Berg right down to his heels.

"Gee," thought Tony, "if that had been a couple of inches lower it would have stiffened him sure. I know I can knock him out now. Why didn't I get that down a little?"

Being an intelligent ringman, Canzoneri waited for another opening when he might lance that right hand of his to the button. In the meantime, he could pile up points, and—missing a knockout—still win the decision with plenty to spare. But if he could knock Berg out—if he only could!

At the end of the round Sammy Goldman expressed himself as being greatly pleased. Tony had followed instructions to the letter, and, in consequence, looked like a certain winner, if that first round was any index.

The Caveman in Tony

AT the start of the second it looked as though the three minutes of action might be a duplicate of those just passed. Berg charged blindly. The thorough manner in which he had been out-boxed did not discourage him in the least. That sort of thing had happened before, and it might very conceivably happen again. It was his job to keep pumping punches as fast as he could. Pretty soon, he believed, Tony Canzoneri would crumble and tire, just as his other opponents had. He landed one stinging right-hander that bent Tony back on his heels, and for a little bit the complexion of the fight changed completely.

Canzoneri was a mere boy you know, comparatively speaking. Despite his years in the ring and the fact that he was a champion, there were moments

when he was swept away with a desire to do things that his cooler judgment told him were not to his advantage. The punch Berg landed caused Tony to suddenly make up his mind that he was going to score a knockout in that round. To the deuce with a decision! He was going to lay Jack Kid Berg out at his feet.

So he stopped boxing and started to slug. That was right down the Englishman's alley. That was where he lived. Though he might look bad against clever boxing, he would certainly look good against any lightweight in the world who tried to wallop it out with him.

Tony was swept back to the ropes. For a minute he was battered and hammered and kept off balance. Sammy Goldman kept yelling and yelling from his corner: "Box! Box!" But the caveman in Tony possessed him for the moment, and he gave Jack Berg exactly the chance that Berg had been hoping and praying for.

Then, suddenly, his reason returned. The lightweight champion of the world backed himself out of a tangle of blows and clinches and began to box once more. His long, accurate jab brought blood to his rival's nose. He kept Jack's head bobbing. Once more he was in control of the situation. He wouldn't go haywire any more. He'd act the part of a fistic king and not let the Britisher kid him into any more slugging matches.

Tony listened mildly to the instructions of Sammy Goldman, who was still shaking with excitement from the previous round.

"All right, Sam," said Tony, calmly. "Don't worry. It won't happen again. But I just had to try taking a couple of cracks at him."

The third round started as the other two had. The Englishman, hair flying, eyes wild, whipped into action before the echo of the gong had ceased to sound upon the air. A grand little fighter, this Berg. They didn't come any gamer or tougher, and Canzoneri had to admire him, even when he was making things hot for him. Berg's seconds had urged him to concentrate on the stomach. If you hit a man a half dozen times around the belt-line, you take more out of him than you do by slashing him anywhere else. So Jack tried to get close with left hooks to the body.

"He doesn't think he's going to get away with that, does he?" thought Tony. "I just gotta knock this guy out!"

Then what happened was as sharp and clear-cut as a slow-motion picture. Berg had unloosed a shot at the stomach. He missed, and his body pulled forward with the arms down. Canzoneri, for a fraction of a second, looked into the Englishman's tense, dark face. The utmost determination was written there. The lips were tight, the eyes blazing. The thought instantly flickered through Tony's mind that this was the big moment—the opening he had been looking for. In that split fraction of a second he whipped a left to Berg's chin. Jack's head bobbed back under the impact. His glowing eyes dulled just the least bit.

Almost at the same time the champion brought his body around and threw in a semi-uppercut. The pivot brought all his weight back of it, and he rose on his toes for the added leverage. Tony Canzoneri never hit a harder punch than that in all his life. It landed flush on the button—and Jack Kid Berg, the iron man of the lightweights, went down on his back, completely unconscious.

Nothing in all his life—not even the winning of the featherweight and lightweight titles—ever gave Tony a more completely satisfying thrill than that knockout. There was the black-haired Englishman on the floor, so completely knocked out that he could not have risen had the count been twice as long. Tony Canzoneri had done that to a fellow who had whipped Kid Chocolate and Billy Petrolle and many other stars. Berg had been the toughest fellow in his class—but he was no longer.

The look on Sammy Goldman's face was like that of an overjoyed father.

He, who had brought Tony along so carefully, had long been sure of the boy's ability, but he hadn't dreamed of so brilliant and unexpected a knockout. It was magnificent beyond words. Canzoneri turned and looked into his manager's eyes as Berg's heartbroken seconds carried their fallen warrior to his corner. There was a world of understanding in that glance. Tony Canzoneri, the great boxer, had also become the great hitter. He completely dominated his class.

CHAPTER II
Juvenile Whirlwind

GEORGE CANZONERI and Josephine Pellegrino were born in the little town of Sharkai, Italy. So far as I know, this village has no other distinction save the fact that it was the birthplace of Guiseppi Carrora, who was later to become known to ring fans as Johnny Dundee.

The young people saw much of each other and their acquaintanceship ripened into love. George was an ambitious boy, and could see no future for himself in this secluded town. He wanted to be off to the great United States of America, where it was said the streets were paved with gold and everyone eventually became a millionaire. Josephine applauded this determination, but she did not intend to let her sweetheart go foraging alone thousands of miles from her side. When he went to America, she would go, too. They could be married by the good parish priest, after they had saved enough for the adventurous journey.

The time came, eventually, when they had sufficient lira. The bans were published and one sunny day Josephine Pellegrino became Josephine Canzoneri. And, not so many months later, they were aboard a steamer crossing the broad bosom of the Atlantic Ocean.

The Canzoneris settled in New Orleans. There was a large Italian colony in that Queen City of the South—a colony almost as large as the more famous French one. The Canzoneris felt themselves at home. They were among people who talked their language and understood their ways. There was a touch of Italian warmth in the sun that blazed as brightly as it ever did on Sharkai.

George's early training had destined him to become a butcher. He secured a position in that business, and, through hard work and constant saving, soon had a place of his own. Children came, one after the other. There were four boys and two girls, and the third child was Tony, who was to become as famous a fighting man as that other son of Sharkai, Johnny Dundee.

Tony was not a big boy. He seemed to lack something of his parents' ruggedness of frame. Tough and wiry, sure enough, but not wide-shouldered and heavy-fisted. He had particularly small hands and feet—and George would shake his head and wonder whether this little bambino of his would turn out to be an artist or a writer. Certainly his small body was never intended for heavy manual labor.

Like most of the youngsters in his neighborhood, Tony Canzoneri made his way rather precariously through grammar school. Afterward, he went to work in his father's butcher shop. He became the general delivery boy, and fifty times a day he would trundle out into the street with his push-cart or a basket of meat on his arm to carry to the customers.

It happened that one of these customers was Pete Herman, who had been bantamweight champion of the world in his day—and one of the greatest ringmen New Orleans had ever developed. Pete's career had just about come to a close. He no longer possessed the youth and stamina to carry him against men he could have whipped easily when he was in his prime. But the old champion worked out frequently at Joe Man-

dot's gymnasium, and whenever Tony could slip away from his duties to watch Pete wield the gloves, he did so. Of all his father's customers, this was the only one whom Tony admired and hoped to emulate.

Pete Herman Is Impressed

AFTER a little while, business fell off at the Canzoneri butcher shop. Tony, hoping to make money to help along, secured a job as assistant packer in one of the warehouses along the Mississippi River. There were lots of colored boys on the dock, and an ancient feud blazed between them and the white youngsters who lived or held jobs in that vicinity. Though Tony Canzoneri at twelve years of age weighed hardly more than seventy-five pounds, his lack of size was no excuse for non-participation in these inter-racial battles. Tony had to fight. Being combative by nature, he saw no reason why he should attempt to duck the inevitable.

He had plenty of scraps, winning a lot and losing some of them, but learning something about the business of handling his fists every time he tangled with a rival.

Now the long arm of coincidence comes into the story. One afternoon Tony became involved in an argument with a couple of colored boys. One was about his own size, the other considerably larger. The argument passed beyond words and ended in blows. Young Canzoneri knocked out the smaller chap with a few well-directed blows, and, when the vanquished one's brother sought to take up the warfare, Tony licked him, too. It just happened that, standing on the sidewalk watching this bitter activity, was none other than Pete Herman, the former bantamweight champion of the world, and Canzoneri's own particular idol.

"Well done," said Pete. "You're not half bad. I like your spunk; the way you handle your fists. You ought to get somewhere, kid. Learn how to box."

Since there was nothing in the world he wanted to do so much, Tony decided then and there that he would learn to box, and some day he might become as great a man as old Pete Herman himself. That sounded almost sacrilegious, but Tony meant it, nevertheless.

Pete invited him to do a little sparring at Mandot's gymnasium, and showed him some of the tricks he had learned in his many years in the ring. Then he suggested that Tony enter the amateur championship bouts that were being held at the Gayoso Athletic Club. Little as he was, the boy could enter in the flyweight class and get some competition that Pete thought would do him good. Of course, starting a youngster of twelve in as hard a game as this seemed rushing things a little, but the old champion came from a school that was not too greatly concerned with coddling the young idea. Let him get out and show what he had. A few wallops wouldn't do him any harm.

It is a tribute to Tony Canzoneri's nerve that he followed this program. The twelve-year-old went down to the Gayoso A. C. and was matched in his first formal battle with a youngster named Mike Bernard.

Tony's First Ring Battle

WHEN he slid through the ropes and saw the glaring lights and rows of interested faces turned toward him, little Tony did experience a qualm of stage fright. After all, he was only a shaver, but he kept telling himself that these fellows weren't any tougher than the ones he had licked on the dock. The spectators who sat there watching him were the same kind of people who stood on the sidewalk and cheered him on when he fought the colored kids. He mustn't get scared. He must keep his nerve, and he'd beat any of these little fellows.

Tony was hardly a handful. As I have said, he weighed only seventy-five pounds, and most of the entrants in his

class scaled over a hundred. He was painfully skinny compared with this Bernard fellow, but he waded right into Mike and punched out a thrilling three-round victory.

Boy, was he excited and proud! At that moment he saw himself champion of the world. There couldn't be anything that could thrill a fellow as much as being announced the winner in the ring. He wanted to keep this up, to go beyond the amateurs and become a champion among professionals. It wouldn't do to let his parents know about it yet. Even if he had been considerably older, they might have objected. His mother certainly would. But neither dad nor mother would agree that twelve years was a sufficiently mature age at which to start a fighting career.

Well, twelve or not, Tony Canzoneri won the amateur flyweight championship, and the great Pete Herman himself sat at the ringside and applauded his efforts.

"The kid's going somewhere, I'm telling ya," Pete would say over and over again. "A natural fighter if there ever was one. When he gets a little older and is ready to step out, I'm going to turn him over to Sammy Goldman. A great guy, Sam! He helped make me a champion and he'll do the same for Tony."

Of course, young Canzoneri realized that some time would have to elapse before he could really get started on a career that filled his boyish dreams with bright visions. He boxed at the gymnasium and appeared at other amateur tournaments, but most of his time was taken up in earning a living. He became a clerk in the warehouse, but the job formed only a drab background against which to paint his fervent hopes of the future. A cheerful, smiling kid, this Tony Canzoneri. Everyone liked him. As he grew a little bigger and his muscles hardened, Tony became a more dangerous fighter. But he never was the kind to bully anyone else.

Good-Bye, New Orleans!

BUSINESS continued to grow worse for George Canzoneri. He found it more and more difficult to make ends meet. He heard from friends in New York that conditions there were rather more favorable. If he sold his store in New Orleans and took his family North, it might be better for all of them. When the father mentioned this, Tony voiced an immediate protest. He didn't want to leave the Crescent City. It seemed to him that all the possibilities of his boxing career were mixed up with Pete Herman, Joe Mandot's gymnasium and the Gayoso Athletic Club—that if he left these behind he might be hopelessly lost. After all, New Orleans was the only city he knew. It had a warm, homey touch. New York represented the great unknown. It was the biggest city of all—a cold one. Maybe they wouldn't give him a chance there to show that he really possessed abilities that might develop into championship caliber.

He couldn't voice these objections to his parents. They didn't know about his boxing ambitions. But George said his mind was made up. He was going to New York and all the children must go with him.

A little tearfully, Tony relayed this news to Pete Herman.

"Don't worry, kid," said the old champion. "I'll tell you what I'll do. Sam Goldman is up there in New York, and Sam Goldman is the greatest manager in the world. I'll write and tell him about you. He'll keep his eyes open, and, when you're ready to start, he'll be right behind you."

With that promise Tony Canzoneri had to be content.

It was an adventure, after all, that long train trip from the South up to the hustling, bustling metropolis. Tony hadn't imagined the way was so long. New York! What did it promise? What joys and sorrows were hidden behind its jagged sky-line? There was

only one career that interested this smiling youngster from the South—only one business could completely captivate his imagination. That was the ring.

Perhaps it was better that the Canzoneris were going to New York, for New York was the fistic capital of the world. Even then Tony had heard of Madison Square Garden. Perhaps some day he might appear in that famous edifice.

At any rate, a guy couldn't be hung for trying. He was going to get somewhere. He had made up his mind about that.

CHAPTER III
Hello, New York!

TO the immense surprise not only of Tony himself but of the whole family, they were met at the station by Sam Goldman. Since Herman had gone into ecstasies in a letter to his former manager, Sammy was anxious to see the youthful prodigy who had so stirred the veteran.

Probably he was disappointed when he saw the slim kid from New Orleans, who, even then, weighed hardly more than a hundred pounds. If he was, he kept that disappointment to himself. You can't always tell what's in a package by its wrappings. Sammy was too old a hand in the game to put a definite classification on this boy at first glance. After all, one built for the future. Tony wasn't ready yet to become a professional. When he was—well, he might live up to Pete Herman's enthusiastic eulogy.

The Canzoneris moved to the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn. Tony, having to help bolster the family exchequer, secured a job in a cigarette factory. That great dream of his still burned brightly. In his spare time he went to the gymnasium and worked under the appraising eye of Samuel Goldman. He was taught more and more of the finer points of boxing. Then Goldman began entering him in amateur tournaments.

It might have been difficult for Tony to combine his work in the cigarette factory with the arduous physical effort of training and boxing had it not been for Joe O'Brien, his foreman. Joe was a boxing enthusiast from head to heels. When he learned that the Canzoneri kid was such a promising prospect, he gave him lots of time off—and didn't deduct a penny from his salary on that account. A kindly Irishman, this O'Brien, and one to whom Tony still admits a debt of gratitude. Without Joe's coöperation, the way would have been made a lot more difficult for the boy from New Orleans.

Altogether, Tony engaged in eighty-seven amateur bouts. Goldman, wise in the ways of the ring, had no intention of rushing his boy too fast. When Tony was ready to fight for money, he would be a finished performer. He would know boxing and hitting, and there would be no question of tossing a raw street fighter in with fellows who could knock his block off. Sammy had become more and more convinced that he had a championship prospect in the youngster Herman had recommended so highly.

Then one day Sam took Tony aside and said, "You're ready, now. I'm going to start you against the professionals."

The boy grinned. That was swell! He had felt himself ready a year ago. And now that Goldman admitted the time was ripe, there was no doubt about it.

"Gee, I'm glad!" said Tony. "Who do I fight?"

"I've got you booked at the Far Rockaway Club," said Sammy, "with a guy named Jackie Gardner. He's no pushover. No champion, or anything like that, you understand, but he's been around a while, and we'll soon find out if you remember the things you learned in the amateurs."

Professional Debut

I DON'T think a youngster making his debut in the ring ever had a more distinguished group of seconds behind him than did Tony Canzoneri the night he stepped into the ring at the Far Rockaway Club. In his corner were Sammy Goldman, Doc Bagley, who had managed and seconded Gene Tunney and other famous fighters, and Tony Palazola, who attained some degree of fame as a trainer for Jack Sharkey. They were three wise men of the ring. There were no tricks of the trade with which they were unfamiliar.

Tony wasn't worried or excited. Though this was his first professional battle, he had engaged in more than a hundred amateur fights and as many more on the street. He felt himself almost a seasoned campaigner. As he looked across the ring at his hard-visaged opponent, he kept telling himself that under no circumstances would he permit himself to get flurried. If he should happen to get knocked down, he'd keep cool and take advantage of the count. What difference did it make if Jackie Gardner was a pro? Tony Canzoneri was a better man, and he'd prove it very soon.

"Now, listen Tony," whispered Goldman, as the New Orleans boy stood in his corner, waiting for the sound of the gong. "I've seen you box often enough. I want to see you fight. Go into this guy as hard and as fast as you can. Put something on your punches."

"Okay, Sammy."

Clang!

Tony Canzoneri sprang forward. The genial smile was gone from his wide mouth. His eyes were narrowed. There was an immense determination in his heart. He was going to lick Jackie Gardner, and he was going to lick him just as quickly as he could. Sammy wanted to see if he could punch, eh? Well, he'd show him.

Gardner, I suppose, thought he was in for a soft evening. Canzoneri was just an amateur, and Gardner had the professional's contempt for the men who fight for nothing but glory. He intended fiddling around for a minute or so to find out just how much his opponent had, then he would go to work. But Tony didn't give him a chance. He feinted at the body with his left. Gardner brought his arms down, and, as he did so, Tony clipped him with a vicious right-hand shot to the chin. It hurt. The professional staggered. Tony drove a hook to the body. Jackie tried to clinch, but Canzoneri kept away, and hit him with another on the chin. Gardner fell to his knees. He was dazed.

With a hot blast of happiness in his heart, Tony stepped back a pace or two and listened to the referee begin the count. Hit! He'd show Goldman how he could hit.

Gardner reeled to his feet at the count of nine. Tony wasted no time. He tore in again and landed one more punch. The fight was over. Jackie lay stretched at his feet—out cold. Sammy was standing in Tony's corner, nodding and smiling. He was convinced then and there that the kid who had come up from New Orleans was going somewhere in the hard business of the prize ring. Maybe Gardner wasn't so hot, but it took a good man to knock anybody off like that.

The speed with which Tony had gained his first triumph did not incline Goldman toward cutting out too fast a pace for him. So Sammy went after fellows like Henry Usse, Harry Brandon, Ralph Nischo, Jimmy Hueler and others of that stripe; preliminary boys in the smaller clubs and armories.

Canzoneri did very well with them. He scored four knockouts in eleven matches, and won the rest handily during his first year in the ranks of the professionals.

Though only a bantamweight, the boy gave every indication of filling out. Before he was through packing muscle on

his sturdy frame, he would be a lightweight at least.

There was one thing I liked about Tony even in those obscure days—his disposition. There was nothing noisy or boastful about him. He realized that he stood at the bottom of the ladder, and that, if he was to climb to the top, he must be willing to learn . . . to make friends . . . to bolster his fighting qualities with a character that would bring nothing but credit to him.

A swell kid, Tony, one of the nicest boys that ever took to the ring. Of course, those who deserve success don't always get it, but the youngster from New Orleans not only deserved it, but was determined that nothing in the world should prevent him from achieving success. He wouldn't be impatient. Anything worth while was not attained at a bound.

Rickard's Prize

TEX RICKARD had built his magnificent new Madison Square Garden on Eighth Avenue between Forty-ninth and Fiftieth Streets. The ancient sporting edifice bearing that name had been torn down, and a new page was written into the history of sports. The first couple of shows in the new Garden failed to produce a knockout. Tex looked on this as a jinx, and offered a prize to the first boy who could score a kayo in the new Madison Square Garden.

Tony had won a few fights and stopped several opponents when Sammy Goldman signed him for a preliminary bout with Dan Terris at the Garden. Dan was a brother of Sid Terris, the Will o' the Wisp of the Ghetto. The match was only a four-rounder. Few people had heard of Tony Canzoneri. They were to hear lots within a comparatively short time.

Every preliminary kid who went into that ring thought of Tex Rickard's prize and strove desperately to win it. Tony himself had that idea in mind when he faced Dan Terris—and, being a youngster who usually succeeded in getting what he went after, he put over the finishing punch in the fourth round.

That was a good augury. It tickled Sammy Goldman, too. Sam, of course, wasn't so much interested in Rickard's prize as he was in the publicity that came to Tony in winning it. The newspapers might have passed up the youngster's knockout of Dan Terris with a line or two, but they gave him several paragraphs because he had registered the first knockout at the Garden.

Tony's manager was keen about getting the boy all the experience he possibly could. This meant not only having him engage in battles as frequently as possible but in sparring with noted exponents of the craft.

It was in 1925, Canzoneri's first year of professional fighting, that he acted as sparring partner for Eddie Shea, who was training for a bantamweight championship match with Charlie Phil Rosenberg. Shea was a thick-shouldered little fellow with a large head. He was probably the best man of his inches in the ring, though he held no title. He had beaten, among others, Peter Sarmiento, Abe Goldstein, Joey Sangor and Johnny Sheppard. He could box and punch, and knew all the tricks of the ring.

To work frequently with Eddie Shea was a grand opportunity for a youngster like Canzoneri. And Tony took advantage of it. He kept his eyes open and his ears, too. Though hard looking, Shea was a pleasant little fellow, and he never took advantage of his sparring partners by beating them up. He liked Canzoneri, who was as fast as a streak and a much better boxer than a youngster of his comparatively limited experience was expected to be.

Of course, the result of the Shea-Rosenberg fight, in which Eddie was stopped in the fourth round, was a great disappointment to Canzoneri. But, so far as he was concerned, the chunky mid-Western bantamweight had played

his part in Tony's life. The kid from the South had learned necessary lessons. It wasn't in the books that he should ever fight Eddie Shea. That situation is a favorite one in fiction, and has happened frequently in actual life, too, but it was not to occur in this case.

CHAPTER IV
Reaching for the Moon

TONY went to the post twenty-six times in 1926 . . . and, when a boxer averages an engagement every two weeks, he's busy.

Among the men Canzoneri fought were Bobby Wolgast, Tommy Milton, Archie Bell, Young Montreal, Buck Josephs, Georgie Mack, Davey Abad, Andre Routis and Bushy Graham. If you are conversant with the game, you'll recognize these youngsters as the cream of the bantamweight class. They all had been in the game longer than Tony, but in those twenty-six bouts he lost only one, drew three times and won all the others. That was a record to cheer over.

Every conceivable style was resorted to by his rivals. Wolgast I remember as a slack-chinned boy with lustreless eyes. He seemed the sort who would loaf and stall . . . but if there ever was a wildcat when the bell sounded it was Bobby Wolgast. That kid threw punches every second he was in there. He seemed to go berserk with effort.

Bell and Abad were fast and clever boxers. Each had a world of experience. Routis was a hard-boiled veteran, of the plugging, Battling Nelson type. He possessed a chin as hard as a rock and the courage of a bulldog. Andre always kept charging. Nothing ever discouraged him.

Most of you remember Bushy Graham. It was only a few months ago that Bat Battalino ended Bushy's career with a one-round knockout in Chicago. Graham was entirely unorthodox in his style. He bounced around like a rubber ball, hitting from any and every angle, like Harry Greb. A tough fellow to solve, that Graham.

And we must not forget Young Montreal. Young? That's a laugh. He had been boxing for fifteen years or more . . . a grim veteran, who had proved himself one of the hardest men in any class to tag on the button.

From this line-up, one would be inclined to think that Sammy Goldman was rushing his protégé a bit too fast. But Sam was sold on Canzoneri. He believed that the careful training the boy from New Orleans had received in the amateur ranks had given him the needed seasoning to compete on even terms with almost anyone of his weight.

Goldman proved to be right, if the record of 1926 is sufficient proof. Tony registered five knockouts—not an excessively high average, perhaps, but splendid considering the class of the opposition. Besides, you must remember, that being under twenty-one years of age, he had to confine himself to six-round bouts . . . and stopping smart boxers inside that limit is a tough job.

The first fellow he flattened was Georgie Nickfor, no star, but a pretty good little fighting man. Nickfor went out in the fourth. Then came Sammy Nable. Sam was rated higher than Nickfor. He was one of those fast, smooth East Side boxers . . . and the history of the East Side is full of ringmen like him. Nable was the favorite to win, but he ran into a hook that laid him out cold.

Next? None other than Archie Bell. That was the greatest victory Tony had scored. Bell rated close to the top. He had everything but the ability to punch. Even Sammy Goldman was a little doubtful of what Canzoneri might be able to do with the flashy Bell. Archie figured to pick the rugged Italian to pieces with his accomplished left hand. Why shouldn't he? But Tony went after Bell just as he had after Jackie Gardner, and, while it took a longer

time to connect with Archie's chin, the result was the same.

Manny Wexler and Enrico Savaardo were the other two kayo victims during that year.

The Ghost from Panama

THE way was not entirely smooth. It never is. Tony had not expected to be held to a draw by Mike Esposito, for instance, or Benny Hall or Georgie Marks. In return bouts he beat the latter two, but Mike steered clear of him.

The real disappointment came in Tony's meeting with Davy Abad, the slim ghost from Panama. Davy was almost as hard to hit as Young Griffo. He had an uncanny sense of timing and a sliding manner of getting around the ring. You let a punch go, fully expecting it to land, and Abad drifted out of the way, making you feel foolish. He was as elusive as a fog.

Canzoneri never tried harder in his life to knock out anyone than he did that night with Davy Abad. He had never run up against an opponent like this in his brief experience.

After several rounds of studied effort, Tony let everything go in a furious effort to knock Abad flat. He saw red. The dark, sneering face of the Central American was a perfect target, but it was a target that slipped out of the way every time he tried to land on it.

As Tony came ripping in, Dave poked him with a cream-puff left and with light right crosses that didn't even shake his assailant. They did one thing, though. They piled up points. Canzoneri knew that. As the third and fourth and fifth rounds slipped by, he realized that he would lose the first decision of his life unless he landed a knockout punch.

It was his first ten-round fight, and that was a handicap, too, for Tony did not know how to rate himself. He fought as he would have fought in a six-rounder, and in the closing minutes was a very tired lad. Davy wasn't tired. He had done nothing to weary himself.

When the echo of the last bell had died, and Abad was announced as the winner, the fury left Canzoneri's heart. He grinned widely and shook his conqueror's hand. After all, the lost decision was not vital. He had learned something that would be of great value to him in the future. Perhaps some day he would get another shot at the Central American. There were plenty of other bouts ahead. The future was bright: He would not let it darken because of the disappointment he had experienced this evening.

The First Meeting with Routis

TONY'S meeting with Andre Routis was noteworthy, not only because he fought a brilliant match against the tough Frenchman, but because Andre was to play so big a part in his life.

The veteran from overseas was no fancy ringman. He made no pretense of knowing anything about the art of boxing. Routis simply walked into an opponent with his left elbow and glove cloaking the jaw, and whanged away with tremendous earnestness.

In eight years of strenuous warfare Andre had been knocked out only once. That was a long while ago. A hard-hitting fellow named Michel Montreuil slammed him on the chin with a whistling right-hander that happened to land on the button . . . and Routis went out in the darkness.

Since then nothing so unfortunate had happened. Andre won the European featherweight championship, and came to America seeking further honors, to say nothing of American dollars.

He found a considerable portion of each, since he was a rough and tumble club-fighter who gave the customers all the action they craved. Canzoneri had no trouble beating Routis. He was too fast and clever for the Frenchman, and,

though he didn't come even close to knocking out his rugged rival, he won with plenty to spare.

There isn't time or space to go into details of all the battles Tony engaged in before he became the leading featherweight of his time . . . and indeed, such a recital might become tiresome.

The little fellow went into his 1927 campaign well established as a box-office attraction in spite of the fact that he had been a professional for only three years.

He started by scoring a technical knockout over Harold Smith, a slim, slick-haired boxer with an excellent reputation. Then he outclassed California Joe Lynch, reputedly the best bantamweight to be developed on the Coast in many years. Then he ran up against Bud Taylor.

That blond, cold-eyed little slugger deserves to be remembered as one of the most remarkable fighters of the period. Few men of his poundage were able to hit as he did. Class stuck out all over him. It took a game man to go into the ring with him, and a very confident one to have hopes of beating the Terre Haute Terror.

In their first meeting, Taylor and Canzoneri boxed a ten-round draw. In their second, Bud won the decision after a furious, blood-stirring struggle. Tony lost no prestige in those battles. He proved himself courageous and capable . . . a chap who must be reckoned with even among the champions. He was only twenty-two years old then, you know.

Following those meetings with Taylor came matches one right on the heels of the other. Tony was in great demand. He beat Johnny Green in eight rounds, and stopped Ray Rychell in seven.

He had two meetings with that whirlwind of the featherweights, Cowboy Eddie Anderson, winning one and losing another. California Joe Lynch was added to his list for the second time, and he scored over Tommy Ryan, Joe Rivers, the hard-hitting Ignacio Fernandez, and knocked out Billy Henry.

Pete Sarmiento

PETE SARMIENTO was his next opponent. Remember Pete? He was one of the greatest little fighters Frank Churchill ever brought out of the Philippines. Tough as a hickory knot, fast and an excellent puncher, Sarmiento had worked his way close to the top of the pack.

"If you can take this fellow, kid," said Goldman, "You're set. Everybody knows what he's got . . . and what it'll take to trim him. How do you feel about it?"

Tony laughed.

"Just the way I do about all of 'em," he said. "If you want him, you get him. I'll do the work."

Goldman signed for the match.

When Tony looked across the ring at the brown-skinned, imperturbable little warrior and recalled just what sort of a fighting man Pete was, he knew the job ahead would be a tough one. But he liked to crack tough nuts . . . the tougher the better. Pete wouldn't lick him without knowing that he had been in a fight.

At the sound of the bell, Tony leaped from his corner. Sarmiento, who loved to rough it, met him half way. They fought like a couple of angry bulldogs, slashing and tearing at each other. Canzoneri felt that the best way to beat the little brown man would be to meet him at his own game . . . out-punch him, out-rough him. That was the ticket.

Midway of the round, Tony ripped a left hook into his rival's stomach. He felt Pete double and wince under the blow. Sarmiento tried to back off, and cover himself from the fusillade of blows that rained upon him. . . . But Tony, smelling a quick victory, was a demon on the attack.

He never fought any harder in his life. He was just as excitedly deter-

mined to gain a quick victory as he had been when he fought Jackie Gardner in his first bout. . . . He gained it, too.

Sarmiento went down. His fogged brain ordered him to rise. He tried to, but couldn't make it. He lay there on the floor, twitching impotently as he sought to control his helpless muscles. Then Sammy Goldman leaped into the ring and threw his arms around his boy. It was the happiest, most exciting moment they had shared.

CHAPTER V
For the Featherweight Title

GOLDMAN was pointing Tony toward a match with Lou Kid Kaplan, who held the featherweight championship of the world. Lou was a buzz-saw in action, a whizzing, two-fisted little battler, but the youngster who had stopped Pete Sarmiento did not fear the issue.

Kaplan beat Babe Herman, Bobby Garcia and other contenders for his title, but found it more and more difficult to make the weight. It was apparent that, if the former Meriden junkman insisted on staying in that class, he would be so weakened that the first good man who came along would take his championship away from him.

Naturally, Sammy wanted to get the big shot for his boy, but matches like these are not accomplished in an offhand way. There are dozens of tangled skeins to be unwound.

Kaplan was an honest champion. As *Fight Stories* has noted before, the Kid could have sold his title for fifty thousand dollars, but refused to handle the matter in this fashion. When he was no longer able to make the weight, he said he would quit the featherweight division . . . and that was exactly what he did.

Meanwhile, Tony Canzoneri was getting so close to the top of the class that he and Benny Bass, the chunky Philadelphian, were conceded to be the cream of the crop.

And then, who should step into the picture but Johnny Dundee, once featherweight champion himself, and a glamorous figure.

In effect, John said: "I'm not so old but that I can teach some of these striplings a little about boxing. Just give me a chance and I'll show 'em."

When a match was proposed between Tony and Dundee, those who knew the ex-champion of the world were a bit incredulous. John had done little work over a long period of time, and his weight had gone to 155 pounds. He was fat, and apparently had left all his old-time physical powers behind. Yet, in six weeks of training, Johnny came down to the amazing weight of 124 pounds.

The old fellow had been a star when Canzoneri was a baby. He was one of the physical and mental marvels of the ring. The fight looked bad on paper. You can't take an ancient veteran out of the doldrums and pit him against a vital, fiery young opponent and expect much of a battle. Besides, the ringside seats were priced at eleven dollars, which kept plenty of customers away. So a little less than nine thousand came to the Garden the night Dundee and Canzoneri met in a fifteen-round battle.

There's no use going into details about the match. As a fight, it was one of the saddest exhibitions of the year, though a classic example of what a wise old-timer with nothing but brains and courage can do to last the limit against a strong and promising boy.

In the very first round Johnny came out like the Dundee of old, bouncing and bobbing off the ropes. How the crowd howled! It was like the ghost of the flashing star we had once known —the man who had fought Leonard and White and all the rest to a standstill. But through the remaining rounds there was little to enthuse over. Canzoneri kept plowing in, doing his best, but he couldn't land on the elusive target that

flitted around the ring like a will o' the wisp. Occasionally a punch to the jaw or a rat-tat-tat to the stomach slowed Johnny down. But on the whole a deadly dullness prevailed.

Canzoneri won twelve of the fifteen rounds, but afterward he admitted that, even though the fight may have been a bad one to watch, it was an excellent one for him to engage in. He had learned a lot from Johnny Dundee. He had found out that strength and speed and a punch are not the only assets a man needs, once he climbs through the hempen ropes. The grim and battle-scarred little veteran taught his fresh-faced opponent plenty in their forty-five minutes of boxing. While Tony was disappointed in not having been able to score a knockout, he was glad that he had had the privilege of putting on the gloves with Johnny Dundee. Of all the names in his record up to that time, there was none to compare with that of the little Italian.

The Bronx Beauty

OF course, when Kaplan really did go to the New York State Athletic Commission and resign his title, Canzoneri naturally loomed large as a leading contender. The solons admitted that there was only one other man of the weight to be considered—Benny Bass. It was agreed to recognize the winner of a bout between these men as a successor to the resigned title-holder.

That was grand news. But before he was to enter the ring with Bass, Tony had two other engagements. One was with Chick Suggs, a clever New England negro, whom he knocked out in six rounds. Only eight days later he boxed Al Singer at Madison Square Garden.

Singer, like Andre Routis, was to play a startling part in Tony's life. Al was called the Bronx Beauty, and within the space of a year's time, had become one of the most sensational and popular figures in New York. Whenever he fought, the club was certain to be jammed to the doors. They said he was another Benny Leonard.

Though he had engaged in less than forty contests, Singer had been so outstandingly successful that his supporters were convinced he could beat anyone.

In spite of Singer's quick, upward flare, Tony held the Bronx boy rather lightly. It did not seem reasonable that a comparatively inexperienced youngster could give him much trouble after he had held his own . . . and more than held his own . . . with the most rugged veterans in the division.

Singer might be clever. He might be able to hit as hard as they said he could . . . but that did not matter.

When they met in Madison Square Garden, that vast arena was packed. It is an axiom in the ring that the best possible drawing card presents a Jew and an Italian in the same ring. Each race is intensely nationalistic, and supports their own in magnificent style.

To Canzoneri's surprise, Al Singer held him to a ten-round draw. It was a fine, bristling fight . . . and I thought Tony had a shade the better of it. Still, there was so little to choose between them that no great objection could be made about the verdict.

Since the Bronx Beauty was a lightweight, this result had no effect on Canzoneri's standing in the 126-pound class. He and Bass were still the outstanding contenders.

Benny had been going very well. In 1927 he scored over such well-known ringmen as Red Chapman, Joe Glick, Johnny Farr, Chick Suggs, Mike Ballerino and Johnny Sheppard. Determined to be on fighting edge for the great effort of his life, he fought three times in January, 1928, scoring over Pete Nebo, the slugging Seminole, and twice over Wilbur Cohen. His match with Canzoneri was scheduled for Madison Square Garden on February 10.

The wiseacres found it hard to pick between the men. If there was a lean-

ing toward Canzoneri, it was because most observers believed he was gamer and better able to stand up under fire than his rival. Certainly, there was little to choose between them in hitting or experience.

A Right Hand to the Heart

DURING the first two rounds Benny looked like Black Gold running against an ice-wagon horse. He did all the work and did it spectacularly.

Canzoneri just laid back and defended himself.

But Tony is not a conservative at heart. He took it easy because he realized that fifteen rounds is quite a distance, and he didn't want to burn himself out.

Just before the bell terminated the third round, Tony let go a right-hander that had everything back of it but the installment on the family automobile. Caught squarely on the whiskers, Bass went down like Goldman-Sachs the day the market broke.

The little Italian stepped back grimly. He felt that the championship was as good as his. The referee began to count. Bass took "eight" with an expression on his face as though a surgeon were removing his appendix. No one at the ringside knew it, but the chunky Philadelphian had received a fractured collar-bone. Some of the spectators who were not convinced of Benny's gameness remarked that Bass was "going to dog it again."

That's all we knew about it, and for the next seven rounds it looked as though the skeptics were right. Tony Canzoneri kicked Benny Bass all around the ring, punching him full of holes, hitting him upstairs and down.

Benny's distress brought a dogged viciousness to the surface. Mauled and wearied to death, he began to hit low. No one quite realized how numbed with pain and despair he really was.

Between rounds, while his seconds were rubbing and fanning Benny, Phil Glassman stood before his fighter and talked—and how he can talk.

"Benny," he said, "listen to me. There's just one thing that I want you to do. Hit him under the heart with the right hand. If you don't want to do it for yourself, do it as a personal favor for me. Do you understand, Benny? A right under the heart."

The beaten Bass mumbled something through his gashed lips, and then went out and was buried under an avalanche of blows. He didn't try that right to the heart. Maybe he couldn't. Glassman went through his monologue between every round, growing as desperate as a clothing salesman who sees a customer departing without a suit.

Of the nine rounds that had gone by, Tony had been credited with seven. There was no reason to believe that the succeeding ones would be any different.

The bell sounded for the start of the tenth. Bass went out with the explosiveness of a suddenly insane tiger. He hit Canzoneri with a right-hander under the heart and slashed him with both hands to the jaw. Through most of the round the little Italian was subjected to a withering body attack that had him sick and groggy.

It was one of the most amazing transformations ever seen in the ring. Bass, harried by the pain of his broken collar-bone, weakened by the incessant pounding he had taken, became, for no apparent reason, a new man. There was simply no stopping him. He battered Canzoneri as Canzoneri had never been battered before.

Of course, Tony didn't take all this mildly and fold up under the furious attack. He fought back—did his best against the rage that poured upon him —but ineffectively.

The Crown and the Glory

THROUGH that round, and the next four as well, Benny kept slugging with both enraged fists. How he maintained the pace, in the condition he

was in, no one will ever know. He did keep it up. Bass didn't have a wide margin in all those rounds, of course. Tony was hard-boiled and able, too, and fought back with all his skill, but the Philadelphian was evening matters far too rapidly for comfort.

Between the fourteenth and fifteenth rounds, Sammy Goldman talked to Tony.

"You gotta get in there and beat him in this round," he said. "I don't see how you can lose, myself, but he's come along so swell that the referee and judges might not see anything but him. Take this last round and you'll be featherweight champion of the world. Kick it away and—well, you'll just be starting all over again."

So Tony rallied—and the two worn and ghastly youngsters threw the last of their strength and determination into the balance. They fought with arms so tired that it was an effort to lift them. Their lungs were straining and gasping for air. Tony smashed away recklessly. He didn't think of defense; he thought of nothing but beating down that stocky little fellow he hated so bitterly. They slugged and clinched and broke from clinches still slugging. The crowd stood and howled its applause of their courage and stamina.

At the finish, Bass, in a furnace of pain, could hardly regain his corner. He stood there, waiting with heart-sick tension to learn the verdict of the judges. Canzoneri went back to his corner, strong and capable of going a long way yet.

"Gosh!" he thought, "if I didn't win that fight, I've never won any in my life. I don't see how they can take it away from me, but you never can tell."

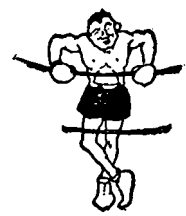
Joe Humphries seemed to take an interminable time collecting the slips. Finally he had them. He stood in the center of the ring—and then walked to Tony Canzoneri's corner and lifted that doughty little warrior's glove in the age-old sign of victory.

The youngster from New Orleans had won the featherweight championship. He was champion of the world, and only a bit over twenty-two years old. He ran across the ring to shake hands with Benny Bass, who stood there with the tears streaming down from under his lashes.

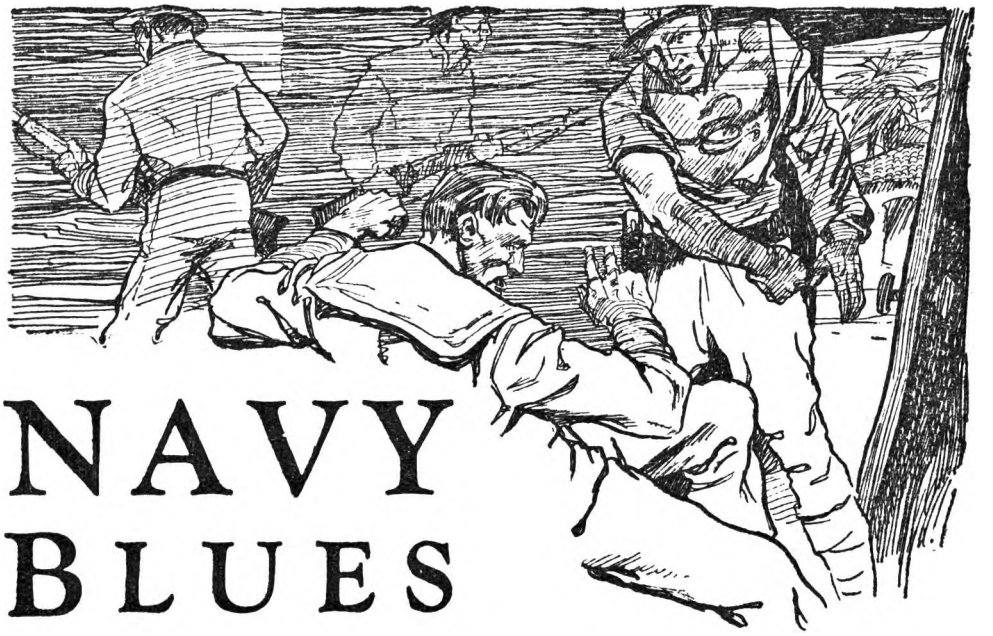
"It was a great fight, Benny," he said. "I'll give you another chance whenever you want it."

The little Philadelphian said nothing.

Tony, smiling and waving to the crowd, danced up the aisle to his dressing-room, champion of the world! It was hard to realize.



The little Dempsey was under a full head of steam . . . but there was trouble as well as blazing success ahead. The thick-set, hard-jawed Frenchman, Andre Routis, stood in the way. Others threatened: Al Singer, who had won the lightweight championship of the world; Jack Kid Berg, the Battling Nelson from Whitechapel; Billy Petrolle, Benny Bass. The woods were full of good men, but Tony Canzoneri went on with a smile. Don't miss the second instalment of this grand little warrior's life story.



NAVY BLUES

By C. S. MONTANYE

The tropics . . . Comic-opera revolution . . . Quick-stepping marines . . . A lone, leather-pushing gob with a grouch. That was the layout when Johnny Martin ran smack into the adventure of the tattooed serpent.

THE white launch from the hospital ship, *Plymouth*, neared the shore. Along the wharves detachments of marines with full equipment were visible. In the distance, over the flat roofs of Managra, hills loomed. Beyond them lay the dank, poisonous jungle.

The launch cut across the tide-rip. In its sternsheets Steve Kane dug an elbow into Johnny Martin's ribs.

"Listen, sailor," Kane said. "Don't go getting into trouble just on account of you being on shore leave. If you go sappy on me now and get in a jam, I'll never forgive you or myself."

"Rest easy," Martin retorted shortly. "I ain't going to mess up with no one."

"That's what you always say. Yet the minute I turn my back you're in a fight. I can't trust you. Right now I got you built up so's you're the next welter champ of the Pacific Fleet, if you don't turn sour on me. You can take this Axel Gunnerson baby the same as the boys took Porto Bello last week. All you got to do is work that grouch off first."

Johnny Martin shrugged. Broad-shouldered, tanned to the color of old leather by the South American sun, his blue eyes narrowed. He showed white teeth in the flash of a thin smile. Martin pushed his gob hat farther back on his curly head. He stared meditatively at the long line of ships anchored off the Managra harbor's mouth.

"Everybody in the fleet," Martin said softly, "from Rear-Admiral Payson down, has been telling me I ain't got the chance of a wooden leg in a forest fire against the Swede. According to them, they don't want me to bring the championship back to the fleet. They want this squarehead marine to keep it another year. Swell pals they are!"

Steve Kane spat.

"They don't know you like I do, sailor. Sure, Gunnerson's good. When he won his bout last year, he hit that guy on the *New Jersey* so hard the lad bounced off the number one gun-turret. Don't listen to 'em. Keep right, and a week from Thursday they'll be cheering instead of sneering."

"My pals!" Martin muttered under his breath. "I'll show them!"

"You bet you will, sailor!" Steve Kane said softly.

The launch nosed in to a wharf. Those aboard began to scramble out. A squad of marines had landed on the other side of the wharf. A hard-boiled sergeant with a scar across his cheek left off snapping out orders to watch the *Plymouth's* tender make its berth.

"Don't step on the nurses' feet or get in their way!" he said in a loud voice. "We gotta be careful or they won't be able to carry no more beef-tea out on their nice, safe little hospital ship."

There was a roar of jeering laughter from the men behind him. Johnny Martin broke away from Kane. He pushed a seaman in front of him out of his path and faced the hard-boiled sergeant.

"What was that crack?"

The other looked Martin over slowly.

"Why, I do believe it's one of the orderlies! Listen, friend, I hate to speak harshly to such a nice, clean boy, but—"

"Oh, yeah?" Something flared up within Martin. For too many months he had been nursing his grouch, trying to battle a way of the thick blues surrounding him ever since he had been transferred from the Yard to the *Plymouth*. "I'll show you how much of an orderly I am!"

Somebody caught and held the right arm Martin cocked. Steve Kane's voice hissed in his ear.

"You crazy fool! Do you want to go to the brig for the rest of your life? I knew I couldn't trust you!" He shoved Martin back, grinning apologetically at the sergeant. "Don't mind him, sarge. That's Johnny Martin, who fights Gunnerson on the fifteenth. He's rarin' to go, but he don't mean nothing!"

"So *he's* Martin?" The sergeant's thin lips twisted in a smile. "Take him away. Get him out of my sight. Gunnerson will do plenty to him! Go ahead, move on, the two of you!"

Steve Kane piloted Martin up the duck-walk to the uneven cobbles of the street paralleling the waterfront.

"You'll never be no good to yourself or nobody else until you learn to control your lousy temper," Steve Kane said.

"Nobody can call me an orderly!" Martin retorted. "Is it my fault they take me off the coal pile in the Brooklyn Navy Yard and transfer me to a hospital ship? For two years I've been trying to get on one of the cruisers. Just because Payson doesn't like my looks or something and I'm stuck out on sick bay, ain't no reason for anybody to kid me."

"Aw, shut up!" Steve Kane requested. "I'm sick of listening to you. I got to take them papers to the field commissary and I'm leaving you here. See you later, and for Pete's sake keep out of trouble."

JOHNNY MARTIN moved on down the street. The warfare with Murillo, the dreaded rebel leader who fought to overthrow the present Managra government, had not sent the populace of the South American city indoors. As he walked along, Martin recalled some of last night's gossip, when the first wounded had been put aboard the *Plymouth*. The marines, after an afternoon's hard fighting, had driven Murillo back to the hills. They were still at it. Even now the rattle of dis-

tant gunfire sounded.

Martin pushed a ruthless way through the rabble on the cobbled street. High overhead a plane whined past on scout duty. There was a sidewalk café a hundred yards farther on. Martin flung himself down on a rickety wooden chair before a table.

His fingers automatically searched his blouse for the makin's. He shook his head in disgust. Since he had started training for the big bout, Kane had made him cut out the smokes. Steve said it would hurt his wind. He couldn't drink, either, but Martin didn't miss the nose paint. He had never had a taste for it, even in that down-and-out period three years before, when he had joined the navy to see the world—and, for a year, had seen it from the top of an anthracite pile in the yard below the Brooklyn Bridge.

When a swarthy waiter came out through swinging doors, Martin ordered a soft drink. He sipped it moodily. The sergeant's gab on the wharf came back to him. It had always been like that. Marines and gobs kidded him because he was on a hospital ship. They said he was in soft. For months he had tried for a transfer. It was the idea of doing something outstanding, of drawing attention to himself, that had led Martin to challenge Axel Gunnerson, the welterweight marine champion. He told himself that if he could knock Gunnerson cold and bring the championship back to the fleet where it belonged, they'd have to listen to him in the matter of the transfer.

Martin brushed away buzzing flies, and brooded. The rattle of gunfire seemed closer. Maybe that was due to a shift in the wind. He thought about Axel Gunnerson. He had never seen the big marine he was to meet. Gunnerson's reputation with the gloves extended from the Pacific, through the Canal to the Atlantic. The Swede had won every bout in which he had started. When he had fought "Swab" Malloy, the fleet's former champion, he had knocked Malloy out, and the gob had been unconscious for twenty-two minutes.

Johnny Martin mused. In the old days he had been a prelim boxer. He had picked up a meager livelihood on the cards at some of the local Brooklyn fight clubs. He had never known how far he might have gone. He had hurt his left arm in a machine shop where he had taken a part-time job. The accident had not only thrown him out of work but had ended his professional fighting career as well.

When he had joined the navy, the staff doctors had taken a look at his wing. They had X-rayed it and fixed it up for him. Now it was as good as new. He had used it in his bouts for the past year and a half. It stood up well under fire.

Johnny Martin straightened in the rickety chair. It began to dawn upon him that the street was strangely empty. The rabble of a few minutes before seemed to have melted away. Diagonally across the street a fat woman was closing the heavy wooden shutters at the windows of her house. Martin watched her, understanding her reasons when a fresh fusillade of shooting sounded beyond the street's end. There had been no shift of the wind. The firing had drawn nearer. Machine-guns rattled away not a quarter of a mile distant.

The waiter popped out of the café.

"We close up, señor! Murillo, he comes! You pay—"

"Oh, yeah?" Martin grinned. "I pay nothing until I'm finished, and I'm settin' here until I'm ready to leave."

"But, señor, Murillo comes—"

"What do I care for Murillo? I'll break him in half and give you his ribs for a souvenir. I can lick him and his whole banana army—"

About that time Martin realized that he was addressing the empty air. The waiter had ducked back into the café. Its inner doors were being hastily slammed shut and bolted. Almost at the same instant a spatter of bullets

pinged against the brick wall of the house across the street where the stout woman had thoughtfully closed her shutters.

JOHNNY MARTIN jumped up. He was on shore leave. The fight between the notorious Murillo and the marines was none of his affair. Besides, Steve had cautioned him about getting into trouble. He could never win a championship belt by stopping rebel bullets. Martin gave a twitch to his cap, turned to leave—and halted abruptly.

A detachment of marines with a sweating sergeant at its head was coming up the street at double-quick. In the next block, smoke began to roll in a thick, yellowish fog. Sudden bedlam broke out. The marines came abreast of Martin. He saw that the sergeant was the same hard-boiled, caustic-tongued marine he had tried to take a poke at down at the wharf.

"Come on, guy!" the sergeant shouted at him. "If you're looking for a fight, here's your chance!"

Johnny Martin swung around. Marines, retreating, had taken up some sort of a stand at the end of the street. Martin knew the lash of inspiration. A fight was what he needed for his grouch, his blues—a fight at close quarters, where he could get in and mix it with some of these yellow-livered monkies; where he could feel bone and tissue crunch and break under the battery of his fists.

"The devil with Steve!" Martin told himself. "This is a public war, and I'm going—going—"

The half-naked horde of Murillo's rebel army had come down out of the hills. They had flung themselves on the marine outpost stationed at the edge of the Managra swamps. By sheer weight of numbers the rebels drove the marines back. Fires had been started at the end of the street. Flames shot up, yellow torches in the thickening smoke. There was hand-to-hand fighting there—shouts, curses, pistol shots and the clatter of machine-guns.

Martin dodged a mattress hurled from the window of one burning building, and ran on. The smoke swirled about him. Suddenly he glimpsed a marine with his back to the wall of a house a hundred yards to the left. Martin saw the man trying to shake off a swarm of the yelling enemy. The marine went to his knees. Knives flashed.

Martin cut through the smoke and reached the scene of action. He slugged the first rebel, kicked the second in the stomach and smashed a fist into the face of a third. He reached the fallen marine. A knife slipped by his shoulder, slicing his blouse.

Martin gripped the hand that held the knife. He jerked the arm back and over. He imagined he could hear the snap of a breaking bone. The man's scream of pain was shrill. Martin flung him aside and turned his attention to the marine. He had been stabbed and was bleeding profusely from his wounds.

Not twenty feet away Johnny Martin saw the door of a house. He half-carried and half-dragged the marine to its threshold. The door was locked. Martin kicked it in. Somehow, he got the marine inside and slammed the door shut. He pushed furniture across to barricade it.

BLOWS thudded off the door. The piled-up furniture shook but held. Johnny Martin gave his attention to the man he had brought in. The marine lay slumped on the floor, unconscious. Martin took the man's automatic pistol from between his clenched fingers. It was empty, but the butt of it made a good weapon. Standing there, facing the door, Martin suddenly was dazzled by an idea.

He had saved a marine! That meant something. He didn't want to be a hero and get a medal, but the saving of a life might be significant. It might help him in the matter of a transfer from the hospital ship to one of the new cruisers.

He tightened his mouth, breathing hard. That was the ticket—save a marine and win a transfer! The furniture wobbled under the assault on the door. The crackle of flames broke out, and the heat in the room increased. Sweat stung Martin's eyes.

His hastily made barricade began to topple over. A machine-gun outside sang like a locust. Martin put his shoulder to the door to hold it. For a minute he had a confused idea that he could keep it shut by his own strength. Then his feet began to slip and slide on the uncarpeted floor. He ducked aside to keep the door from falling in on him.

It crashed open with a splitting, splintering sound. Smoke and cinders, caught in the air current, whirled through its aperture. Martin threw up an arm to shield his burning eyes. He figured he was all through. He couldn't see to fight. He tried to strike out with the automatic, but somebody caught his wrist and wrenched the gun away.

"Easy, buddy, easy! Everything's going to be all right!"

Johnny Martin tried to focus his blurred, watering eyes. He couldn't see the man's face, but knew it was that of a marine. The other was stripped to the waist. Martin was just able to make out tattooing on the fellow's sweat-glistening chest. He saw a coiled snake with a forked tongue done in red and blue inks.

The newcomer pushed him aside, shouted something to those in the doorway, and went across to the wounded marine on the floor.

"Hey, wait a minute!" Martin's voice was thick, choked. "Leave him be! I'll take care of him!"

"Oh, you will, eh?"

"You heard me! I brought him in and I'll take him out I want credit for this!"

Martin stumbled forward. He was resentful, angry. The swirling smoke made the marine with the tattooing on his chest a vague shape. When Martin reached him, the heel of his open hand swung over and clicked Martin's teeth together.

"So you want credit, eh! Mebbe a solid gold cup or something—"

Johnny Martin swung with his left. He missed, and a right hook bounced off the side of his jaw. Martin felt his knees buckle under him. The tattoo mark on the man's wet chest danced fantastically before his blurred vision. He knew he was going out for the count—going out cold. Without a sound, he reeled against the room's side wall, pitched forward and lay motionless, his face pressed to the hard, wooden floor.

The marine shouted to those in the doorway:

"All right, you guys! Here's a couple of fellers to go out feet first! Come on, make it snappy!"

EVENING had descended upon Managra. Stars hung like white lamps in the sky. Across the harbor the fleet's semaphore lights blinked like twitching eyes. Johnny Martin sat on the stringpiece of the wharf where he had landed that morning and waited for the *Plymouth's* launch.

His head ached dully. The events of the day tumbled through his mind. Murillo had been captured and the excitement was over. Managra celebrated the bandit's arrest and the flight of his broken army back to the hills. The cobbled street paralleling the waterfront was vibrant with voices, footsteps, gaiety.

Suddenly a familiar voice sounded on the wharf:

"If it ain't the sailor himself! What a mug you are, Johnny! I've been looking all over for you. Where you been at?"

Steve Kane sat down beside Martin. The hospital ship's launch curved in out of the light-shot gloom. Martin drew a breath.

"I've been around."

"Yeah, but where? What were you doing?"

Martin got up. He stretched his

arm and looked out across the harbor.

"Lots of things. Don't ask me, because I don't feel like telling you. Here's the launch. Let's get out to sick bay and sleep this off."

Steve Kane gripped his arm.

"You sound like you'd been drinking. If I didn't know you were off the skee, I'd figure you were tanked. What's the trouble, sailor?"

The launch was almost in. Johnny Martin answered over his shoulder.

"The trouble is some guy in the marines I don't know by sight but who I'm going to get if it takes me the rest of my life! A guy who did me out of a fair chance to get that transfer, knocked me cold in the bargain, and put me down at a first-aid station for three hours. Boy, what I won't do to that gorilla when I meet up with him!"

Steve Kane digested the statement.

"Battling, eh? I knew it. Tell me something. How are you going to meet up with this party you're beefing about when you don't even know him by sight?"

"I got a way of recognizing him," Martin replied briefly. "Don't be asking me no more questions now, because I don't intend to answer them. See?"

Kane shook his head.

"No, I don't see and I never will where you're concerned. Fighting against my orders! Me trying to make something out of you, and you going sappy on me!" He followed Martin down into the launch. "Honest, I don't know why I bother with a dummy like you—"

IT was the night of the bouts on the gun deck of the *Idaho*. In the forward range-finding room, temporarily used as a dressing-room for the boxers, Steve Kane worked on Martin, kneading his back muscles. Outside, as evinced by the lusty cheering, the semi-final was over and the main bout coming up.

"Get this, sailor." Kane's tone was crisp and quick. "I was talking to Doc Brennan last night. He says if you bring the champeenship back to the fleet, he'll sign the recommendation for your transfer. Win tonight and you can write your own ticket on what boat you want to sail."

"If I can't knock a marine silly," Martin grunted, "leave me aboard the *Plymouth* and I'll take everybody's kidding and love it!"

The door opened.

"Shake it up, you gobs! Gunnerson's in his corner, and they're waiting for you."

On the gun deck, where the ring was roped off, sailors and marines waited in crowded, serried ranks. As far as Johnny Martin could see, there were faces. Steve Kane made gangway through the throng. Martin followed. Overhead the stars peered down, and ashore the lights of Managra were like glinting, yellow necklaces.

Martin ducked under the ropes and followed Kane to his corner. He was greeted with cheers, but there was something lacking in them. It was as if the sailors wanted him to do his best for the recovery of the championship belt, but doubted his ability. Martin sucked in a breath and stared across at the Swede, while Kane conferred with the referee.

Axel Gunnerson didn't resemble the squarehead Martin had imagined him to be. He was dark, tanned to a mulato tint, and heavy-jawed. He wore a bathrobe of the marine colors, and met Johnny Martin's curious look with an expressionless face. The crowd, annoyed by the delay, grew satirical.

Steve Kane returned to Johnny's corner. He shoved a rubber plate in Martin's mouth, looked to the hand bandages and laced on the gloves.

"Fifteen rounds, sailor! Pay attention. Don't mix it with this baby until you feel him out. His right's murder. Stay away—box him."

Martin couldn't answer because of the rubber plate in his mouth. He nodded. The bell clanged several times. He got up, holding the ropes and flexing his arms. The crowd gave him another

cheer. Martin smiled ironically. They didn't think a whole lot of him. Gunnerson was tough, and he was untried, the winner of only a few minor bouts. A load of money had been wagered on the marine champ. Martin thought of what Doc Brennan on the *Plymouth* had promised Kane.

The bell again. They met in the middle of the ring and touched gloves. In the next minute Martin knew he was in a fight. He had hardly rolled with Gunnerson's first left jab when he felt a shock of amazed surprise. In his corner, with the bathrobe on, Gunnerson was only the champ of the marines. With the robe off, Gunnerson was something entirely different. Johnny Martin's gaze darted to Gunnerson's chest and fastened on the tattooing there. He saw the coiled snake with its forked tongue done in red and blue inks, and recognition and understanding held him momentarily spellbound.

So it was Axel Gunnerson who had broken in the door that day! Gunnerson who had planted the solid hook on his jaw and knocked him cold! Gunnerson who had gyped him out of his chance to be a hero and get credit enough to fulfill his fondest dream and end his navy blues! *Gunnerson—*

Something whipped itself across Martin's jaw. His legs went limp under him. The roar of the crowd echoed in his ears. He saw the referee's arm move up and down mechanically. At the count of "six" he climbed to his knees. At "eight" he was on one foot, and at "ten" he was up. He covered, bobbing and weaving, trying to clear his head, and falling into a clinch.

"Stand up and fight!" Gunnerson's voice hissed in Martin's ear. "Stand up and take it! You'll be going back to sick bay soon enough."

"Oh, yeah? I don't know. Remember the day you knocked me out—"

"You're crazy! I never saw you before!"

"The day—"

The referee tore them apart. Gunnerson shot a left and right. Johnny Martin blocked the first swing and let the right flick harmlessly by his head. All at once a sense of triumph flooded him. Something told him he couldn't lose. In a hundred fights he might be knocked out, but tonight, now, he was invincible.

This bout was in the bag! The championship was coming back to the fleet, where it belonged. Swab Malloy's kayo was about to be avenged.

"That snake," Martin said, when they got in close and slugged, "is your trademark and calling-card all right!"

Axel Gunnerson made some reply, but Martin didn't hear it. He hooked with his left and sent his right in. It thudded against the tattooed reptile. Oddly, the snake seemed to move. Again Martin jabbed his left to the marine's face, and banked his right glove against the serpent. The forked tongue seemed to dart out at him. Martin slammed his left at the menace for the third time.

Gunnerson covered up and tried to hang on. The sense of triumph was like a goad to Johnny Martin. There wasn't much of the round left. Martin realized that. The frenzied shrieks of the crowd drove him on. He had found out something. Axel Gunnerson couldn't take it below the ribs!

The marine champ reached the ropes. He slid off them and tried to side-step. There was something in his eyes, a harried, numb, wondering look. Fighting like a fiend, Martin chopped in a flurry of left and rights, and hooked for the jaw. He stopped the blow in mid air. The feint worked perfectly. Gunnerson's guard went up. With the speed of light, Martin's left socked in and buried itself in the solar plexus, an inch below the snake's coiled tail.

He stepped away as Gunnerson fell forward. The marine sprawled over the canvas. There was a stunned, almost eerie silence. Through it the referee's count sounded, clear and loud. Then Johnny Martin's glove went up in the symbol of victory, and a tumult of fran-

tic cheering rolled across the Managra harbor. The championship was back with the fleet!

"I NEVER seen anything like it nowhere!" Steve Kane declared, when they were back in the dressing-room again. "Sailor, you were good enough tonight to lick the world. What were you saying to Gunnerson?"

Martin grinned happily.

"I was reminding him of a certain afternoon—the afternoon of the day his pals put the cuffs on Murillo and I was knocked for a loop. You see, that's the way I figured I'd know the guy I was looking for—by the snake tattooed on his chest. The second I landed it, I was home. Nothing could stop me then, Steve!"

Kane, listening, began to laugh. He doubled up against the table where Martin sat.

"Sailor, this is funny! On the level, it's a riot!"

"What's funny about it?"

"You, with a grudge against Gunnerson! Listen. Don't you know there are more snakes than one in this man's army? Get me right, now. I was talking with a couple of marines yesterday. They told me something you ought to know."

Johnny Martin stared for a long, silent minute.

"Oh, yeah? What did they tell you, Steve?"

Kane straightened up. He controlled his mirth with an effort.

"The marines told me Gunnerson didn't figure in the battle that afternoon," he explained. "Gunnerson, at the time you were being knocked off, was routing ammunition supplies through San Pedro, nine miles up the coast!"

HE PACKED 'EM IN

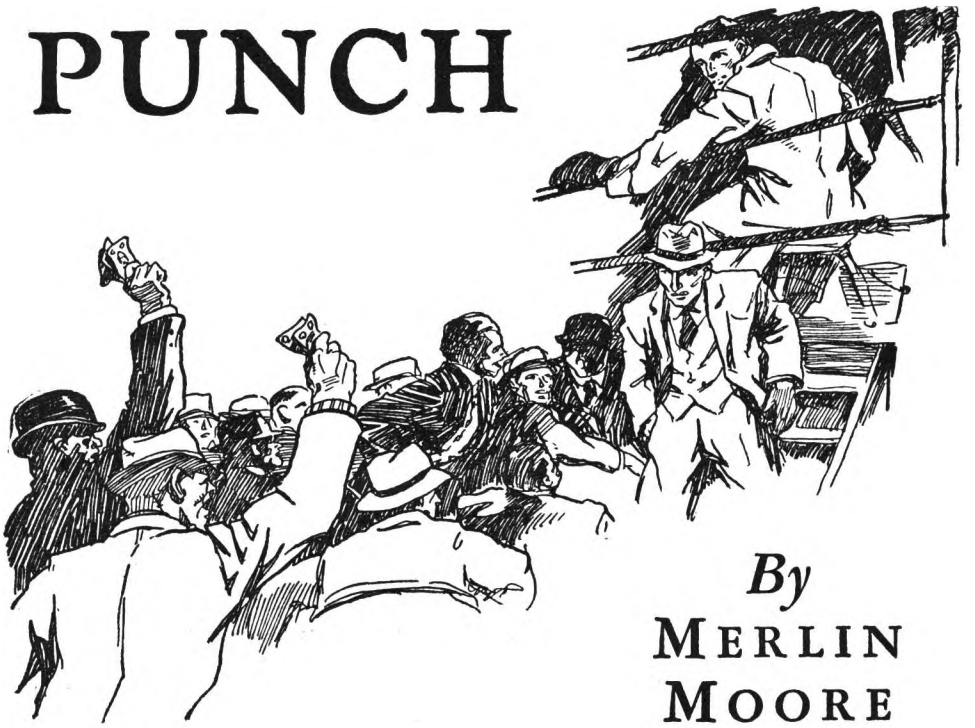
ONE of the toughest lightweights that ever laced on a glove was Willie Fitzgerald, who was called "The Fighting Harp." Fitzgerald was the leading contender among the 133-pounders for nearly fourteen years. During that time he fought everyone of consequence, including Jack McClellan, Jimmy Britt, Joe Gans and Aurelio Herrera. When he found it difficult to get matches with men in his own class, he nonchalantly stepped up and took on such corking good welterweights as Mike Twin Sullivan, Harry Lewis, Jimmy Gardner, Young Loughrey and many others of the same calibre.

Willie was a "club fighter," as the saying is. He didn't depend on boxing skill but on ruggedness and a wicked punch in either hand. Were he in action today, he would pack them in, particularly if paired with such fellows as Tony Canzoneri and Billy Petrolle. The spectators always could count on speechless action when Willie answered the starting bell.

He wasn't invulnerable, of course. No one is. But it took such a marvelous performer as Joe Gans ten rounds to score the first knockout registered against the game Irishman. Later, Steve Crosby, Jimmy Gardner and Harry Lewis turned the trick, but Willie never did get discouraged. During the last six years of his hectic career he engaged in nearly thirty-five battles without losing a single one.

Those matches were not pushovers either, for included among his rivals were Andy McGarry, Freddie Welsh, Tommy Quill, Fighting Dick Nelson, Leech Cross and Young Erne. Any one of those chaps could be rated as a star in whatever period you might place him.

The POISON PUNCH



By MERLIN MOORE TAYLOR

There was poison in the secret punch old Bud Hanna taught The Assassin—but its venom was mild in comparison with the hate that filled The Assassin's heart.

BACK in the days when he was plain Bill Terry—long before he had perfected the deadly left hook which had won him the sobriquet of "The Assassin" and the lightweight championship of the world—he had been driven from St. Joe in disgrace.

A foul blow was the reason—a vicious, unfair punch that had incapacitated a clever opponent who had stung Terry to fury with a succession of hard stabs to a tender and bleeding eye.

The boos and hisses which followed marked a turning point in Terry's life. They filled him with a burning desire to "show those hicks," and they unleashed the savage within him.

St. Joe had become too hot for him, but elsewhere he had scaled the heights. His nickname told the story. He had battled his way to the title by a species of cruelty and vindictiveness rarely seen in the ring.

Once he had taken a man's measure and satisfied himself that he was the master, he slashed and smashed his rival, but held off the final merciful hook to the jaw until the tigerishness in him had been appeased.

Now, flushed with conquest, he was returning to the town which once had given him the bum's rush—to make it pay. He had shown the hicks, as he had vowed. Their kowtows in acknowledgment of that fact would be sufficient amends for their raspberries on that never-to-be-forgotten night.

All but old Bud Hanna. Terry had not yet determined what he was going to exact from Bud, but it was going to be plenty. For Terry had concentrated against the old man all the hatred of which he was capable—and it was mostly because of a handshake.

This was how it had happened. . . .

Terry, fleeing the juvenile officers in the slums of his native city, had caught a freight. An unfeeling brakeman had discovered him as the train pulled into St. Joe, and kicked him off. Terry had not been hurt—he was inured to hard knocks and the freight was moving slowly—but, snarling, he picked himself up from the cinders and hurled lumps of coal at the grinning brakeman until he was out of range.

Then Terry went uptown, and a day or two later drifted into the gymnasium which Bud Hanna ran as a side-line to his promotion of boxing contests. Something in the unkempt, shock-headed youth's miserable appearance touched the old man. He gave him a job as handy man around the place.

One day, because no one else was around, Terry laid his broom and mop aside and put on the gloves with a preliminary boy who was yelling for a sparring partner. He took to the padded mitts like a duck to water. Unconsciously, going about the gymnasium in the course of his duties, he had absorbed a great deal from the boxers who trained there, and, given the chance, was able to put much of what he had learned into practice in a crude way.

He made a monkey of the preliminary boy, and old Bud Hanna saw him do it. He took Terry in hand, taught him a few things and began to use him to help train other boys. In no time at all Terry became a preliminary boy himself. After he had acquitted himself well several times, Bud had a serious talk with him.

"You've got something, son," the veteran said. "You're a fair to middling pork-and-beaner right now, but you can go a long ways if you make up your mind to do it. If you'll put yourself in my hands entirely—"

Terry eagerly agreed. Since he was a minor, however, canny old Bud took steps to protect his own interests. Terry had no living relatives, so Bud went into court, had the youngster made a ward of it, and obtained from the judge a contract that made him Terry's manager and partner in his earnings until he should come of age.

"Now we're all set," he announced. "I've been waiting a long time, Terry, to teach a certain left hook to the right boy. You've got a right that's not to be sneezed at, and a natural left that's a honey. It's made to order for this hook I'm going to teach you. Once you've got it down pat and land it—well, you can start taking off the gloves so far as that fight is concerned."

FOLLOWED days of gruelling grind for Bill Terry. Hour after hour Bud patiently instructed him in the art of give and take. He saw to it that the boy had proper food and sufficient sleep, and watched with pride as the slim young body developed suppleness and strength.

But he did not teach him the promised left hook. "It's this way," he ex-

plained, when Terry mentioned it. "The hook won't get you anything unless you pave the way for it. You've got to know how to jab and cross and uppercut and feint first. The hook is your reserve—to spring on the other fellow when you need something extra to bring home the bacon, and never at any other time. You'll be getting around to it by and by."

There came a day at last when Bud locked the gym doors and initiated Terry into the secret of the blow—a twisting, corkscrew thing that started no more than ten inches from the target but landed with crushing impact. Followed other days when he practiced it over and over until Bud was satisfied to let him try it out in an actual match.

Terry, under orders, landed it in the second round, and it was half an hour before its victim became wholly aware of his surroundings.

Bud Hanna was jubilant.

"You're on your way," he told Terry. "I'm going to put you on a week from next Friday in the semi-windup against Young Eynon. He's fast and clever, and just the boy that will make you extend yourself. You're going to need that hook to beat him—but, mind, you're not to use it until I give the word, and that won't be until the fifth round, anyhow. I'll be sitting at the ringside. Watch me for orders and follow them exactly."

Terry nodded. "All right," he agreed carelessly.

Young Eynon was wise in his way. He suspected that no good had been intended him in this match. For two rounds he was careful, bringing to bear all his knowledge and skill to compel Terry to disclose what he had. He discovered that he was meeting stiffer competition than he had expected, but at the same time he came to the conclusion that Terry was "in over his head" and that he, Young Eynon, could take him.

In the third round Young Eynon opened up. He unloosed a fusillade that drove Terry back to the ropes and cornered him. Then, methodically, he began a bombardment to keep him there. Terry evaded him after a bit, but he had been badly shaken, and took considerable more punishment during the round. Just as it ended, a stinging jab opened up a cut over one eye, and all of the ministrations in his corner during the rest period failed to stop its bleeding.

Young Eynon concentrated upon that cut when the fourth round began. He jabbed and jabbed until Terry was wild with the pain. Enraged, Terry rushed him, swinging wildly.

"No! No! Cover up! *Cover up!*" bellowed old Bud Hanna.

If he heard, Terry paid no attention. Again and again he rushed madly, only to take another jab upon the cut over his eye. Abruptly he set himself for the hook that Bud had taught him.

Bud screamed a warning against it, then groaned as Terry hooked and missed and went to the floor under a vicious uppercut from Young Eynon's fist. He was up again in a flash, ignoring Bud's shouted pleas that he take his time, set himself for the hook again, missed, and went to the canvas for the second time.

He came up groggy, and, as Young Eynon danced in, seeking an opening for the knockout he felt sure was in his power, Terry suddenly brought up his clenched fist in a deliberate foul. Then, spurning the writhing body of his opponent upon the floor, he whirled and clambered through the ropes.

A bedlam of hoots, hisses, catcalls and jeers sounded an accompaniment to his march from the ring to his dressing-room. For a moment he was in danger of being mobbed, and policemen with drawn clubs clove a way through the angry fans and surrounded him.

For all of his sneering curses, Terry was stung to the quick. The applause with which his efforts had been received on other occasions was as bread and meat to a starving man. The attitude of the crowd tonight, even though he

had brought it upon himself, enraged him.

Later, old Bud Hanna rubbed salt in his wounds.

"You're a yellow dog, Terry," he said bitterly. "I never saw a dirtier, more uncalled-for foul than the one you handed out tonight. You're washed up with the fans here. Some of them are ready to hang you to a lamp-post."

"I'm blowing town tonight," said Terry. "Gimme what dough I got coming for the fight—"

Hanna shook his head. "I got orders from the state boxing commission to hold up all purses for any fight that ends in a foul. They'll never give you a cent of it. But here's ten dollars out of my own pocket. Now, good-bye."

He extended his hand, and Terry took it before he recalled that Bud never shook hands with a man he wanted to see again. It was an insult Terry never forgot or forgave.

IN the years that followed, Terry came to believe that Bud had swindled him out of his share of the purse and had then chased him out of town. It was for this he was going to make Bud pay.

Terry was trying to decide how he was going to do it when Ike Goldstein, his rotund little manager, plumped down into the seat beside him.

"I'm still trying to figure out, Terry, just what your idea is in wanting to go to St. Joe," he said. "Isn't it about time you let me in on it?"

"It's just a matter of sentiment, Ike, like I told you."

Ike sat up in alarm. "Sentiment! You don't mean it's a dame in this hick town?"

"Naw," Terry said contemptuously, "it ain't a dame. But St. Joe is the place where I got my start. There's a spot for it in my heart, and I gotta go back and see the old town and some of the fellows I used to know."

"Boloney! Come on, come on, what's the low-down?"

"Well, I'll tell you, Ike. It's an old man, a gray-haired old man who taught me what I first learned about boxing. Taught me that left hook, too. He's got something coming from me—and he's going to get it."

Ike slanted his eyes for an appraising look at his champion's face. "From the way you said that, I'm not so sure I'd want to be in his place, Terry. Don't you go to doing anything rash, now. You're not too popular even if you are the champ, and it won't put any dough in our pockets if you get the newspaper fellows down on you."

Struck by a sudden thought, he grew excited. "I got an idea. Soon as we light in town we'll give it out that you come back, just like that hooey you handed me, because you got a sentiment for the place and particularly for that old goofus I never heard you mention before. The newspapers all over the country will eat it up. Maybe it will start people to thinking you're not so inhuman, after all. But you shoulda told me sooner. Think of all the publicity we coulda had!"

St. Joe reacted to the presence of the champion as Ike had hoped it would. His every appearance was the signal for an ovation. If any of the fans recalled that night when they had hooted and jeered him and talked of stringing him up to a lamp-post, it wasn't mentioned.

So Terry strutted and posed and patted old Bud Hanna on the back and gushed over him and was very well satisfied with himself, indeed. He had "shown those hicks" and made them like it.

Just as soon as he got even with old Bud, and in such a way that there would be no comeback—he'd blow St. Joe.

ON the second day of their stay Ike Goldstein came to his champion in a state of great agitation.

"What's the idea of having me for a manager if you're going to make your own deals?" he demanded hotly. "How come that you've been putting it out that

you're going to stage a benefit for this Hanna guy? You haven't said a word to me about it."

"Keep your shirt on," advised Terry. "I never said a word about a benefit. I just happened to mention that I'd like to give Bud a testimonial. Testimonial, Ike, not benefit."

"Well, everybody's got the idea you meant a boxing exhibition, and the town's nerts over the idea. There'd be a wad of dough in it, a sell-out, and we could use a bit of the do-re-mi just now. But we couldn't hold out on this old pal you've dug up without a squawk that'd be in every paper in the country, and that wouldn't be so good."

"Listen," said Terry, "you go ahead and fix it for the exhibition. We can stick the money in our pockets and there won't be any squawk, either. Nobody'll ever know we kept it except Bud, and I got a way to gag him. It came to me just like that."

Bud Hanna, Terry said, lived with an invalid sister in the old homestead where both had been born. Bud was devoted to the bed-ridden old lady; both were deeply attached to their home.

"A fellow named Harkness came to me today and said that, without letting his sister know, Bud had borrowed a grand on the place," Terry continued. "The note comes due in a couple of weeks. Bud's broke. He can't pay it. Harkness was willing to renew it, but he swallowed that hooey that I was going to do something for Bud and he suggested that I pay the note. Well, I bought it off him."

"You bought it? Going to play Santa Claus to the old man?"

"I am not. I was figuring on foreclosing when the note comes due and tossing the old punk and his sister out on their ears. I been figuring a long time to get even with him for a dirty deal he gave me. And I wouldn't be out anything. The place is worth twice the grand it would cost me, maybe more."

Goldstein's lips curled in a sneer. "You are a dirty dog, aren't you, Terry? I've pulled some raw stuff in my time, but this—putting an old man and a sick old woman out of their home—well, it's no skin off my back. What's the note got to do with your being so keen about this benefit—I mean testimonial?"

"After the dough's in the house, you pull the note on Bud and tell him I'll let it run so long as he keeps his mouth shut about us grabbing off all the jack. He won't like it, but he'll agree. He'd do anything to stay on in the old home and keep his sister from finding out there's a plaster on it. Get it? We invest a grand, and we stick in our pockets whatever the exhibition brings in—five or six grand, anyhow."

"Ten, easy."

"The more, the better. We can always foreclose and get our grand, and maybe two or more, back."

So it was arranged. Goldstein got busy with his arrangements for the "testimonial" to Bud Hanna, while Champion Terry went around with a smile on his face like that of the cat who knows just when he is going to eat the canary.

"Well, Champ," Goldstein said a day or two later, "I got a guy all ribbed up to box you in the exhibition. Some boob blacksmith who used to pull on the mitts once in a while. He ain't got no record and he won't give you any trouble. Says he'd like to do it for the fun and the honor of boxing with you, and I was all set to pay a hundred berries, too."

Terry yawned. "What's his name?"

"Guggenheimer or something like that. What's the diff? They'll turn out to see you, not him, and nobody'll expect anything from him. You can carry him along, show them some fancy stuff—you know what to do."

BILL TERRY, "The Assassin," was the first to make his appearance in the ring for his exhibition bout. Ordinarily the champion delays his entrance, but this was only a hick affair and

Terry was not averse to posing a while amid the plaudits of the spectators.

Eventually a murmur that grew into a volley of cheers announced the approach of his opponent. Terry turned slightly, so that out of the corner of his eye he could watch the form swathed in a bathrobe clamber through the ropes and advance across the ring for the customary handshake.

Terry bent over the ropes and favored Ike Goldstein with a derisive wink, then, at a signal from his manager, whirled and thrust out his gloved hand. As he did so, his jaw sagged, his eyes threatened to pop from his head, and crimson flooded his cheeks. *The man he was to box was Young Eynon!*

Swiftly memory pictured for the champion that other time, five years before, when he had stood in the ring with this man—the cool, deliberate jabbing away at his sore eye, his own wild and ineffective rushes, and his failure to land that devastating left hook, the two knockdowns, the deliberate foul, the hisses, the hoots, the jeers.

Suddenly it impinged upon his consciousness that unfriendly voices were shouting at him:

"Do you know him, Terry?"

"Try fouling him this time?"

"Think you can land the left hook on him?"

"Eynon'll knock you down again tonight, Champ."

Terry glanced angrily around. Something told him that this was no accident, no remarkable coincidence. It was deliberate. For what purpose? And who had done it? That often-proved axiom of the ring that a man who has licked you once always has the Indian sign on you, flashed into mind. He felt a faint twinge of fear.

Abruptly he jerked himself back from the brink of panic. This, he told himself, was only an exhibition, not a fight, as the heavily padded gloves upon his hands testified. And what had he, the champion, to fear from this other man, who had gone nowhere, was making his living at the forge and anvil, his fighting skill insufficient to keep him in the ring game? Eynon had been clever in the old days, yes, but Terry himself had gone ahead, had reached the topmost rung. His lips curled in a sneer as he touched gloves with Young Eynon and returned to his corner.

"One thousand dollars that Eynon knocks him out."

The cry came from somewhere near the ring, and Terry saw Ike Goldstein leap to his feet and start in the direction of the man who had uttered it. Terry grasped the ropes and strove to call the rotund little manager back to his senses, to tell him that it was all a monstrous joke which he would explain later. Then he saw money being displayed all around, and other cries dinned into his ears.

"Five hundred here that Eynon knocks him out."

"Two hundred here."

"I'll take the same."

"I've got a yard on Eynon."

To his dismay Terry saw Goldstein, a sheaf of bills in his hand, taking every offer, and he tried to yell a remonstrance. But his voice failed him. He could only gurgle. Then he saw Ike shake his head and come hurriedly back to his corner.

"Gee, Ike," he said in an agonized whisper, "have you gone off your bean? What are you doing?"

"Making a clean-up," Goldstein said cheerfully. "These hicks think it's the real McCoy, and they've gone crazy. All right, we'll make it for blood. Go in there and knock this bird stiff. I bet every cent of the bankroll."

THE referee was calling them to the center of the ring. Terry did not hear what he said, for, divested of coat and vest, his sleeves rolled up and an unholy light of joy in eyes that peered from behind thick-lensed spectacles, old Bud Hanna stood just outside Young Eynon's corner, and he was laughing openly at the champion.

Rage rose in Terry's bosom. Framed, was he? Well, he'd shown these hicks once; he'd show them again and make it cost them dough this time. He'd take this blacksmith who was supposed to have the Indian sign on him, and cut him to pieces in the process.

When, at the sound of the gong, he swept out of his corner, he was "The Assassin." With lowered head and upraised guard, he charged. As they came together, his arms became flailing pistons bent on the annihilation of Young Eynon, but rage—and fear—robbed him of his judgment of distance and sapped the strength of his blows. Young Eynon might have been out of the ring for years, but he had not lost all the old skill, and, just as had happened so long before, he started jabbing, jabbing, jabbing at the same old eye.

Terry, more experienced these days, kept telling himself that he must get a grip on his emotions, bring himself under control, forget the personal angle and use his wealth of ring knowledge to take the play away from this smiling devil in front of him.

Suddenly cool, he unlimbered a withering fire of punches at Eynon's head and body. A hard right to the mouth split the blacksmith's lip and brought blood; a smashing cross under the heart sent him staggering back.

Now! Eynon was coming in again. Like a dart of lightning, Terry set himself for the left hook, the famous, corkscrewing, demolishing left hook that had made him champion. Then he shot it out with all his weight behind it.

But it didn't land! Terry, thrown off balance and wide open, saw with horror that now it was Young Eynon who was setting himself in the peculiar and only position from which the hook could be delivered effectively. *Eynon, too, knew the secret of the blow!*

Terry strove desperately to get his guard up, knew he never could make it in time, saw the hook start but never felt it land. Sudden and all-encompassing darkness enfolded him.

HALF an hour later the door of the champion's dressing-room was pushed open and old Bud Hanna burst in upon Terry and the distrait Goldstein, who were venting their wrath upon each other.

"'Tis music to the gambler's ear to hear the suckers moan,'" quoted old Bud, "and you two are certainly furnishing a whole concert for me right now. You didn't have me fooled a minute, Terry, with that bunk you spilled all over town about how grateful you were to me. I knew you too well. A testimonial for me, says you. Yeah, and a benefit for yourself, eh? Well, I reversed 'em. And I get my benefit from the jack you bet and lost. That was mostly my dough you covered—had it salted away in bonds for a long time."

"Well, you can just peel off a grand and hand it over for that plaster on your home," snarled Terry.

Bud shook his head. "I'll give you nothing for it, but I'll take it off your hands just the same, Terry. Remember when I first signed you up? Remember—and this ought to be news to you, Ike—when the court gave me a contract that called for half of what you made in the ring until you were twenty-one? How much was it, Terry? And where is my half? I've got the papers in a suit I filed against you today for an accounting. Want 'em served on you? No? Well, I'm not the man to kick even a yellow dog when he's down, so I'll make you a proposition. Hand over that mortgage, and you can have the old contract. What do you say?"

"I'll say it for him," said Ike Goldstein quickly, "and the answer is 'yes.' Some people get all the breaks, Bud Hanna, and you're one of 'em. If the champ had ever landed on that Young Eynon of yours with his left hook—"

"I taught him that left hook," said Bud. "I taught it to Young Eynon, too, and then I taught him something else that Terry never knew—how to block it."

FAMOUS FIGHTS I HAVE SEEN

By
OLD TIMER

Billy Madden, manager extraordinary, was the key to the historic Maher-Goddard battle. Watch Maher as he glares across the ring at Madden ministering to his new protégé. Once Madden had stood in Peter's corner and guided him through the fistic wars. Now they were enemies, and Goddard personified the breach that had come between them.

PETER MAHER sat down stolidly in his corner of the Coney Island Athletic Club ring and glared across the lighted stretch at his opponent. Peter's disposition was never a mild one. It soured now beyond all bounds. A scowl furrowed his forehead. His lips were tight with wrath. Normally he could stir himself up to a pitch of fighting rage when it was necessary—but his bad humor now was not due to the man with whom he would soon trade punches.

He was angry because Billy Madden was in the opposite corner to second Joe Goddard, an Australian who was known as the Barrier Champion. Several years before, Madden had gone in search of a man whom he thought might be able to

whip John L. Sullivan. Madden found Maher in Ireland, and was much impressed with the big fellow's terrific hitting. He brought Peter to America and began training him for the task of whipping the supposedly invincible John L. However, Jim Corbett beat Peter to it by knocking out the once great title-holder in New Orleans.

That was disappointment, indeed, but Billy still had hopes that his Irishman would some day wear the heavyweight crown. Before forcing Corbett into a match, however, it was necessary for Maher to score over some other outstanding performer among the heavyweights.

Among these, of course, was Bob Fitzsimmons, and Billy made the mistake of pitting his man against the red-headed, freckled Cornishman. The story of that battle has been told before. Bob scored a decisive knockout over the ambitious invader.

That disgusted Madden. He abandoned Peter and went in quest of someone whom he thought might be better equipped to become a title-holder.

He found a very promising prospect in Joe Goddard, who had not only beaten down all opposition in Australia, but had won several fights over good men in the United States.

Joe was a big, clever fellow and an excellent hitter with either hand, though his right fist was not packed with the dynamite that made Peter Maher one of the most feared heavyweights of his time.

However, Billy was sold on the ability of the man from Down Under. It occurred to him that it would be both an excellent test for his new protégé and a bitter lesson for his former favorite if he could match Goddard with Maher, and the Australian should win.

Peter accepted the fight without much trepidation. He had a world of confidence, and his defeat at the hands of Fitzsimmons was the only real black mark in his career. But, when he climbed into the ring and saw Billy Madden hustling around Goddard, whispering in his ear and arranging his fighting apparel, Peter was nettled. It disconcerted him, for he and Madden had been on friendly terms for a long while.

Peter admired the knowledge and skill of the man who had once handled him. He always had felt that he possessed something of an advantage over his opponent when Billy was behind him. Madden knew how to rib him up—how to spur him into his best stride—and now Billy was over there helping Goddard. Peter muttered angrily to himself. He didn't feel right. He was ill at ease. Then his anger boiled higher and overrode his nervousness.

He'd show Billy Madden. He didn't need that fellow back of him. Who was this Goddard, anyway? A big stiff from Australia. One wallop and the fight would be over. He was Peter Maher, by the blue sky! and he'd be heavyweight champion of the world yet, Billy Madden or no Billy Madden.

Maher Impatient to Get Going

THERE was a lot of money at stake. The purse was seventy-five hundred dollars—and in 1892 that was more than a small fortune. Maher's eyes glittered. He tapped his fists together and wished that he was out in the middle of the ring throwing punches at Goddard at that very moment.

In later years when Peter softened up, they said he had a glass chin, because he frequently finished on the floor. But, at this time, the strapping Irishman was a perfect physical specimen and well able to assimilate punishment while dealing out plenty on his own hook. There never has been a fighter, I think, who could put more thundering power into a right-hand shot than Peter could. It may be that he lacked qualities of skill and generalship—but any man who could punch the way he could was likely to stop almost anybody.

Pretty nearly every Irishman in

Brooklyn was packed into the Coney Island Athletic Club. They had been sorry to see Peter beaten by Bob Fitzsimmons, but now he had an opportunity to redeem himself. So well did these spectators think of his chances that they bet heavily on their favorite at two to one That meant something, too. Peter had all the clanishness of the real son of Erin. He wanted to win for himself first, of course, but then he wanted to win so his backers might collect their bets, and, thirdly, he was all steamed up with the desire to disappoint Billy Madden.

He caught Billy's eye, and there was a gleam of sardonic humor in it. It seemed almost to say, "Well, I've got somebody that'll finish you, all right. Fitz did it, and this fellow's better than Fitz ever thought of being. Watch yourself, now! There's plenty of trouble ahead."

Peter could hardly restrain himself. His rage was like a tumultuous sea. He wanted to walk across the ring and let his right go at Billy Madden. He knew that wouldn't do any good. It would get him in bad. And he could hurt Bill a darned sight more if he flattened Joe Goddard.

There were those around the ringside who said that, if the Australian had a chance to beat the Irishman, it would be because of Madden's strategy.

"Strategy, my eyes!" said Peter to himself. "Billy can't get in there in the ring and help Goddard keep away from my wallops. I've knocked out better fellows than this Australian."

When the referee called the men to the middle of the ring to receive their instructions, Billy came out holding the bathrobe around the Barrier Champion's big shoulders. He didn't evade Peter's clashing glance. He just looked at the Irishman and grinned. That annoyed Maher more than anything that could have happened.

"Let's get going," he said. "Don't fool around here so much."

"Oh, you won't be around long, Peter," said Billy. "Not when this boy of mine gets through working on you."

Rage choked Maher. He walked back to his corner, muttering to himself.

Though no ring general, Peter had this fight pretty well figured out in his mind. He was going to take the aggressive at the start, and pound away at Goddard unceasingly. He felt that Joe, who had some reputation for cleverness, would stay on the defensive. That would be all right. The way he felt, no defensive boxes—no counter hitter—could bother him very much. He'd get through any defense, with his lashing right-handers. And if he could knock Joe Goddard out in the first round, he was going to do exactly that.

He didn't intend to fool around and waste any time. Bing! Bang! Right from the opening bell. If he didn't knock Joe out in the first three minutes, the customers would witness more action than they had ever seen in their lives. Even a knockout wouldn't satisfy the crowding passion in his heart. It had to be a quick and humiliating one. He wanted to show Billy Madden up, to prove that he didn't know a fighter when he saw one. Bill had quit Peter Maher, hadn't he? Well, in a couple of minutes he'd wish he had him back.

Clang!

Out of Nowhere

PETER bounded from his corner. His eyes glared. His right fist was cocked for a finishing blow. Boy, how he wanted to put it over! Then he met one of the greatest surprises of his entire ring career. Instead of Goddard backing and jabbing, and trying to protect himself, the Barrier Champion came at Peter with unbridled fury.

An unexpected happening like that is disconcerting. When you expect an attack, you're set for it. You aren't shaken out of your poise by something that flashes like a bolt from the blue. Peter's brain and nerves were directed along a certain path. He was going to make the

fight. The other fellow was supposed to back away and play a defensive rôle. Instead, here was the big Australian piling into him with a fury of blows.

Maher didn't run. He wouldn't have done that, anyway, and, in his present state, it would have been inconceivable. But he couldn't set himself for a punch. He felt himself thrown out of his stride, His right hand was his most effective weapon, and he kept firing it continually, but it failed to find a target because Peter's head was bobbing under the impact of Joe's gloved fists. Snarling bitterly, Maher bore down on the task before him.

Out of nowhere came a whistling right that caught him behind the ear. Bright lights exploded before Peter's eyes. His head suddenly seemed like a balloon. He couldn't think clearly. A black mask fell before his eyes. His knees buckled.

Then he felt the rough canvas under his knees. He was down. The shock of that discovery did something to dispel the fog that circulated in his brain. Down? He couldn't be. It was impossible. That big stiff of a Goddard couldn't do that to him. But cold reason told him that Joe really had floored him. The tables had been turned in a most bitter and unexpected way.

Peter told himself to relax. Take it easy. Pick up that count and don't get on your feet until the referee says nine. No use getting excited about this. It was a lucky punch, and it wouldn't happen again.

But the thought that over there in the far corner Billy Madden would be shuffling and rubbing his hands together and leering sardonically across the scuffed floor of the ring made Peter Maher so ragingly angry that it was all he could do to restrain himself from leaping up at once and hurling himself on Joe Goddard.

Of course, that would have been silly. It would have been playing right into the Australian's hands. Peter was still a little weak and shaky. A few seconds would bring the strength back to his arms and legs. He needed that strength, too.

Gosh! he hadn't believed Joe could hit like that. In the ringside seats and in the balcony the Brooklyn Irishmen were howling with hysterical fear. Many of them had bet their last dollar on Maher —and here, in the very first round, they saw him on the floor. Peter shook his head again to clear it.

Let them howl; they'd soon be shouting the other way. He wasn't done yet. Why, he hadn't even begun to fight. It was the surprise of Goddard's aggressiveness that had caught him unawares. Now that he knew what was going to happen, he'd be prepared for it. No one in the world would be silly enough to say the Barrier Champion could hit as hard as Peter Maher. Not in a thousand years!

At nine the Irishman was on his feet. Goddard piled into him again with a tremendous assault. Peter slowed him down for a moment with a vicious hook to the body. Joe wouldn't get gay with him, so they battled their way through the remainder of the round with honors about even.

Neither Would Yield an Inch

PETER returned to his corner in a bitter frame of mind. Though he knew he shouldn't do it, he couldn't help looking across the ring at Billy Madden. His former manager was laughing and whispering into Goddard's ear. Blast his eyes! Telling Joe the fight was as good as won, that's what he was doing. Well, it wasn't as good as won. Not for the Australian, anyway. In the next round he'd wipe that knock-down off the book. Trying to make a fool of him, eh? He gritted his teeth.

The minute's rest flicked by like a few seconds. That didn't disturb Peter. He felt strong and able again. He didn't need the rest. All he wanted was to get out there and pound his two hands on

Joe Goddard until the Barrier Champion fell at his feet. Let Billy Madden laugh then!

The second round began with the same flailing attack on either side. Goddard apparently was stimulated by the knockdown. True, his opponent had come back with a vicious rally, but even Peter's best haymakers hadn't landed on a vital spot. Madden had been telling Joe the best way to beat the Irishman. That was to keep on top of him continually. If you let the chap get set, you might as well kiss your chances good-bye. Peter never needed more than one real wallop to end a fight. But not having a calm mind, he could be hustled out of his most dangerous stance.

They fought like tigers. Neither backed up; neither would concede an inch to the other. There wasn't much boxing now . . . just sheer slugging; desperate determination and desire on each side.

Maher was supremely confident of himself again. Several times Goddard had shattered his jaw with terrific wallops, but Peter had stood up under them and come back, flailing away himself. On more than one occasion he felt sure that Joe would buckle under the attack. But the big fellow stuck to his guns. If he was hurt, he refused to admit it, even to himself. That might have been a little disconcerting to someone else, but Peter counted on breaking down the other's stamina with a steady bombardment. He told himself that the end was bound to come very soon.

Those at the ringside saw a different picture. There was little to choose between the rivals in those three minutes of action. If anything, Goddard had just a trifle the better of it because he kept on top of Maher so consistently and with such desperate determination that Peter didn't look as good as he usually did. The Irish who had bet on him were disturbed. They shouted and pleaded with him to knock the Barrier Champion cold. There was nothing in the world that Peter would rather have done than accommodate them at that moment.

There was no need for Referee Johnny Eckhardt to urge them on. Both men traveled as fast as they possibly could. They burned up their energies with a prodigal hand. The Coney Island Athletic Club was a babble of exclamations.

Peter's seconds kept up a continuous chatter from the corner. They shouted advice to him; urged him to get in close; not to let Goddard take the aggressive; to slow him down with belts to the body. Each one had a different suggestion.

"Ah, shut up!" growled Maher under his breath. "I know how to get him, and I'll get him. Who's doing the fightin', anyway?"

He was panting a little from his furious exertions, but Joe was panting, too. Each of them had taken plenty.

A Right to the Jaw

THE ring was a welter of tremendous action. Goddard, his mustache partly hiding his bruised lips, continued to attack with every bit of strength and determination in him. If he had played a waiting game, Maher might have knocked him out, but this continued rushing in, this unfailing shower of punches saved his hide, and hurt Peter's. It was good strategy.

They swept on and on. Blows that would have stopped dozens of men were dodged or blocked. Many hard punches landed on head and body, though. Joe's optics were circled with black. The Irishmen were taking hope now. As long as he kept trying, there was a chance with every punch he threw.

And then, in the middle of the round, Goddard landed a smacking right flush against Maher's jaw. The big Irishman went down with a crash. The audience came to its feet, screaming and hysterical.

Peter lay on the floor, inert. Consciousness had completely gone, but it

came back to him after a few flickering seconds. Out of one corner of his eye he could see Johnny Eckhardt's shoes. The referee was bending over him, counting in a loud, firm voice. For just an instant Peter was confused. He didn't know what it was all about, and then the memory of Billy Madden came to prod him with the demand that he rise and annihilate Joe Goddard with one sweeping wallop.

He dragged himself to his knees, slowly, clumsily. There was a foolish little plan forming itself in his mind. He remembered hearing of someone who had been knocked down, leaping suddenly to his feet, catching his opponent unaware and flattening him. That's what he would do. Goddard wouldn't expect it. Joe would think that he was too weak to try anything like that. Peter shifted his gaze and fixed it on the Australian's fighting shoes. They were fairly close to him.

At seven he tried to heave himself quickly up and throw a punch. But he found that his legs were heavy and his arms like lead. He couldn't spring up. It took a great effort of will to rise even slowly.

He came finally to his feet at the count of nine, weak but cool enough to cover his jaw and body from the vigorous blows of his big opponent.

Was there ever such bad fortune in the world? Two lucky punches—but each had almost spelled the finish of Peter Maher. He had been down twice. Joe Goddard had still to feel the resin against his knees.

Still, Peter was strong and game enough to continue his quest for victory. Though the Barrier Champion did his energetic best to knock him out in the remaining minutes of that round, it was an abortive attempt. When Maher had recovered somewhat, he rallied once more and drove his ponderous fists at Billy Madden's boy.

More than one chap has tried to tell me that Peter Maher was not game. But, after having watched him come back so bravely after these knockdowns at the hands of Joe Goddard, I am quite convinced that the report was nothing more than canard. Maher had courage. A less brave fellow than he would have been discouraged at what had happened. But Peter wasn't discouraged. He was only infuriated and more determined than ever to score a knockout.

At the end of the round, though, he was not in the best of condition. His lungs strained like a pair of bellows. His legs still felt the effect of that paralyzing blow to the jaw, and Madden kept laughing and talking and waving his hands, and the mere sight of him made Peter more angry than ever. He felt that he would rather die right there in the ring than let Joe Goddard whip him. He had forgotten about the Irishmen who had bet their money on him. He forgot all about the heavyweight championship of the world. The only thought that remained starkly in his mind was the necessity of whipping Joe Goddard so that Billy Madden might be humiliated. He *had* to whip Goddard. There was nothing in the world that would satisfy Peter Maher but a smashing triumph over the tall Barrier Champion.

Maher Still in the Running

SO the third round began with all the odds in favor of Goddard. Those who had bet two to one on Maher before the fight now saw the odds switch to two to one in favor of Joe. He had fought a strong and intelligent battle, and had followed out the strategic plans outlined by his manager. So far, Goddard had not made a single mistake. Maher had made two—and each had counted heavily against him.

You couldn't have told from the roaring way in which Peter went out for action that he had been badly hurt in the preceding canto. He swarmed to the attack, and was met by an equally redoubtable effort on the part of Goddard.

They hammered away furiously and without quarter. Though they might

go an unlimited number of rounds, each was burning with a desire to end the contest immediately. Goddard knew that, even though he had piled up an advantage, Maher was by no means out of the running. Peter's right hand was always a dangerous weapon—a Big Bertha that might explode defeat at any moment.

They kept blasting at each other. It was a fight well worth remembering. The action lacked none of the dramatic fury that had preceded it. You sat tensely on the edge of your chair and waited for the knockout that might come with any motion of those flashing fists. We all knew Maher was the hardest hitter among the heavyweights. In this fight Goddard had proven himself a dangerous and ambitious puncher, too.

We wondered what kept them up. You could hear the spank of leather against bare flesh back in the farthermost seats. But if Joe or Peter seemed to buckle at moments, they always recovered in time to prevent the ignominy of being floored.

Inside of himself, Peter kept demanding more and more. There must be no let-down. He must score very soon. He would never again feel at peace if he failed to whip this cockey protégé of Billy Madden's.

I must say that, save for the knockdowns Goddard had scored, there was not really such a great margin of difference between the warriors. True, Joe had some the better of it, but it was not an insurmountable lead, or one that need have discouraged Peter too much. As a matter of fact, these two men were very evenly matched in physical and fighting qualities. Goddard's coolness was an asset, for at times Maher was so swept away by his anger that he fought wildly, and with none too good judgment.

The Irishmen who had bet on their favorite could still cling to their cherished hope. They were not yet ready to throw up the sponge. Not by a long shot.

The Kayo

FOR a few seconds Maher drove Joe before him in a flurry of punches that seemed to come from every direction. Then the Barrier Champion took hold of himself. He refused to back up any more. He came close, returning Maher's barrage with short-arm jolts that had all of his great power behind them. Peter was too mad with rage to bother about defense. He was too intent on battering his opponent down to block or duck, and then one of the Australian's hooks caught him flush on the jaw. Maher sagged. He felt the strength draining out of him. His cheeks suddenly became white and taut. His staring eyes could focus on nothing. His arms dropped impotently.

If ever a man stood primed for a knockout, it was Peter Maher at that moment.

He had no defense, no clear knowledge of what was going on. His dulled brain failed even to retail an image of Billy Madden.

It could not have been more than a fraction of a second that he stood there as slack as a melting image of wax. But I retained the memory of it for a long, long while—and that memory has remained with me for forty years. He seemed so hopeless, this strong man who had suddenly become weak.

Then Goddard sprang forward, lashing out with his powerful right hand. His fist landed flush on Maher's mouth. The impact of it split the lip. A little wash of blood spurted from under the leather.

Maher went down like a sack of oats. Every vestige of consciousness had been driven from his brain by that blow. He landed on his back. Eckhardt knelt beside him and began to count. Peter could not possibly have heard the numerals He was dead to the world, but some stirring of his subconscious mind prompted him to attempt to get to his feet. His great muscles twitched in the effort, but he succeeded only in rolling

arouid until he lay face down on the canvas.

The referee's voice, audible now *in* the sudden hush that fell over the building, and, "Nine" and then, "Ten—and out!"

Johnny Eckhardt arose and lifted Joe Goddard's arm high in the air.

I didn't look at Peter Maher or his conqueror. I looked at Madden. It was around him that the drama of this furious battle had centered. On his hard face was a look of pity. He felt sorry for Peter Maher, and that sorrow tinged his exultant delight in the victory that had been scored by the Barrier Champion.

After all, Billy had discovered Peter in the Irish countryside, and had brought him far in the fistic game. Naturally, he could not fail to find a little sympathy for the Irishman, even though Peter hated him so bitterly.

It was Goddard's third victory in America, and certainly the most impressive he had scored. Most of the spectators were willing to admit that the big Australian appeared to have the makings of a heavyweight champion of the world.

Unfortunately for Goddard, he never did achieve the title. He was a good man, but just being good was not enough in those days . . . not with fellows like Fitzsimmons, Corbett, Jeffries, Sharkey, Ruhlin, McCoy and others to block the way.

At that moment, when he stood over Peter Maher's prostrate form, with a wide smile lighting his face, none of us at the ringside would have bet much against his chance of attaining the heights. It was a great feat to flatten the Irish champion . . . a brilliant feat, indeed.

Billy Madden was certain he had the title-holder he sought, but even though Bill was a shrewd, far-seeing manager, he could not look into the future and read what the stars had in store for the big Barrier Champion

Goddard just wasn't fated to gain the heights.

Twenty Years of Trading Leather

IT took ten minutes for his seconds to bring Peter Maher back to consciousness. He shivered under the dousing of cold water. He shrank from the sting of smelling salts in his nose. Then he shook his head . . . sat erect . . . and glared once more across the ring.

"What happened?" he asked.

"Goddard knocked you out," his chief second informed him, gloomily.

The fighting light flared in Peter's eyes again. . . . Knocked out! . . . Madden was laughing at him. . . . By heavens, it was intolerable! . . . Goddard wasn't a better man than he. . . .

"Sit down," his handler snorted. "It won't do any good to start trouble now."

No, it wouldn't. Maher relaxed on his stool, but there were tears under his lashes.

That fight represented the turning point of Peter's career. Thereafter he began to slip. His confidence had been ruined. There was still the terrific power in his right hand. When it landed, he was frequently a winner. He'd be able to hit until the last time he stepped into a ring. But a man needs more than hitting power . . . and Maher's heart was broken.

Altogether, the big Irishman lasted twenty years at his hard trade, but the last ones were only a mockery of the ones that had gone before. Peter kept fighting because he had to fight to live. There was no other business for him to turn to . . . and he needed money.

So he went on, and the knockouts scored against him more than balanced those that he registered. Fellows he once could have whipped with a punch began beating him . . . but he wouldn't quit. He stuck it out, until his case became so hopeless that even he recognized it.

Bad luck dogged Peter Maher from the start. He, who might have become a heavyweight champion and a great money-maker, wound up with no money at all.

The last I heard of the greatest hitter in the heavyweight division was some years ago. Badly crippled with rheumatism, he was working as a watchman on the docks in Brooklyn.

A sad old man, dreaming of the days when he was one of the most sensational figures in the ring . . . a day when the Irish of the metropolis hailed him as a king. They don't remember him now . . . but then, most of those who cheered him forty years back have gone down the long trail themselves.

The younger fans don't remember Peter Maher. He is no more than a shadowy name when he is mentioned at all.

But that night, when he stepped into the Coney Island ring and saw Joe Goddard and Billy Madden looking at him from the opposite corner, he was a great man. . . . That's something to remember in the days of adversity.

It's better to be a has-been than a never-was, after all.

Yes, sir!

CAN SHARKEY MAKE GOOD HIS BOAST?

WHEN Max Schmeling and Jack Sharkey signed to fight fifteen rounds for the heavyweight championship of the world next June, it put an end to a comedy that has held its large share of interest in the daily papers. Schmeling, as everyone knows, won the title because he was fouled by Sharkey in their first meeting. It was the only time in the history of the game that the heavyweight championship had been decided that way.

Immediately after the fight, William Muldoon of the New York State Boxing Commission, declared that the Black Uhlan ought not to be recognized as the successor to John L. Sullivan and the proud string of champions who followed him. That rankled Schmeling. He replied that he was perfectly willing to fight Sharkey again—to give him first crack at pugilism's most glittering crown. But Max went back to Germany and suffered an injury to his eye that kept him out of action for quite some time.

Last year his manager, Joe Jacobs, elected to have Max fight Young Stribling, who was recognized by the N. B. A. as the leading contender. Schmeling surprised everyone by his brilliant attack that finally stopped Stribling in the fifteenth round.

Sharkey still claims to be the leading American heavyweight. He demanded the chance that had been promised him. His poor showing against Mickey Walker was neutralized by his great triumph over Primo Carnera. It is likely that Schmeling would have been willing to go on with the Boston Sailor at any time, just as Dempsey was willing to fight Harry Wills. But in Max's case, as in that of the Manassa Mauler, the business end of the firm decided against it.

Jacobs first picked on Mickey Walker for a fight in Miami, but, when it became apparent that this match would not draw enough money to make it interesting, he nominated Dempsey as his first choice. There was such uncertainty about the possible comeback of the old champion, however, that Jacobs was eventually forced to decide on Sharkey. Whereupon, the articles were signed.

Jack Sharkey will now have the opportunity to prove that he can knock out the Black Uhlan inside of ten rounds, as he has consistently claimed.

NINE COUNT

By D. A. HARRISON

Nine! The final warning; the figure of impending doom . . . Nine means your last chance . . . Nine means you've got to get up . . . And nine, to Jack Hagen, light-heavyweight champ, meant that you can take a near-kayo at the hands of a starry-eyed dame just as you can against a wild-eyed slugger.

DALEY paused in his prowling around the room. He went close to the long table and spoke to the man stretched upon it. His voice held a pleading note.

"I know ya so well, Jack," he said, "I know what ya got in yer mind, and maybe ya *kin* hit better than anybody—even *me*—ever thought. But ya won th' title because ya bin boxin' th' ears offa guys that ain't got nothing but air in their dome. "All I want ya t' do is box this guy till ya git a line on 'im. Don't mix it up with 'im till ya put th' eye on 'im—that's all I'm askin' ya, Jack."

He moved away again.

The light-heavyweight champion lay very still, but his features twisted into a grin as he looked up into the face of Nipper Brady, his trainer, who was rubbing his legs with expert, deft fingers. He winked at Brady and turned his close-cropped head to stare at Jim's back.

"You've got a better edge than I have, Jim," he said, in a slightly husky voice. "There's nothing in the world to prove that I'm about to take a dive, is there? What's wrong with you, anyway?"

Jim Daley shook his head, thrust his hat farther back on his forehead and shoved his hands in his pockets.

"I don't know what's got me," he

said slowly, "only I want ya t' keep away from this Jones kid—he's got a mean punch, Jack."

For an instant resentment flared up in the blue-gray eyes of the champion. For an instant anger surged into his pale face, which was drawn and haggard to a perfect "edge." Blood swept in a scarlet wave up to his head. He started to speak, hesitated, and his indignation died out.

"I know," he said, "and I *haven't.*" He laughed softly. "Well, I hope he doesn't kill me. For your sake, Jim, I hope I get out of this match alive."

In a moment Daley was beside him again.

"Aw, I'm an old woman, Jack, I guess," he said, and there was genuine affection in his eyes. "Only we won so much—it ain't possible, I know, fer ya t' lose—and yet I just git worried sometimes. Life's been darn good t' us, kid, don't fergit that. It scares me sometimes—"

Jack hadn't forgotten. He'd gone to early mass that morning and lit a candle for all the good fortune that had come to him.

He reached out a taped hand, and, seizing Jim's arm, shook him gently. And then Nipper Brady, fat, good-natured and one of the best trainers in the fight game, spoke up. His voice was nasal and high-pitched.

"Aw, it's them darn newspaper fellas," he announced calmly. "This Curly ain't so much. I know a couple guys seen 'im out on the coast an' they didn't broadcast none about 'im. But yer a *boob,*" he directed his remarks to Jack, "if ya start swappin' punches with 'im. What's the use gittin' pasted if ya don't have t'?"

For a long time it was very still in the little dressing-room. From far up in the Garden the dull roar of an eager, primed mob drifted ghost-like down the corridors. The preliminaries were well under way.

No sound in the little room. No one there but those three, and yet, to Jack Hagen, the place was full of ghosts.

Ghosts of the men he had beaten but could not knock out. Ghosts of the men he had had rocking on the ropes and could not finish. And, strangely enough, the ghostly echo of the fight mob that knew he couldn't hit and derided him for it.

Jack had learned about his gallery long before, when he first broke into the racket. He won his first six fights in a row, and the mob went wild over him. It followed him home and stormed his front doorstep until the neighborhood policeman had to send in a riot call.

And then he lost a bout and the crowd with it. The night he dropped the decision to Lefty Kaufman, the fans were missing from the corridors of his dressing-room, and only a solitary cop was at the curb to see him and little Jim Daley into a cab.

Jim stuck. He had stood by during all those years when the way was easy and when the going was rough. Daley thought Hagen was the greatest fighter in the world—bar none.

But Jack found out that night that the crowd wanted a killer, always, and he was a million miles in the opposite direction. In the years that followed he had it impressed upon him pretty forcibly that the mob was a fickle thing, utterly uncertain and unreliable. Only Jim and a few others were real. On the night he won the light-heavyweight title, less than a dozen persons were invited to help him celebrate.

But the crowd had left a mark on Jack. The crowd knew he couldn't hit, and that knowledge had never ceased to annoy him. He wanted to be a popular and respected champion, but he couldn't hit. Perhaps nobody will ever explain why Jack Hagen didn't have a punch. He was the best boxer of the day. He had taught himself to use his left hand in a straight jab that had rendered the evening a total loss for many an ambitious young ringman. He owed the title to that jab, and the crowd thought

it was "swell"—but it wasn't enough. They liked him personally, and they admired his skill, but the rank and file never believed he could "take it" because he hadn't "mixed it up" after the night Kaufman laced him to ribbons.

"Aw, some good guy'll get past that jab o' his one of these days," they predicted, "and slam him so hard he'll *never* wake up. These swell guys can't stand th' gaff! Look at what happened to the big champ when Dempsey—th' poor old fella with one foot in th' grave—landed on him!"

And, as though some of those comments still rang in his ears, little Jim Daley suddenly wheeled about.

"I just wantta say this," he announced swiftly, "that there ain't a guy in th' world kin beat ya if ya box 'im. Keep away from 'im, Jack, and ya'll make a monkey outta 'im!"

"Aw, you bin goin' t' th' movies, Jim," said Nipper Brady; "one o' them pictures where th' champ gits slammed an' a swell-lookin' girl begs 'im t' win fer her! All ya need's th' skirt!"

A GREAT roar greeted them as they entered the Garden. All over the huge building a mob, ten thousand strong, rose to a man to salute him. He was the champion, punch or no punch.

Jack smiled and swung swiftly down the narrow aisle that led to the roped arena. He stopped there for a moment to shake hands with some newspapermen. Then, mounting the steps and crawling under the ropes, he turned his face to the mob—still smiling as the roar swept upon him.

Satiated with the spectacle of three knockouts that had preceded the main bout, they bellowed at him, and it sounded good to Jack until a single voice penetrated the confusion of sound. It rode distinctly over the steady roar and floated up to the ring with extraordinary clarity.

"Aw, he's a pink-tea champ!" it said. "That guy can't beat a egg!"

Jack posed for the cameras alone and with the grim-faced challenger. He shook hands with the referee, with a genial "Hello, Lew." He went to his corner, and a second from Curly's corner stood by while the gloves were laced on his hands. A perfect example of a cool, unperturbed young man, sure of himself, laughing softly with the little group that hovered near him.

The announcer stepped to the center of the ring to speak, and raised his arms high for silence.

"Final bout," he shouted, turning slowly to send his voice to all corners of the Garden, "final bout, fifteen rounds for the light-heavyweight championship of the world. The champion and popular holder of the title," and he thrust an arm in the direction of Jack's corner, "Jack Hagen, of New York!"

A great wave of sound swept down from the roof, and the shrill voices of women punctured the steady roar.

The announcer was speaking again, pivoting slowly around.

"The challenger, Curly Jones, of California. Referee, Lew Thomas."

The referee stepped to the center of the ring and signaled the two fighters forward. The champion, taller than Jones, stood with a tan bathrobe thrown across his shoulders and little Jim Daley's arm hitched through his, listening gravely to instructions. The two men touched gloves, and Curly shot a look of ferocious dislike at the champion as he turned away.

They went to their corners, Daley whipped the bathrobe away and Jack stood jumping lightly up and down against the ropes, facing the crowd. The smile was gone from his face. And, in the brief instant before the bell, a voice from the ringside drawled "That guy can't bust nothin'!"

Gong!

Lights snapped out everywhere except over the ring. The two boxers whirled about from the ropes and sprang at each other in the brilliant spotlight.

A flash of lithe bodies, naked to the waist.

Jack Hagen led with four straight lefts without a return. Then, as he stood flat-footed, with his right poised to cross, his opponent beat him to it and landed with a terrific uppercut.

The champion rocked backward and crashed to the floor, and the mob leaped to its feet with a mighty shout.

A WORLD'S champion knocked cold in less than a minute of battling! Boy, what an event to relate to your grandchildren!

"He's down! He's down! Oh, what a champ!" And some individuals demanded to know who this Jones was to put a champion away with a punch.

But the mob asked no questions. It knew Curly Jones, protégé of Jack Dempsey. Trust the top-row boys to know the life history of everybody in the game. They wasted no words on side comments. It was enough, since the champion showed signs of life, to cause their voices to lift in a steady bellowing:

"Knock him out! *Knock him out!*"

The lad from California backed toward his corner, but his gaze never left the figure on the canvas, as, with flashing eyes and lips drawn back, he waited—waited—

"One—two—three," the referee's arm rose and fell, and the crowd swayed in agony, in joy; raving, praying; howling for a killing, begging the fallen to get up—

"Aw, he was through before he started," the crowd was broadcasting. "There'd been a lot of stories put out, but he had no punch—he couldn't hit—he *never* could hit. His press agent had given it out that he'd developed a punch. Blah! A swell boxer, sure, but that's all! A lot of good that'll do him now, against a baby with dynamite in his gloves and a sweet way of borin' in. Jones learned that trick from Dempsey. Why, he's got Hagen licked to a standstill. The champ can't stand the gaff. These swell guys can't take a pastin'."

"If only Hagen could hit!"

"And he's the guy that done all the blowin' about being a *real* champion. This is the fella that's been snappin' at the heels of the boxin' kings for years, yellin' for a crack at the title. He wanted to fight Kelly when the French Canadian was champ. What a laugh! Kelly'd have killed him!"

"He claimed he beat Kelly once a couple years ago. But that ain't what the book says, brother! He tells the world he can trim all the light-heavyweights put together. Why, he thinks he can beat the big boys, too. Honest! He could lick 'em all! An' have a look at 'im—here he is—out, through, finished in the first round of a fight with a guy nobody heard of till a month ago!"

"Yeah. It's a laugh, ain't it?"

But Jack had some friends in the crowd who didn't want to see him slaughtered, and from all sections of the Garden they took up the count with the referee, hoping in some desperate way that the numbers would penetrate to the foggy senses of the champion.

"Get up, Jack!" they yelled. "Get up! Get up!"

"Seven—eight—nine—" droned the referee.

"Nine—nine—nine—" howled the mob. "They're countin' ya out, Jack! Get—*up!*"

And nobody thought he would, but at "nine" he had rolled over on his knees, reaching for the ropes, and by some miracle was on his feet, backing away.

A brief lull then, like the pause that comes in a summer thunder shower, pregnant with impending danger. The crowd settled back in the darkness, murmuring, muttering.

Jack shot out his left and set himself to cross, and again Curly was ahead of him. Quick as a flash, he struck home, and once more the champion went down, flat on his back, heels in the air, his body lurching, rocking from the force of the blow.

Nobody expected the fight to continue then.

"One—two—three—four—five—six—seven — eight — nine —" the referee droned. And once more Jack pulled himself to his feet, shaking his head as a dog shakes himself clear of water. Out on his feet, he stood there, swaying, when the crash of the gong, ending the round, came to his rescue.

The Garden was in an uproar. Deliberately, a half smile on his face, Jack walked to his corner and sat down. And Nipper struck him across the face.

"Wake up, Jack!" he yelled in an ear that was singing with vague, unfamiliar sounds. "Wake up, kid, wake up!"

His handlers worked on him like mad, flinging water in his face, holding aromatics under his nostrils, rubbing the back of his neck, twisting his head in an effort to bring him "out of it."

"Can't ya hear me, Jack?" Nipper begged, but he received no answer as the champion stared straight ahead with unblinking eyes.

CURLY tore in as the bell rang for the second round, but he ran into a stiff left, and for three rounds Jack did nothing but jab, jab, jab, while the crowd shouted encouragement and advice.

"Box 'im, champ," they bellowed hoarsely. "Teach 'im how t' box, Jack. Jab his head off, Jack. Teach 'im how to box."

It was agony to little Jim Daley, to whom the fighter and the title were precious things. On that night, only a few weeks ago, when Hagen had been crowned ruler of the light-heavyweight realm in this same Garden, no sweeter music had ever come to Jim's ears than the shrill, high-pitched voice of the announcer designating "his Jack" as the new champion.

Tonight he saw the championship dissolving into thin mist. The glaring lights of the ring beat down on him as he crouched outside his fighter's corner, but he did not see them. He was remembering the long, lean years when they had made such a valiant bid for the title. He could see, as plainly as though it had been yesterday, the tall, rangy Hagen kid who used to leave the evening paper at his house and sometimes stop to ask him about some boxer.

For Jim, as the minutes ticked by, the years rolled back as though at the touch of magic fingers, and he saw again those long-ago days when he had put Jack through his paces in the Hagen cellar against the protest of Ma Hagen, who didn't want a prize-fighter in her family, and the objection of his father, who vaguely associated boxing with highway robbery, murder and the poorhouse.

Back in the darkened seats that stretched away up to the roof, the pack was shrieking, mad with the lust of battle.

"You got him, Curly! Finish him! He's out! Smear him!"

High and piercing and sing-song, like the voice of a huckster lost up an alley, a single voice drifted down from the mob:

"Box 'im, champ! Keep away from 'im, Jack! Come on, Jack! Come on, Jack!"

Jim Daley was as oblivious of their remarks as was the champ himself. It was his own voice of half a dozen years and more ago that was whispering in his ears. "Your mother," he had said, "will probably never speak to me again fer helpin' ya, Jack, and yer old man's liable t' take a swing at me fer it, but *honest,* I *do* think ya'll be a champion some day!"

And the bell kept clanging and the lights throughout the vast building sprang to life and died again, save for the ring, where they flooded the canvas with gaudy yellow. And Jack kept coming back to his corner and moving out again like a man in a dream.

In the fourth round he stuck his left glove in the face of the challenger, and Curly sneered. "Come on an' fight," he invited, in a swift whisper, and beck-

oned with murderous gloves. Jack caught him on the jaw with a jab that snapped his head back, and then the champion missed with a stiff right uppercut, and Jones got him under the heart with a right that came up out of the cellar. The smack of leather on bare flesh echoed dully four rows back from the ring. The blow hurt.

"Will he ever wake up?" Jim whispered bitterly to himself. They were stepping around above him in the pool of light. He raised his eyes and saw the long straight legs of his fighter whirling in and out up there on the canvas, and the gong cut across the Garden and Jack stumbled back against the ropes and moved heavily toward his corner. There was a dull red mark spreading over the flesh below his heart. If the stool had not been shoved under him, he would have sprawled on the floor.

"He never comes back like this," the thoughts raced through Jim's brain. "He's always on his toes. He's always alive. Get him out of it some way, Nipper, get him out of it!

"Jack, it's the fourth round," he said aloud. "Can't ya hear me, Jack? It's the fourth round. Aw, Jack, snap outta it, kid—*any* fighter kin go down—anybody but a champ! They're beatin' ya, Jack—wake up—wake up—"

Brady worked on him with hands frantically matched against the clock.

"D'ya hear me, champ?" he snarled, his voice harsh with fear. "D'ya hear me—?" and again he struck Jack in the face.

And then, quite suddenly, the champion spoke.

"All right, Jim," he said slowly. "All right—I hear you. What round is it?"

They told him and whispered swift admonition and cast furtive glances in the direction of Curly's corner.

But something had happened to the Californian. His morale had suffered a tremendous set-back after those first rounds. Of all the men in the Garden, he and Jack alone knew what terrific force had been behind those two knock-down punches and the right under the heart. They were meant to be knockout drops. They had dynamite in them. And yet, two had put Jack out on his feet, and the third had restored him to consciousness by its very power. When they failed to do the intended job, Curly faded fast.

Jack rushed him to the ropes at the beginning of the fifth round, and buried him in a snowstorm of jabs that left him breathless and bewildered. In the eighth session the champion opened a cut over Jones' eye. In the ninth he tied him up in knots.

As a double row of newspaper men stared, gaping, he administered to the challenger a neat and complete boxing lesson the like of which he had never before received.

Ten thousand men and women, screaming, shrieking, gone mad over a fighter who, but a short time before, had been out on his feet, and now was unbeatable.

"Anybody else," they told one another wildly, "any other guy'd 'a' been dead!"

Curly started swift punches that sizzled into futile swings as the champion blocked them, knocked them down and jabbed Curly's head until it flopped back and forth like a swinging door.

When the bell rang for the twelfth round, the boy from the coast was so bewildered that he could scarcely see. He lowered his head and squinted his eyes in an effort to locate a target.

And a waggish soul, with a sense of humor, jibed him shrilly from high up in the darkness, "Where is he, Curly? Where is he?"

DALEY moved restlessly about the lobby of the hotel, smoking countless cigarettes as he waited for Arthur Deering to arrive. In the back of his mind he was already conjuring up pictures of the heavyweight title for Jack Hagen.

The throng in the lobby surged around him, but he failed to see them.

The cheers and shrieks of the mob still came to his ears, and it was sweet—sweet after all these years. The memory of Jack, bleary-eyed, snoring on his feet and going on by sheer instinct and heart, would be something to keep for the rest of his life.

And Jim cursed himself for a fool for having agreed to introduce Deering and his sister to Jack. Deering was a society man—a nice enough chap, Jim had to admit—and Daley was not averse to having people meet his fighter. In his opinion Jack was good enough to meet *anybody*. Daley was not at all awed at Deering. But after tonight anything could happen. And a bored young aristocrat could put notions in Jack's head. To say nothing of the girl! "Here's the bovies, all right," he reflected.

Long ago, when Jack was new in the fight game, Jim rehearsed the woes that had come upon fighters who looked too long on the bright lights and listened too well to the come-hither music. Because he loved Jack with a devotion that had never wavered, he wanted to see him happy, and one day he hoped Jack would meet some nice girl and get married and raise a family. But when that time came, he told himself grimly, the gloves would be stowed away in camphor and crêpe!

Tim Larkin, the promoter, had told Jim about the Deerings.

"The boy plays around with a sporty crowd," he said. "Nice chap, got everything, been everywhere. The girl's a high-hatty dame, one of these bored women looking for new things to keep life interesting. Their old man's lousy with money."

Jim never gave much serious thought to the fact that Jack wanted to pal around with girls but was afraid of them. There had been a girl once—a newspaper reporter. Jim liked her, too, until he found out that Jack was taking her to dinner at the Ritz and learning to play bridge.

After that the girl dropped out of the picture.

Perhaps young Deering's sister was a homely dame, he mused. The newspaper girl had been too easy on the eyes.

"My sister and I'd both like to meet your fighter, Daley," Deering had said. "She'll present herself if *you* don't do it. She's used to getting what she wants."

And Daley had let himself in for it.

"Come up an' see the champ after th' fight," he had suggested.

"Big-hearted me, givin' 'im his funeral ticket, maybe," he muttered to himself, and noted, with a vague glance at the clock, that it was nearly midnight.

And then, quite suddenly, he saw Deering coming toward him. And clinging to his arm, her chin tilted at an insolent angle, was the prettiest girl Daley had ever seen.

Her manner plainly suggested that Daley should prepare to descend to his knees in humility and beg permission to go on living in the same world. That sort of thing had never appealed to Jim even in the bad days when a thin dime had had its value.

And he disliked her on the spot.

THE room was very still and cool and quiet. The windows were open, and from far down on Broadway the sounds of a New York midnight drifted along the little breeze that had sprung up. A small night-lamp was burning on the dressing-table.

The champion lay with his face to the door. His lips were swollen, and a faint discoloration streaked a pencil-like finger beneath one eye.

"Jack," said Jim Daley, "I got a couple o' friends o' yours along. They was rootin' fer ya out there t'night. They wantta meet ya. This is Mr. Deering and his sister, Jack."

The champion shook hands with Deering and stretched out his hand to Jan. A smile came around his lips and his eyes.

"I'm glad to know you," he said and motioned to Jim to get chairs for them.

"Oh, I'll sit here," the girl said, and touched the edge of the bed lightly with one slim hand.

Daley heard it, and a vague warning communicated itself to him. A skirt! Gosh, no matter where they come from or how they look, watch out fer 'em! He shoved a chair forward, but Jan turned her back on him and sank down on the bed, where she could see a fighter at close range.

"Did he hurt you?" she asked curiously.

Jack shook his head.

"No, I'm all right."

"I never saw a fight before."

He laughed softly.

"It was a bad start for you. I was never knocked down before. I can't believe yet that I really was down."

Jan stared at him in amazement.

"Why, didn't it hurt at all?" she demanded rather abruptly.

He shook his head slowly, in denial.

"I felt something hit my chin," he explained, "and I felt it in my knees, and I heard somebody counting—but I didn't know they were counting over me."

"I thought he must have killed you," she laughed softly.

"Knockouts never hurt—at least not your chin. They do a lot of things to your pride—"

Daley's voice sounded suddenly loud.

"Yeah, we wantta get a chance fer 'im with th' big shot. Oh, he needs a little more weight, sure—"

"You're not going to do this sort of thing all your life, are you?" Jan said. "I think it's awfully brutal. And the men in that crowd—" She shuddered in exaggerated fashion. "Does your mother like you to fight—or haven't you got a mother?"

Blood swept into Jack's face.

"The best in the world," he said quietly, "and she doesn't like it at all. But it isn't as bad as it looks. I like to box—we don't hate each other."

Jan leaned over and laid soft fingers on the scar under his eye.

"But it must hurt sometimes." Her hand was like a snowflake against his hot face. Jack caught his breath sharply. "It isn't worth it, I'm sure. You're a nice-looking boy. You ought to do something else. Maybe we can help you. I've a lot of friends who'd get a great kick out of meeting you. Will you come to see me?"

"When?"

"Come tomorrow." She fumbled with a little jeweled bag.

"I'll write the telephone number. Call me up when you're lonely. Try to come in the afternoon—my father won't be home then," and again she laughed softly.

Jim, remembering the laugh, called it "brazen."

LONG after they had gone, Jack lay there wide-eyed in the dark, thinking—thinking—

His head ached dully. His whole body throbbed with pain. Slowly he raised one arm and slid his fingers cautiously over the flesh under his heart, and pain leaped up to meet him.

Wearily he turned his head and pressed his face down in the pillows. He felt sick at himself, disgusted with the ring. In his own mind he was like a dog that had been beaten and mangled and had crawled off alone to lick its wounds.

A bunch of animals, snarling, tearing at each other! He shut his eyes and remembered Curly's face, lips drawn back in a sneer, blood trickling down his cheek and into his eye from the gash in his forehead. He saw himself—even himself, who lacked the elements of a killer—mad with the desire to score a knockout.

He'd been close to passing out tonight. He had been hurt more than he realized. His head still buzzed annoyingly. He must have looked swell, all right, smashed down on the canvas. It turned him, nauseated to think of being knocked down after all the years he'd avoided it.

And the girl had seen him.

He kept his eyes shut and remembered her face, and her dark eyes and faintly parted lips. Daley and all his warnings became utterly meaningless. He whispered her name over and over to himself, as though out of its very repetition he could conjure her face again.

"Jack," the voice of Daley re-echoed in his mind, "watch out fer wimmin' kid! Wimmin an' licker an' smokin' an' late hours. Ya can't beat *them*. Ya got *all* th' men in yer class licked to a standstill—ya kin beat anybody in th' world—heavyweights *included*, but ya can't beat wimmin' an' th' others. Th' good-lookin' ones are th' worst. Geez, they'll make ya look like a sap. Never ya mind what others do. *You* stick t' th' fight game without any trimmin's an' ya'll have the heavy title one o' these days.

"Ya can't bother about wimmin' Jack. It's what ruined th' old-timers. Only they didn't have sense t' know it. Ya got brains, champ. Ya ain't any punk with a tomater crate fer a bean. Ya can *think* things. Ya can't beat a skirt's game, Jack. There's only one safe way—keep away from 'em. Ya ain't old, Jack—ya got all yer life ahead o' ya t' know skirts—but, while yer fightin', fer gosh sakes let 'em alone."

But this one was different, he told himself, turning restlessly in bed. She was educated and decent.

"Aw, they wantta know ya—sure they do. Yer a great big guy an' good-lookin' an' strong. Skirts always like strong men. They kin come from the Bowery or come from Fifth Avenue, but they all fall fer th' strong guys. But they don't wantta know ya because yer Jack Hagen—they like th' title an' a great big guy t' show off on the streets."

But Jan was interested in *him*. She'd wanted him to quit the fight game and go into something safe.

"They'll bust ya, Jack. Ya'll git runnin' around with 'em, an' th' first thing ya know they'll talk ya outta fightin'. Ya'll git soft, kid, an' some guy'll knock ya out an' th' crowd'll laugh at ya—and th' skirts won't even remember ya was once th' champ. Ya'll git knocked out—" and the last few words repeated themselves over and over in his tired brain. He'd been near it tonight. It was the fear that tagged the footsteps of every fighter. Punch drunk and knocked out! The enigma that lurked in the background. He'd been hanging on the dizzy edge of it tonight.

"Ya'll git knocked out—*ya'll git knocked out—*"

With a hoarse exclamation he writhed over on his face and buried his head in the pillows. "Let me alone," he gasped. "Let me alone."

The night marched by in the streets outside. In the next room Daley slept peacefully and Nipper Brady murmured in his dreams.

The distant rumble of traffic seeped into the room as the world turned in its bed and rubbed drowsy fingers over its eyes.

But sleep did not come to Jack.

He tried to shut out the memory of Daley. "We'll go up in th' woods, Jack, an' live in a shack an' toughen ya up. We'll go before th' commission an' give up th' title an' make our bid fer th' big shot. Ya can't miss it, champ—ya'll be boss of 'em all. Geez, think o' th' years we waited—ain't it swell, Jack, just thinkin' about it!"

Long, grinding days of training. Weeks in the woods away from everybody, everything. No companions except sparring partners. Miles of roadwork in the chill of early morning. Hours of punching the light bag and the heavy bag. Round after round of shadow-boxing and sparring. Hour after hour of chopping trees and carrying logs. Day after day of the heartbreaking routine of making iron muscle, of stripping down to sheer sinew and bone, and eventually acquiring that "edge" that made him half-animal wanting to snarl at the slightest provocation, aching to slash out in the face of any-

one who happened to be nearest.

He turned restlessly in bed. His body ached dully. He was tired and sick and lonely.

They'd lectured him for years, and girls hadn't mattered until tonight, when he'd met Jan. The memory of her hands on him brought a stifled cry to his cut lips. He wanted her. Maybe she *wasn't* for him. Maybe she was just looking for a new thrill. Maybe she'd make a fool of him. Well, Curly had done that tonight.

Blindly, he got up on one arm, reached for the telephone at his bedside and switched on the little light. Her card lay where she had left it, and he leaned over to read the number penciled on it.

He lifted the receiver.

"Stuyvessant four-nine-nine-nine," he said huskily.

In the next room Daley snored on in peaceful ignorance, and yet it was Daley's voice that spoke to him.

"Wake up, Jack!" it cried. "Jack, can't ya hear me, kid? Aw, Jack, snap outta it—they're countin' ya out, Jack—they're countin' ya— *Any* fighter kin go down— Jack, fer God's sake, git *up*—"

Counting him out! Counting him out! Jack leaned his head broodingly against the phone so that the edge of the mouthpiece bit hard and cold into his forehead. Counting him out!

The voice that came over the wire was snappy with impatience—"Nine-nine-nine, d'ja say?"

And suddenly a great roar like the sound of a mob far off echoed down the quiet night. It rolled in great waves of sound, past blinking lights and a world going in mad circles. It surged in black billows about his knees and thrust itself through the fog that padded his brain, *"Nine—nine—nine—"*

"No!" roared Jack savagely. "Wrong number, you dumbbell!"

The snappy little voice vanished with a click as loud as a gong.

Jack hung up.

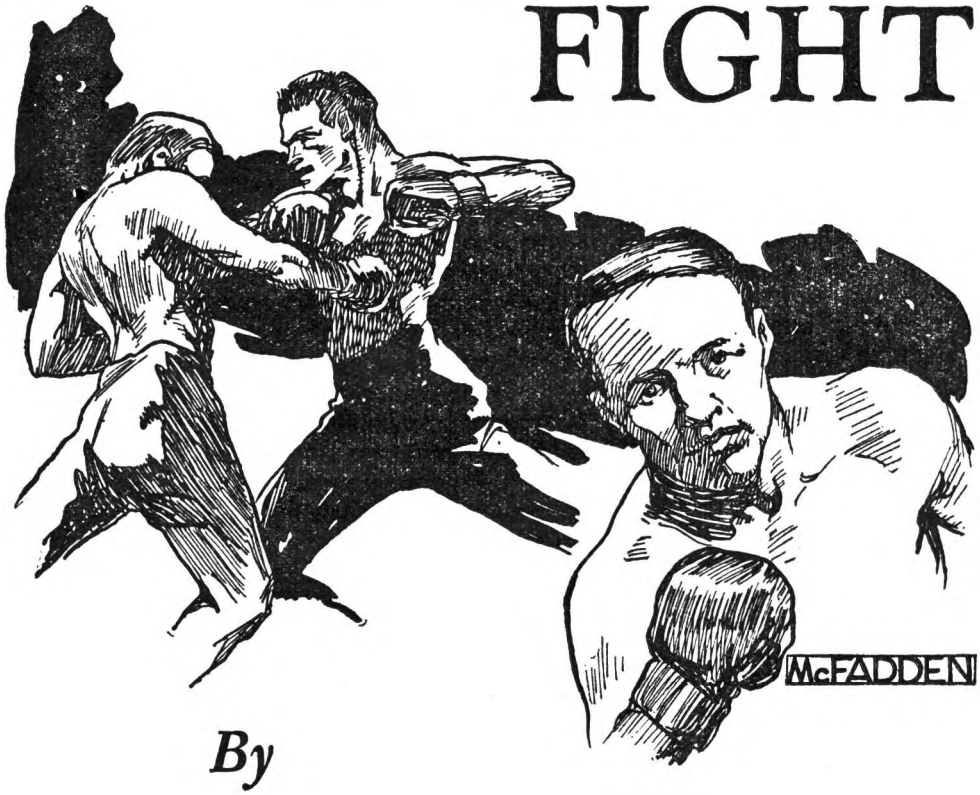
Over the transom came the sound of Daley's snoring.

AN APPOLO OF PUNCH

ENZO FIERMONTE, who is billed as the middleweight champion of Italy, is really an extraordinary fellow. Enzo can claim to be the handsomest man in the ring. After the death of Rudolph Valentino, the European film companies began scouting around in an effort to find someone who might be developed into a star of similar magnitude. Fiermonte was chosen, but he had no ambitions for a career on the screen. At that time he wanted to become a doctor. He attended the University of Padua in search of a degree. Then he was smitten by the boxing bug and dropped his studies to seek a fistic championship. Should he fail, he could return to college and become a doctor of medicine by taking a two-year post-graduate course. In the meantime, it seems likely that he will gain a greater degree of success in America than he had hoped for.

Enzo is one of the most powerful straight right-hand punchers among the middleweights of recent years, and when he knocked out the rugged Jack Rosenberg in his Madison Square Garden debut, Fiermonte immediately became something of an idol with the fans. The chap who can hit is certain of a following, and this handsome young Italian must be classed with the best punchers of the day.

I HAD TO FIGHT



By

GEORGE (ELBOWS) McFADDEN

They called him "the man of a thousand elbows" and "the uncrowned king of the lightweights." In these memories of an amazing ring career, a great fighter tells how he "elbowed" his way to fame.—Part II.

GEORGE EDWARD McFADDEN began his fighting career as an amateur in 1891 at New York City, where he was born. In '95 he broke his hand in a bout with Joe Hopkins, a colored boy from Union Hill, N. J. This accident led him to develop a defensive style in which his elbows won him the nickname that made him famous from coast to coast.

In the first part of this story Elbows related the details of his early life, how he went to a trade school and learned plumbing, worked at it, at bricklaying, in a foundry, started his own gymna-

sium and, meanwhile, boxed persistently until he was recognized as a worthy contender for lightweight honors.

He told in his own words of how he fought the great Gans and knocked him out in twenty-three rounds; how he boxed many other aspirants for the crown in an era of famous fighting men; how he failed to win the title from Erne, and then was matched with Kid Lavigne, who sought to climb back to prominence by whipping him.

Tune in again, everybody. It's Elbows McFadden speaking.

Now go on with the story.

ALMOST everybody of importance in the fight game was around the ringside that night of October 6, 1899, when Kid Lavigne and I shuffled around in our corners waiting for the announcer to finish his introductions.

The crowd was on edge. They didn't want any introductions. Most every fan in the old Broadway knew me. I had fought there a score of times, fought in all the clubs around town. Everybody knew the stocky, square-jawed Saginaw Kid. Why, only three months ago he was lightweight champion of the world.

We had our gloves, on, and I was anxious to get started. For a long time I had been after the Kid. I wanted to meet him when he was the champ. But no. He had passed me up, time and time again, fighting other boys in our division, fellows who would have none of my game.

It being a New York club, I got a big hand from the crowd; and the Kid—say, the reception they gave him is still ringing in my ears. He was a great fighter, that fellow, and, even as we stood in the center of the ring and got our instructions from Johnny White, the referee, there was an air about him that made you feel you were standing before a champion.

He had that look of supreme confidence, a kind of condescending expression on his face, as if—well, as a champion would look when confronting a push-over. The atmosphere was charged with the power of his personality. Newspaper men who had been calling me "the uncrowned lightweight champion of the world" were looking at me now with a feeling akin to pity.

In my corner, a moment later, I stood and watched the timekeeper, his hand raised, his eyes on the watch. Twenty-five rounds! I punched down the padding in the four-ounce gloves to give my knuckles a chance.

Bong! I heard the bell and the shouts of the crowd calling to the Kid and to me, yelling for "Elbows" to do his stuff. Out of my corner I shot. I wanted to get into him, and to get that first contact over with, to see what the Kid had and to let him get a first-class sample of my own punching.

We came together in a flurry of gloves. Remember, I was not one of those hit-and-get-away boxers, though I had been called one of the most scientific of my day. I was in there to fight, to make the result a decisive one. I wanted to win by a knockout if possible, so did the Saginaw Kid. In that first round he piled more gloves into me than I had ever seen before. And I bounced them right back at him, I felt his famous left, and I knew that I was in a fight that would end with one of us flat on the floor.

"Come on, Kid!"

"Lavigne by a knockout!"

"Elbows meets his master!"

The ex-lightweight champion's rooters kept up the shouting between the first and second rounds. I sat on my stool, and I think I looked calm enough to allay any fears my friends may have had. My handlers told me to watch out for his left. A dozen ringsiders behind my corner offered advice.

"Let me fight this fellow, Billy," I told Roche, my manager. "I've felt that left, and I believe I can match it."

My own left hand was no mean weapon. I had developed it beyond its previous capacity during the months I

was compelled to favor my broken right hand. And now I was ready to give Lavigne a taste of that left.

Betting was still going on at the ringside. The odds? Well, the Kid was the favorite at about ten to eight. But what of it? I differed with that opinion, and went out there in the second to prove it.

Always Dangerous

LAVIGNE came tearing into me like an express train. That was the Kid's style—rip, slash, pound. He swung viciously with his left. His teeth were bared like the fangs of a pit terrier. I was rooted to the floor, ready to counter, but that left drove into my body like a cannonball. I rocked on my feet, and, before I could set myself to shoot a right counter, that awful left hit me again and I was knocked sideways.

Fight! The Kid was a holy terror. He was on me in a hop, and I tried to jab him away. It was like poking at an onrushing locomotive. His right whizzed over and crashed into my jaw, and I knew then and there that I was just playing into his hands. A few more punches like that and he would have spread me on the canvas.

"Cover up," I said to myself. "Pull yourself together, Elbows. Set your own pace for this fight, and make him like it."

That's what I did. Blocking his punches with my elbows, I stood him off. Instead of standing there flatfooted and trading blows, I shifted and ducked and picked off the punches as they started. The Kid was raging. He snarled as he swung at me, and the boys who had bet on him were visualizing themselves spending the money.

In the third, fourth and fifth rounds I went to work on him systematically. He grew more furious as, round after round, I let him tear in and contented myself with spoiling his shots. I slipped his terrible left, again and again, rolling my hips as a lot of the old-timers have seen me do. His left swished past harmlessly, and I speared the right that followed on my elbow or forearm.

By the time the sixth round came up I had the Kid's number. I timed his swings and his hooks and began to pile up a wide margin on points by countering the punches he was missing. The frown on his face deepened, and he kept swinging harder and harder. Twice in the sixth I connected with my right to his face, and both times I untracked him. But you couldn't keep the Saginaw Kid away from you for long. He always came slashing in again.

"You can lick this guy," Roche roared in my ear as we waited for the bell. "Just keep boxing him."

I grunted agreement. There was no use trying to talk. The racket from the shouting spectators almost deafened you. There were cries of encouragement for both of us. Some of Lavigne's friends yelled at the top of their lungs to take the pace away from me; that I was outpointing him by a mile.

Lavigne didn't have to be told. For the last couple of rounds he had found his old slam-bang style quite futile. Now he was leaning forward in his corner, tensed, like a wild creature awaiting freedom from its cage.

When the bell clanged, he fairly flew at me.

I blocked his first smash with my right elbow. But what happened after that is another story. He came on so fast that I was caught flatfooted. His right boomed under my heart with such force that it spun me half around. Then, before I could gather my wits and catch my breath, his left hit me on the jaw and sent me staggering onto the ropes.

"He's going! Come on, Kid. Oh, you Kid!"

Rooters raved madly for Lavigne to finish me off. He had me in a bad way, they thought, and I guess I was hit pretty hard. My handlers were bellowing at me to cover and clinch. From

the Kid's corner came shouts of advice:

"On the chin! On the chin!" they told him. "He's ready for the cleaners."

The Saginaw Kid came on. His eyes were fixed on my jaw. I could almost read his thoughts as I saw him leap in. He was counting on that left and right again. I sucked in my breath quickly, tried to hold the look of a beaten man, to make that help me in a tight spot. It worked.

With his left starting almost from his shoe-tops, Lavigne swung. As as he swung, I ducked, side-stepped, and waited. Back he came with his right. Then I lifted my own right in a fast uppercut that caught him on the jaw as he pivoted.

That punch staved off ruin for me. It snapped Lavigne's head back, threw him off balance, and gave me the opportunity to step in with another uppercut that landed almost on the button, while the fight-mad spectators, who practically counted me out, whistled and stamped their feet.

Punch for punch I traded with him then, but those two uppercuts had demonstrated that old Elbows could still send 'em over, and Lavigne was more careful about the openings he left from that moment on.

Just before the end of the round the Saginaw Kid crashed a right into my left elbow that rendered it completely numb. The entire arm felt like a dead thing hanging in its socket. However, I kept a poker face, and played along.

"I guess I showed him," I said to Roche when I reached the stool.

"He's a pipe for you, Elbows," Billy reassured me. "But don't leave yourself open for any more of those wild ones on the whiskers."

I didn't tell him about my deadened left arm. I was afraid that, if he fussed over it, the Kid would get wise. Little things like that lose fights for you. So I said nothing and let my seconds rub me down. There were eighteen more rounds to go. Maybe the arm would snap out of it. Fighting with one hand was nothing new to me, so I jumped up from the stool and met him with the bell.

The eighth and ninth rounds convinced me that I was at least the Saginaw Kid's equal. I was sure I gave him more than he handed out. Toward the end of the eighth my left arm began to tingle, and, by the time I was ready for the ninth, it was as good as ever. What a relief that was to me! with a chance like this, a paralyzed arm would have been a sure-enough calamity.

The "Eyes" Have It

BEFORE the end of the ninth round I landed a hefty wallop on the Kid's left eye and it began to puff, which proved that he could be hurt, just like any other fighter. But it didn't keep him from barging in like a wildcat.

"Let him keep coming," I said to myself, as he continued tearing into me, swinging around, and boring in again and again. I just moved along steadily, getting him every now and then with a smart, telling blow.

That puffing eye must have made him see red. He had been vicious enough before, but now he was utterly enraged. His punches fairly rained around me, some of them crashing into my arms and elbows, some swishing past my face like bullets. But I evaded 'em pretty well, and returned to my stool without having sustained any real damage.

The Kid's handlers worked over his injured eye during the rest period, and reduced the swelling perceptibly, but, when we went at it again in the tenth, it wasn't long before I got in another right, and the old eye closed up again.

Lavigne snarled and swung his left against my ribs. I countered with my own left, and it was a fast left in those days, let me tell you. It caught him on the mouth. Blood began to dribble from his lips. He fought back wildly,

bent on knocking me out.

"The one-two, Kid!" his rooters kept yelling. It was a regular see-saw for the crowd. Every time an effective blow was landed, one gang or the other would take up the battle cry:

"Knockout!"

"You got him wingin', Kid!"

"Show him some science, Elbows!"

Lavigne was desperate. He wanted another crack at the lightweight championship, and, to get it, he had to brush me out of the way. And, boy, the power he put into those punches made 'em whistle! I can't emphasize that too often. It was so typical of the intensity with which Lavigne fought all his great battles.

Twice the Kid tried to land haymakers that he picked up from the floor. Twice I stabbed him with perfectly timed rights, and then, just as we were staging the rally that had been marking the finish of each round, I got my left through to his other eye. I was trying for the chin, but the fast moving Kid was hard to gauge. When he went to his corner this time, both of his eyes were puffed.

My seconds patted me on his back.

"That's the ticket, Elbows," Roche said. "Don't slug with him. Science, my boy, science."

They worked on my arms. My handlers always had to do that. I used to take a lot of punishment on my arms, you know. Where other battlers sopped up punches on face and body, my arms bore the brunt of the fighting.

Lavigne peered over toward my corner while his seconds fluttered around him. His brother, Billy, apparently was trying to show him how to cope with my style. The Kid, himself, was puzzled. I guess it was the first time he had run up against a boxer who could punch. Fellows like Erne, who had out-pointed him in twenty rounds, were not hard punchers.

I could see the Kid shaking his head, as if in disagreement with his brother's advice. I suppose he was still pinning his hope on a haymaker, no matter what the cost.

The bell!

CHAPTER VII
Fighting Heart

WE were at it again. The Kid rushed. My left struck him in the mouth. His head bobbed. His feet dug into the canvas, and he lunged right back at me. This time he tried his right, and I beat him to the punch. My own confidence was now established. I had solved the style of the Saginaw Kid. Every time he rushed, I let him spend his punch, then countered. It seemed that we went on like this for hours. I hit him on the jaw, on the chin, in the body, trying mightily to put over the decisive blow. But both of us were still sloughing away at the end of the sixteenth.

"He's made of iron," I said to Roche, as I flopped on my stool. "I've hit him with everything in the book, but he keep's coming."

"You're wearing him down, Elbows," Roche answered, while he sponged me off. "He's missing by miles. He swings like a gate."

"Yeh," I nodded, as I looked at the sea of faces around the ring. "Yeh. Like a gate. But get yourself in front of one of those gloves!"

I'll never forget that seventeenth round. Neither will a lot of the fans. The Kid came out looking strong and able. Though his eyes were puffed, he could still see sufficiently for all practical purposes.

I walked into him and feinted with my left. He started his left, pulled it, and brought around a fierce right hook. I smothered it on my arm, and we stood there and traded gloves for almost a minute. Johnny White kept weaving around us. The crowd was on its feet. I could make out no one intelligible voice, but the whole build-

ing seemed to rock and tremble. The sound was like that of a train roaring through a long tunnel. I thought it would never end.

Lavigne was not to be denied. He was a punching demon. I countered and blocked and smashed my blows through every opening, but his amazing strength held him up under punishment that would have killed an ordinary man. We fought like clawing cats from one side of the ring to the other, on the ropes then off them, in a slugging clinch and out of it.

From my corner came a dozen voices, but I couldn't make head or tail of them. Johnny White was talking to us, too, and the Kid's seconds roared jumbled instructions. Lavigne and I were intent on the battle itself. I wondered if he was tired, and if this was his last stand.

"I'll risk it," I said to myself, and shoved him away as he came in again.

Then I made the one bad move of the fight. I started a lead. Maybe he drew me into it. I cannot remember. But I did lead. And the Kid hit me with a right on the jaw. The noise that had been incessant up to that moment grew even louder. Dimly I recall feeling my knees buckle. I was going down. The whole world grew black. It was as if I had stepped over the edge of a precipice. The roar of the wind as I dropped into the chasm pounded my ear-drums. Instinctively, I must have stepped back—felt the ropes behind me—and my senses snapped again to life.

And not an instant too soon. Kid Lavigne had the next blow started. He was going to knock me out. My only chance to save myself was to punch—just punch. There was no opportunity to clinch. My stance was all wrong for blocking or ducking. So I braced myself and gave him the right.

Down he went. Lavigne—the Saginaw Kid—ex-lightweight champion of the world—went crumpling to the canvas! I spun around to keep from toppling over him. Johnny White flew to his side and began counting.

"One . . ." he said, bringing his arm down.

I remember holding my right fist ready, waiting anxiously. The crowd was gesticulating wildly. The Kid's seconds were hanging on the ropes in his corner. Roche and my handlers were bellowing something at me.

White shouted, "Two."

I saw Lavigne on his knees, shaking his head. His jaw was set, and he was fighting off the effect of that punch. It looked as though he was through, but you could never tell with the Saginaw Kid.

"Three," bowled Johnny White, and, as he said it, the Kid came off the floor and at me like a hurricane.

I tried to get over another to his jaw, but he was all over me, swinging, ducking, bobbing his head, and hooking those lightning gloves of his at anything that looked like an opening.

"The right, Elbows!" the fans kept yelling. "Give him that right!"

I tried it. Again and again, I thought I saw my chance. But it didn't come in that round. The bell interfered. I was disappointed as White parted us and sent us to our corners.

"Look Out for a Haymaker!"

"I'll go after his body," I said to Roche, as the moment for the eighteenth round approached. "After that punch on the chin, he's keeping it out of my way."

"Look out for a haymaker," Billy advised. "You're winning this fight, Elbows. Don't run any risks."

The thought of knocking out Kid Lavigne had gotten quite a grip on me. I had had him down once. I could do it again. As we left our corners for the eighteenth, I saw the Kid coming at me a little less swiftly. His legs weren't any too steady, it seemed. I walked in methodically, oblivious to the pandemonium around the ring.

Boxing with all the skill and strength

I could muster, I began a body attack. With the sodden smack of every punch came a salvo of cheers. I felt like cheering myself, not for Elbows McFadden but for the Saginaw Kid and his gameness. He took those punches coming in, always coming in. I walked around him swiftly, making him lunge and making him miss. And all the while I ripped my fists into his belly and ribs, only now and then switching to his face to straighten him up.

Throughout the round I battered him from pillar to post. When I returned to my corner, I saw men at the ringside in the strangest of positions, like a tableau in a madhouse. They stood, balanced on one foot, leaning on one another's shoulders, chins projecting, arms outstretched, fists clenched, eyes popping and brows wrinkled in perplexity.

Nobody had expected me to knock out Kid Lavigne. And here I was, with the nineteenth round coming up and the Michigan marvel all but finished. How he had kept his feet through the eighteenth I could never understand, but I felt I was going to end it in the next.

"My arms are sore," I said to Roche, who had gone to work on them even as I spoke. "I've knocked down more punches than I ever did in my life. If I can hit him this time I'll finish him."

"Get a quick start, and meet him in his corner," said Roche.

My corner was cleared early. I waited, like a sprinter on the mark. I was excited; tense. Almost within reach I saw the fulfillment of a dream. Knock him out! Knock out Kid Lavigne! Erne couldn't do it. Nobody had done it. There, the bell!

I bounced from my stool and almost jumped across the ring. The Kid took only two steps, and I was into his body again. There was a wild scramble of feet, elbows, heads and gloves. I didn't want to give him a chance to get going. Bang! In went my right. Flush on the chin it caught him. I leaped back, away. Kid Lavigne tumbled forward to the floor.

Johnny White started toward him. Heads popped up all around the edge of the ring. The sports writers stared at the Kid on the canvas. But before White could start the count, I saw Lavigne stagger to his feet. He was groggy, bleary-eyed, but fighting mad, and he flew at me.

"Measure him! Measure him!" somebody was yelling at me from my corner.

Yes, measure a stick of exploding dynamite! We came together with a slithering, slashing of gloves. I was boxing carefully, seeking another opening for my right. We fought savagely for a moment, and then I got it through again. I felt my knuckles land against the Kid's hard chin. He fell. White was over him. I was moving back, staring at the Kid and at Johnny White, who was counting now. He'd passed "three . . . four . . . five . . ."

The Courage of the Saginaw Kid

I WIPED the sweat from my face with the wrist of my glove. The Kid was looking around, getting his position on the floor. He saw me, saw White standing beside him, saw the faces around the ringside looking at him curiously.

At six he was up. He assumed a defensive attitude. He did not swing, or tear into me as before. Obviously he wanted me to come to him, hoping to sneak over his famous left-hand smash. I feinted him, with a lead for the jaw. His glove went up again to block it. Twice I did this, in less time that it takes to tell of it.

His eyes were fixed on me as if he were saying, "Go ahead. Try to reach my jaw again, you bonehead."

All the steam I could drive into my left then swung into his body. It was a terrific blow, as hard as any I had delivered thus far. The echo of that leather bomb made the club seem miles high and empty. There was no clamor now. The Kid was bent double, melting like a wax model, falling dismally.

Again the routine began. White was counting. On the floor, the Saginaw Kid was rolling, turning from side to side, twitching as if the pain of that last punch was more than he could bear. I heard the count proceeding. My eyes roved from the figure on the floor and the man bending over it to the seconds in his corner, in mine, the officials of the club and the crowd, some standing tense, silent, mouths agape, others crunching hats, breaking canes, whooping it up.

I didn't want to hit him again. A game guy deserves some consideration. But a man like Kid Lavigne fought to win or lose, and he fought with every last ounce of courage and red blood in his body. There was only one way to end the fight that night at the Broadway. That was to knock the Kid out. For he was up again. Up at nine, and tottering, almost blinded by the blows from my gloves—but coming in for more.

I had to do it. It wasn't because the crowd was swept away by the heat of the battle and demanded its human sacrifice, but because of the Kid himself. He would never cease battling while consciousness remained.

Again I floored him with a left. All he had left now was his fighting heart and the will to drag himself to his feet. Once, twice, three times I knocked him down, and watched the tableau on the canvas, and listened to the chanting count of Johnny White and the salvos of cheering from the sea of flesh and blood that surrounded us.

Once more the Kid climbed to this feet, a sorry picture of what once had been the terror of the lightweights. Again I drove in my left, then my right. The last one hit him on the chin, and that was the end.

Like the pages of a picture book, I can see those scenes again. But I do not want to say more of it here. I knocked him out. Some people have tried to infer that I knocked out the shell of a great fighter, but they do not stop to recall that, when I entered the ring against Lavigne, the Kid was the favorite in the betting. Few gave me an outside chance of whipping him, and certainly no one foresaw a nineteen-round knockout victory for me. No, they cannot take that from me, any more than they can say that the Saginaw Kid lacked courage. I never fought a gamer man in my life, and I have engaged in something over eight hundred ring battles.

CHAPTER VIII
Baiting Terrible Terry

MY sensational defeat of Lavigne brought me a great deal of publicity. The boxing experts of those days declared in no uncertain terms that I was the logical successor to the title. They rehashed the records of my bout with Erne, and showed that I had done practically all the fighting; in fact, had more than demonstrated my superiority. The papers are still on file to prove this, and more—they will show clearly that I could not win Erne's title unless I knocked him cold.

However, I was too busy in those days to bother about things that were behind me. I was always looking ahead.

"Get me another match with Erne," I said to a group of sports writers, after I whipped Lavigne.

"Erne won't fight you again," they replied, "and you know it, Elbows. He doesn't want any part of you."

Nor did he. I challenged him at every opportunity. When I saw that I couldn't expect any action from him, I demanded attention from anybody in my class or out of it.

"I'll fight any man in the world," I told the newspapers.

That challenge was printed from coast to coast. Any man in the world, any weight, no exceptions, forty-five rounds, winner take all. It was a sweeping defi, and I stood ready to back it up.

At that stage of my ring life, I feared no man in the game. I could have stepped into a ring weighing anywhere from 128 to 139 pounds. For years I had no trouble whatever remaining under the lightweight poundage, which was then 133.

When Terry McGovern came through with his startling two-round knockout of Joe Gans, I went after him. Remember this. All the things I say here are verified in the newspapers of that time. I would have liked nothing better than to clash with Terrible Terry. We would not have differed a pound in weight.

From club to club I went with my proposal.

"Get me McGovern," I said.

Terry turned a deaf ear to their offers, although we would have been a sell-out. Fans saw the possibilities of a fight between us, and demanded the match. Sam Harris, who was McGovern's manager, was too clever for us, though. Instead of signing up with me, he went downtown to a hockshop and bought the old belt that Jack McAuliffe once wore, and he put it on Terry and had his picture taken. The pictures were all over the place.

The belt was a nice one, with diamonds in it, and Sam had had the word "lightweight" scratched off and in its stead put "featherweight."

I could have bought that belt myself. I had looked at it once in the hockshop window. The price, as I remember, was $187. Odd price, but I think that included interest on the loan.

After waiting a while for McGovern to accept my challenge, I met him one night at a bout and got him off in a corner.

"What do you say, Terry?" I put it squarely up to him. That was the way I used to do: Go around and meet the fellows I wanted to box, and try to talk them into fighting me, showing them that it was only a business proposition, anyway. There were no hard feelings.

Terry grinned.

"Come on," I said. "You and me. We can get five figures in any club here in the East. Name the terms yourself."

I knew at what poundage he could do his best fighting, and was not afraid he would dry me out. But he shook his head.

"Any fellow who can knock out Gans in two rounds," I argued, "Should be willing to fight me, Terry."

"Listen, George," said McGovern. "Sam Harris is my manager, and if he says no, then it's no."

"Well then," I went on with some eagerness, "suppose we wrestle. I'll grapple you, best two out of three, winner take all. How's that?"

Terry laughed and jabbed me playfully. A crowd of sporting men were around us now.

"You think you're pretty smart, George," said he, "but not for me. I know what you're thinking. You're looking forward to us winding up in a barefist fight, eh? Well, nothing doing."

So that ended my attempts to get a fight with Terry McGovern.

I'm sure I could have beaten him at his best, too.

The Man of a Thousand Elbows

FEW fellows boxing in my time experienced the difficulty I encountered in getting matches. I do not say this without realizing that it may sound conceited. But I have my scrap books beside me as I write, and they are filled with newspaper stories and pictures, cartoons of myself in action, original telegrams from promoters and managers of boxers who were then prominent. These bear me out.

Among some of the leading fighters who refused again and again to meet me were such men as Owen Zeigler, Matty Matthews, Jack Everhardt and Rube Ferns.

I offered Ferns the same proposition I had offered others, and kept at it until I tired, seeing the futility of my plea.

I wanted to fight Honey Mellody.

"Winner take all," I said to Honey, "at one-forty-two ringside, six hours before, or—any old weight."

And Mellody said, "No."

This was after Mellody had beaten Walcott at Chelsea, in fifteen rounds.

Mike (Twin) Sullivan, who defeated Mellody and claimed the title, stood almost six feet tall. Yet I fought Mike a nice little twelve-round draw. Then, when Mike outgrew the welterweight division, the title was claimed by Jimmy Gardiner, one of those tough Gardiner boys who hailed from the ould sod and made their home in Massachusetts. Jimmy and I went ten hot rounds to a draw in Boston.

"How is it that you had so much trouble getting matches?"

For years I have been asked this question. Boxing experts, digging through records and files, have said to me, "I notice you never fought Matthews," or some such name. Well, the truth, if it must be known, is that these fellows wanted none of my game.

Many boxers hid behind the idea that was suggested by the use of my elbows. They claimed I was not a fair fighter. This is untrue. Look through my record, or the record of any fighter who met me, and see how many bouts I lost on fouls. None. On the other hand, I've won a few on fouls, where opponents, maddened to desperation by their inability to penetrate my defense, let their blows go wild.

I'd be willing to bet there are many men living today who can remember seeing me in the ring, and hearing my opponent's rooters yelling at the referee.

"Stop him, ref," they'd shout. "He's fouling so-and-so."

The referee would talk back between rounds.

"I'm closer to these guys than you are," he would tell him. "If there's any fouling, I'll toss him out in a minute."

No, sir. I never used my elbows with which to strike a blow or to take unfair advantage of any fighter. I used them only defensively.

In my match with Dal Hawkins, February 28, 1901, at Mechanics' Pavilion, San Francisco, I won on a foul. Hawkins, who was one of the best fighters developed on the Pacific Coast in that period, found himself unable to match my boxing skill, and, after repeatedly being warned, was disqualified in the seventh round.

As an example of how fight club crowds swing from one fighter to another, consider my battle with Patsy Sweeney at Boston.

This one almost ended in a riot because Patsy's friends believed I was using my elbows illegally. They demanded that the referee disqualify me, even toss me out of the ring. I was in an unfriendly town. They wanted Patsy to win, and, as if he were unable to do it himself, they proceeded to prod the referee. In the early rounds I set a slow pace. I wanted to finish fast, and was saving myself for fifteen rounds. Patsy came to me, leading. I smothered every punch he let go.

Along about the sixth round, a lot of Sweeney's friends came rushing toward the ring, shouting for the referee to stop the fight. The arbiter kept telling me to be careful, and I continued to assure him that I was using my elbows only for blocking. But the crowd was persistent, and the referee was only passing the buck.

"I'll toss you out," he said to me in the eighth round. "Stop that elbow stuff."

I was sitting in my corner waiting for the bell, and he was leaning over me, while the crowd sat and enjoyed it.

"Okay," I replied. "I'll give him the kind of fighting he likes better."

So I went out and stood toe to toe with Patsy. I've mentioned him before in my story. That fellow could punch. The crowd was on its toes, too. I wasn't using my elbows at all. Suddenly I spied an opening, and gave him a taste of my right to the whiskers.

Well, here's where the flickleness of the crowd expressed itself. Patsy went

staggering like a sailor on a rolling deck. And up came the crowd—his crowd—every man-jack of them cheering me, begging me to get in there and knock Patsy through the floor.

I would have done it, too, if I could, but Patsy Sweeney was one of the tough men in my record. We battled along on even terms for the rest of the fight, and, when we came together in the final round, both of us took a lot for granted and swung crazy haymakers. Both missed, and we fell to the floor like a couple of amateurs.

"A draw," shouted the referee. And I guess he was right.

CHAPTER IX
Claims to Fame

FOR almost twenty-five years I boxed anyone who would meet me, and dared the rest of them. Along with my actual ring encounters and training, I played around with numerous inventions, wrote a little book on boxing, built up a nice clientele in my gymnasiums, gathered a family around me and took care of my mother after my father passed on.

I can look back on the hey-day of the American squared circle. I have seen a lot of champions come and go, and a lot of challengers fall by the wayside.

At the time of my third bout with Joe Gans, I recall that "horseless carriages" were first granted permission to enter the paths in Central Park. It was quite a concession by the authorities, for only horses and horse-drawn vehicles had been permitted in the park up to that date. Today, thousands of automobiles swing out of the park here at Fifty-ninth Street and roll past my gym at 51 East Fifty-ninth.

In those days one of my toughest opponents was Jack O'Brien. Don't confuse this name with some others of ring record. This O'Brien boxed under his own name. When Josepn Hagan of Philly, came into the picture, the writers had to do something to discriminate between them, so they called our O'Brien "New York" John O'Brien, and Hagan "Philadelphia" Jack O'Brien. It was "New York" Jack who was scheduled to fight me twenty-five rounds at the Broadway on the same night that Bob Fitzsimmons was matched to meet big Ed Dunkhorst over at the Hercules Club.

As it comes back to me now, I have to laugh. The papers played up both fights. Some ran layouts with our pictures. And every one of them, offering expert opinions, informed the fans that, if they wanted to see a "fight," to go to the Hercules.

"On the other hand," they told the readers, "if you like scientific boxing, go and watch O'Brien and McFadden."

Any old-timer can read this now and laugh with me, for it is well known that the great Ruby Robert toyed with Dunkhorst, giving a marvelous exhibition of skilful boxing for one round, and knocking Ed as flat as a dime in the second. This was the contest they had been instructed to see.

Over at the Broadway, O'Brien and I put on one of the fiercest struggles of the year. For almost ten rounds we slugged and pummeled each other, until my harder wallops to Jack's body began to sap the strength from his legs. The crowd, influenced by the advices of the experts, was a small one, but it mattered little to us. We were fighting as if a championship depended upon the result.

"We'll show 'em where the best fight is, Jack," I grunted into O'Brien's ear.

"One of us'll show 'em, Elbows," he came back at me.

O'Brien's Gameness

AT the end of the tenth my handlers told me that O'Brien was caving in under my body punching.

"He's folding up," Roche said.

Whitey Lester and Harry Tuthill were in my corner, too. Both of them were pretty good fighters themselves.

"It's that right of yours, Elbows," Whitey told me. "I remember that one in the belly. Aim for his belly."

Whitey and I had mixed it the year before, and I had stopped him in seven rounds. He knew my right hand.

Billy O'Brien, Sammy Kelly and Paddy Moran were in Jack's corner, rubbing his middle. The crowd, small as it was, indulged themselves in plenty of remarks before the eleventh round began. The Irish were having a hard time deciding which of us they preferred.

There were yells for "Jack" and for "Elbows," and Charley White, our referee, stood there with his eagle eyes taking in everything.

Jack stepped away from his corner lightly enough. But I could see that he was preparing to stay away and box. So I moved into him.

The eleventh was a welter of fast punching, with Jack trying to out-guess me, and yours truly managing to shoot in a few more hard blows to the midriff. In the twelfth I saw that he was through taking them in the middle. I decided to give the fans a fight to compare with the Fitz-Dunkhorst shindig.

"Come on, Jack," I said to O'Brien, "let's give 'em a slugging match." And with that I let my right go in a heavy swing that buried itself almost wrist deep in his belly. Down he went.

With his glove pressed to his stomach, O'Brien writhed on the floor while the count went on. At eight, when it appeared that the fight was about over, he came up, staggering. Talk about a game fellow! You can give New York Jack O'Brien the nod every time. He was racked with pain, yet ready for more.

With his feeble defense, he was an easy mark for me, and I piled in with both fists rattling against his face and body. He tottered and gave ground, falling backward to the ropes, hanging on grimly, and trying to keep me off with a one-hand defense. I hated to do it, but no fighter wants to quit on his feet, and no fighter like this O'Brien would stay on the floor while he had the strength to get up. So I laced it into him. He would have toppled then, but the bell saved him.

"He's out!" the fans yelled. "He's out on his feet!"

I guess he was. But, in his corner, Moran, Kelly and his brother Billy feverishly went to work on him.

"Come on, Jack," I could hear them urging him to pull himself together. "Go out and make a fight of it."

"He'll never last another round," said Harry Tuthill, as he rubbed my arms. "He's through."

Nevertheless, I hurried out at the bell. Charley White was going toward Jack's corner, too. The crowd had come to its feet. Jack's face looked funny, as if he was in great pain. I remember stopping and staring at him for the moment as he came up from his stool and took a forward step. He was moving mechanically. Then he crashed face down on the canvas.

"Jack!" I cried, and started forward, as White and Jack's seconds reached him and picked him up. I was glad then that I hadn't torn into him, met him in his corner and struck. It was bad enough.

It wasn't funny then. Not a bit. I had broken two of Jack's ribs. But in a short time he was up and around again, and we had a good laugh over the joke we had made of the newspaper experts who picked the Fitz-Dunkhorst battle in preference to ours.

A Favor for Martin Julian

BOB EDGREN, the famous sports writer and cartoonist, will remember this as well as I do. It was in February, 1900. I was a boxing in top form, and had earned a rather enviable share of the spotlight. Martin Julian, whom a lot of readers may remember

as the brother-in-law and manager of Bob Fitzsimmons when he was champion of the world, was running a club in Philadelphia. It was called the Penn Art Club. Why Art, I do not know, for it was a bleak enough place, and, aside from the fistic art, there was little of beauty within its walls.

Well, Martin had been after me to come over to Philadelphia and box Gans. I was willing. We dickered back and forth until things were satisfactory on both sides. The bout was scheduled. During the week in which we were to have met we enjoyed perfect winter weather. But Gans had some excuse for calling it off.

Julian went to work on it again, and we finally settled on a date two weeks later. Everything went smoothly, and I left New York with my manager, Billy Roche, and a large party of New York friends, including Bob Edgren.

"What's this?" I asked casually, as I glanced out of the train window nearing Philly. A snow storm had come up. And what a storm!

"It's a blizzard," said Edgren, calmly. Nothing ever ruffled him.

The train slowed up and we crept into Philly. The Penn Art Club was reached by trolley. We all piled onto the car, which staggered off through the drifts. It was cold, and the snow was piling high on both sides of the tracks. There was nothing to laugh about in this. A snow storm meant a poor crowd at the club, but I had given my word to Julian.

Standing on the platform of the trolley, Bob Edgren and I were talking about the fight game, its characters, high-lights and shadows. Suddenly, without warning, the trolley swung around a curve, and Elbows McFadden went hurtling from the platform into a mile-high drift.

I yelled. Edgren yelled.

"Elbows!" he cried. "Where are you, Elbows? Are you hurt?"

At the same time he yanked the cord to stop the trolley, and he was the first off as the bunch came piling after me through the snow. Head first, I had dived into a snowbank twice my height. Edgren and the bunch dug me out, clawing like hound dogs at the drift. Then they brushed me off and hustled me back to the trolley, where I was bundled inside to keep from catching cold.

Eventually we reached the club. Martin Julian was there to greet us. His face wore a worried frown.

"Good old Elbows!" he said. "I knew you'd get here. Gee, this is pretty hard running into a storm like this."

The gathering of spectators was so small you could scarcely call it a crowd. I was thinking of the nice weather we'd had for the first date, which Gans had called off.

"Don't run out on me, Elbows," begged Martin Julian. "You go on and box him. I'll make it up to you some other time."

He was in a jam, it was true. I knew that, if the show didn't go on, it would hurt his club. So we boxed. Gans and I went six rounds to a draw, or maybe it was no decision. But it was a colorless affair, and my heart wasn't in it. However, it saved Julian from embarrassment, though I've often wondered whether it was Elbows McFadden or Bob Edgren who helped Martin Julian out of that jam.

Because, if Edgren hadn't seen me lurch from the trolley platform and stopped the car, the good Lord knows where I might have ended up. It was a blizzard, and you couldn't see a foot ahead of you.

CHAPTER X

A Scrapper's Scrap-Book

NO record of my ring career would be completed without the name of Kid McPartland. Today the Kid is a first-class referee. When we were both a lot younger, he was a first-class fighting man. Once we had met over the

four-round route, and I walked off with the decision on points. In 1900 McPartland sought to wipe out the sting of that defeat.

Today he is tall and slim and gray-haired, but as straight as an arrow. When we fought our famous battle at the old Broadway, the Kid was one of the leading lightweights of the period. He had given a fine account of himself against the best the country could offer. Kid Lavigne, then champion, failed to down him in twenty-five rounds of milling. His twenty-five round draw with Jack Everhardt at Coney Island was one of the year's classics. Yet, while Everhardt refused to have anything to do with me, McPartland demanded the chance.

"There's a big difference," he said, "between four and twenty-five rounds, Elbows. I think I can beat you now."

"I wish more of these boys felt the same way about it, Kid," I replied.

So we signed for twenty-five at the Broadway, which was the leading fight club of that day. Both of us were in perfect shape when we finished training for the bout. And I particularly remember the big crowd that came over from Brooklyn to see the fight. McPartland was a Brooklyn boy, you know.

Looking back on that fight, I can understand why boxing writers like Charlie Mathison (now a New York state boxing judge) classed the Kid among the cleverest defensive fighters then dividing the limelight. He named two others: Griffo and "the man of a thousand elbows," as he called me.

McPartland was clever. He gave me all I could handle from the opening bell. That is, until I could perfect my countering and get in some good punches. Then my greater strength told on him. All other things being equal, my punches packed more dynamite. I felt him weakening.

Up to the eighth round he had his left jab working perfectly. It was his best weapon against me. He could see, as the bout progressed, that he was doing no damage worth mentioning. And it rattled him.

My elbows got in his way, annoyed him, and, after five or six rounds, he began talking to Johnny White, the referee.

"Make him keep those elbows down, Johnny," he would say. "Watch his elbows, will you?"

White kept his eye on me. Now and then he'd say something about "Careful with those elbows, McFadden."

I was beginning to get a little angry myself. Everybody knew why I was called Elbows, the Kid as well as any one else. He knew what to expect. Why should I change my style for him? I wouldn't, but I *would* go after him in earnest.

Up to the end of the ninth round I had allowed the Kid to set the pace. Starting with the tenth, I waded into him. His Brooklyn crowd saw me go after him, and yelled for him to pepper me with his left.

"Come on, Kid!" they bawled in chorus. "He's no tougher than Lavigne or Everhardt. Spear him, Kid!"

"Yes, he will!" I answered over his shoulder, as I went to work on McPartland's body. From that round on, I centered my bombardment amidships. I gave him everything with both fists. I could tell what effect it was having. The Kid winced as I struck. He seemed to shrink away from the punches even before I started them.

Little by little he softened up, and, just before the end of the tenth, he slid to the floor, exhausted. White began the count. I though I had finished the Kid in ten, but it was not to be. The bell rang. His handlers dragged him to his corner.

"Measure Him, Elbows!"

FOR three rounds McPartland avoided me like an eel, and the crowd began razzing him.

An experienced fighter rarely pays

any attention to remarks from the spectators. He realizes that, if he does, he may come in for a neat trimming. The Kid knew his business. He ignored 'em, and it wasn't until the fourteenth stanza that I could get close enough to again bury my glove in his middle.

He grunted from that one, and I followed quickly with a left that opened a cut over his eye. The Kid promptly got on his bicycle and kept out of danger for the remainder of the round.

"He's trying to out-distance me," I said to my seconds at the end of that round. "He thinks that, by making it a running fight, he'll tire me out."

"He'll never last, Elbows," they assured me. "He's just hanging on for a couple of rounds. You can take him now any time you connect."

I thought so, too, and tried to measure him at once. But the Kid had a great pair of legs and knew how to use them.

When I did catch up with him, the fifteenth was almost over. I told you he was a smart fighter. Well, I caught him and let go with both hands in a rapid volley to the head. He was knocked off balance, and then, before he could get away, I switched to the stomach.

The Kid stumbled awkwardly, arms down, and collapsed on the canvas just as the bell rang again. Twice it had robbed me of a knockout victory.

"Your punch must be gone, Elbows," I heard somebody yell. I was standing in my corner, waiting for the revival of hostilities. The Kid was having a hard time shaking off the effects of that fifteenth round. His seconds poured water over him. They thrust the smelling salts under his nose. One of them was rubbing the back of his neck. His eyes were fishy looking, but he was game enough to climb to his feet with the gong, and he came at me as if he meant business.

Bang! I drove my right to his heart. He dropped like a felled ox. White began counting. The Kid struggled stubbornly against the nausea that must have gripped him. But he was on his feet before White reached "ten."

"Measure him, Elbows! Tack it on his chin!" Plenty of advice was forthcoming from the ringsiders as I stepped up to the Kid. His eyes were foggy and his legs trembled, but he tried to fight, feebly. Those are the moments you just don't like to meet in the ring. But you've got to face 'em from time to time, and the best way out is a quick kayo. So I shoved him away, and stuck my left against his chin to hold him steady for a good, clean right-hand shot. Another second and I would have crashed that right to the button. Then into the ring came the sponge, and I withheld the blow.

He lost to me by a knockout in the sixteenth in that second bout of ours. This defeat, however, gained him many friends who recognized the difference in our punching. The Kid was not a puncher, though he had the courage of a lion, and plenty of skill.

Memories of a Busy Life

IT was in 1902, I think, that I cut away from Billy Roche for reasons sufficient to myself.

That year I fought a fellow named Billy Moore, and knocked him out in a round. His manager, Johnny Mack, was a friend of mine. We got together, and, from that point on until I retired from active participation inside the rope, Johnny managed my business. Under him I fought such fellows as Rube McCarthy, John L., Jr., Jimmie Kelly, Amby McGarry, Al Greenwood, Kid Williams, Patsy Connor, Dick Grant, Blink McCloskey, Charley Seiger, Fred Lucas, Tommy Connolly, Jimmy Hunt, Sailor Brown, Joe Gans, Curley Supples, and plenty of others. As a matter of fact, I went on with anyone and everyone who expressed a willingness to tangle with me.

In addition to my boxing, I also started several champions on the road

to ring fame. The popular Johnny Coulon was a student of mine. I gave Mike McTigue his groundwork in the art of self-defense, and I coached Freddie Welsh when he first came to this country. All three became champions.

Little Johnny Coulon is my cousin. When he came to me, he weighed eighty pounds. That was in 1905. I took him in hand and taught him how to box. In 1906 I was putting on a little boxing show for a church organization, and Johnny was one of my battlers. Another one was Kid Murphy. The Kid didn't want to box with Johnny.

"I'm ashamed, Elbows," he said. "The guy's too little." Murphy was then recognized as bantamweight champion.

"Go ahead, Kid," I answered. "I'm paying you. And there's nothing at stake. Just a little show for the boys."

After much persuasion, I managed to get Kid Murphy into his ring togs and started him with Coulon. Without prejudice, I make this statement . . . Kid Murphy twice climbed out of the ring and argued the matter.

"I don't want to box him, Elbows," he insisted. "He's too little."

Well, I finally talked him into it, and the result was a scream. Murphy couldn't lay a glove on Coulon. Little Johnny was all over him. And—like some strange prank of fate—it was Johnny Coulon who, within a year from that night, whipped Kid Murphy for the world's championship. Yes, Coulon was one of my protégés.

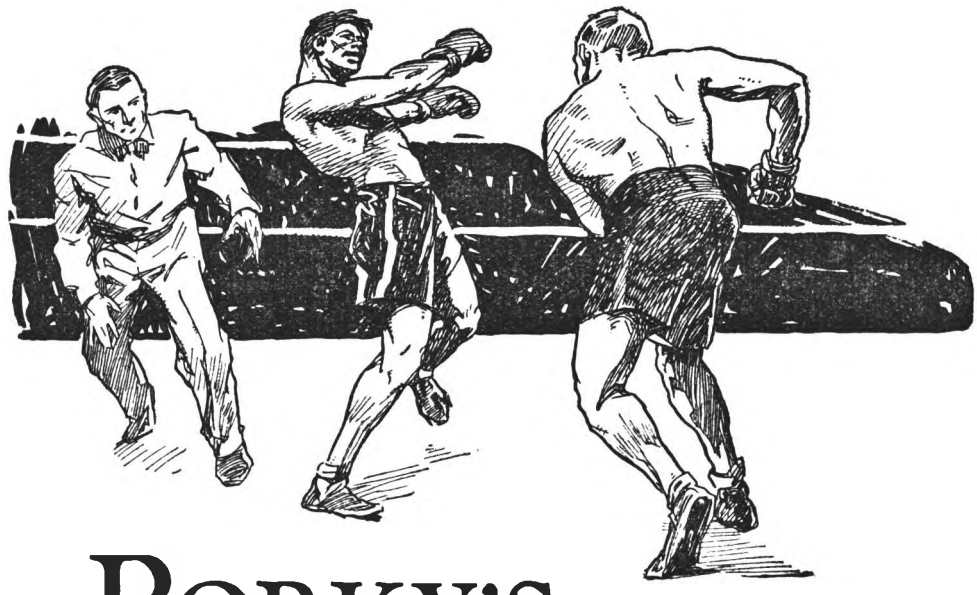
During the course of a moderately active life I have also designed and sold a number of patents. Two of my exerciser patents went to the Whiteley people, two more to Anthony Barker. Many, many years ago I crashed into the public prints with my noiseless punching bag, and the principle has since been adopted by a score or more manufacturers.

In my present gym, at 51 East Fifty-ninth Street, I am using my own patented chest-developing and height-increasing machine. All of my life I have been interested in the human body and its safe and sane development. I remember Bernarr Macfadden, the physical culturist, when he and his first wife stood in a store window here in New York and demonstrated an exerciser adopted from one of my own design.

Since I first began boxing, and that is forty or more years ago, I have worked in my gym, daily, except Sunday. I have no cauliflower ears and no scars on my face, other than a dent in my nose that was put there in a little amateur tussle many years ago. I have all of my own teeth, and they're as sound as the American dollar. I do not drink, and I doubt if there is one among the old-time fight crowd who can truthfully say I was ever heard to use bad language. I boxed at the big New York benefit shows for George Dixon, and for John L. Sullivan, and I vowed there never would be any benefit shows for Elbows McFadden.

To avoid the possibility of this last paragraph being misinterpreted, let me remind you of something that Joe Gans once said. This was years after Joe had won the title, a long time after that gruelling Goldfield fight with Bat Nelson. He was asked by a newspaper man, "Who is the toughest man you ever fought?" And Gans replied without hesitation—"Elbows McFadden!"

THE END



PORKY'S ROUND

By ART MOORE

The fire of youth had gone from Porky's limbs. He lived among the ghosts of his slugging past; but there was one big round in him yet—even if it was only a memory.

SPORT DILLON, manager of the Dreamland Arena, knew a good thing when he saw it.

"Look," Sport demanded, "at those legs."

Willie Donklie looked, and thought he saw a pair of oldish, fattish and extremely tired legs which shuffled about the ring supporting a very weary fighter.

"And," ordered Sport, one yellow-gloved hand raised daintily. "look at those arms."

Willie looked, and saw two thick arms, pumping ponderously into an opponent's middle; slow, squashy blows they were. Willie thought, but he didn't say.

"H'm," said Willie.

"That face. That jaw. That nose—and that bald head. Yip!" Sport allowed himself the luxury of a laugh.

"Yip," countered cautious Willie, wondering what was up and holding his fire until he found out.

"That stomach. He'll have to take that off."

Willie pursed his lips thoughtfully and gazed weightily at a ridge of fat

which rolled above the fighter's trunks.

"Do I know a good thing when I see it?" Sport demanded.

"Ya sure do boss. Yep." Willie waggled his head to make it emphatic. "No one can pick 'em like you can," Willie knew where he stood now. He'd been asked that question before, and Willie, a wise boy, knew all the answers.

"Then sign that fellow up for Friday night. Ten rounds with Chopper Fione. Don't offer more'n fifty smackers, and don't give more'n a century. Get it?"

Willie got it, though he looked doubtfully at the heavy-moving fighter in the ring.

"That's Porky Halloran, boss. You know—the palooka you told me not to give even an opening spot to. Even the navy, except for some pals on the *Valiant,* is givin' him the ha-ha—"

"Listen, punk," Sport cracked out. "Do I know a good thing when I see it or don't I?" And Sport's slightly purple jaw thrust itself under Willie's nose.

Willie ducked as though from a right-cross, and forced a frozen smile to break the fear in his face.

"Jus' kiddin'. Sure, you can pick 'em. And how! I'll get him for fifty, boss. Leave him to me."

Sport stalked out of the gymnasium, lighted a monogrammed cigarette, and moved with paunchy dignity toward Les Cohen's. Cohen also knew Sport could pick 'em, and had for proof several delicate monetary transactions of a vaguely sporting nature. And Sport. this morning, had another delicate matter for Les to handle in Les' own oily, close-mouthed fashion.

IN the Dreamland Arena a bell sounded, and Porky Halloran allowed his heavy hands to dangle loosely as he shuffled his way to his corner. His hands were heavy, as though the gloves were water-soaked pillows. He felt as though his brain had been jarred into a thousand tiny fragments.

"The boy packs a wallop," he muttered thickly to the ringsiders.

His hearers smiled openly, and a derisive voice reminded Porky that Flash Larkin couldn't hit hard enough to turn a whisker on a House of David heavyweight.

"Listen, grandpa," the voice continued. "When the bell sounds, you'd better go out on a pair of crutches. Only don't let Flash get them away from you. He might be able to hit—on the delivery end of a crutch."

Porky looked around the ring, his eyes freezing on the sagging figure of Chief Petty Officer Jim Bell, of the *Valiant.* Porky scowled, but his scowl only brought jeering laughter from Bell.

"Dashing young tar makes good," came Bell's derisive voice. "Listen, Porky, with a little experience—say about twenty more years—you ought to be a pretty fair match for a blind man in a wheel-chair, providing, of course, that he doesn't have the full use of either hand."

The bell cut short Jim's comments, and Porky creaked to his feet and shuffled toward Flash.

"There's life in the old boy yet," jeered Bell.

Porky launched a ponderous right, and Flash danced away on his toes. Flick! Slap! Flash snapped two lefts to Porky's face. A right followed, looping into the pit of Porky's heaving stomach. Porky raised his thick arms and rushed in, smothering Flash in a clinch. He tried to pump a right into Flash's mid-section, but was too slow. Flash brought his own darting left to Porky's jaw, and was away again on his dance.

When the gong sounded, Porky was glad to call out, "That's all for today, thanks, Flash," and crawl out of the ring. His chest was heaving from his two rounds with Flash, as he went toward the sand bag.

Bell followed him.

"Why don't you skip a little rope, Porky?" Bell wanted to know. "I'll

bet those old legs would go limp as a dish rag."

"Put the gloves on with me, just once," Porky growled, with a gleam in his eye.

"What a fine greeting for an old shipmate, gone these three years. Besides, I quit fightin' years ago, and you know it. It's a youngster's game. Me dodder about a ring trying to catch up with some young squirt? Not me! No, sir!" And Jim Bell spat complacently into a corner.

"I can lick you again just as bad as I did twenty years ago," Porky answered as he lunged heavily toward the sand bag. "I'd knock you just as cold."

"Old Father Time has knocked you cold, and you don't know it, you sap," Bell replied. "Well, so long. If you don't know when you're through, it's your own mistake. You always could take 'em, and take 'em and then take some more. But, fella, you can't lick the greatest slugger of them all—K. O. Father Time."

Bell left the gymnasium. He, too, stopped at Les Cohen's, but only to place a two-dollar bet on the ponies at Agua Caliente. He completed the transaction absently, and without diverting his thoughts, which had leaped the years and the miles to Manila harbor, where, twenty years before, he and Porky Halloran had clashed for the championship of the navy in a struggle of brawn, speed and youth which still made talk wherever fighting navy men gathered the world around.

For sixteen steaming, bitter rounds the two had smashed and mauled. Blows were shot home—crunching, devastating blows which smacked soddenly against jaw and stomach. And Porky had come flailing on, everlastingly flinging punches against the best Jim Bell could offer. Porky's fists had rained upon Bell like twin sledges in the hands of a demoniacal giant. Porky's 180 pounds had darted about with the lithe grace of a leopard, back and forth across the deck under the white canvas overhead—a canvas that failed to dim the searing intensity of the sun.

The end came in the sixteenth round, wrapped in Porky's bullet fists—the knockout punch which ended an agony of heat and punishment for Jim Bell. It was a one-two punch, thrown as Bell came too eagerly, too carelessly to the attack. Porky had won the championship that far-off day because he could take 'em. Take 'em flush on the jaw and deep in the stomach. Take 'em and come darting in, fists chopping and tearing. That was Porky Halloran—

"How he *could* take 'em!" Jim mused. He half smiled, as though he found the memory good.

Jim left Les' cigar store without observing Sport Dillon in the back room. Sport did not observe Jim, either. If he could have known what was in Jim's mind—but he didn't, and a thousand dollars passed into the hands of Les Cohen.

"Sucker money," Sport explained. "The fleet's just in port with a good, new heavyweight, Chopper Fione. Too good for any sack of meal in Pedro. Got him signed with a has-been gob for tomorrow. The rest of the navy don't know about Chopper at all. I had Slug Dillard signed up for Fione, but he busted a hand. And there's always some nuts who think Porky Halloran is what he used to be twenty years ago. They're all on the *Valiant*. Take their dough. Sailors is suckers."

And Sport Dillon went down the street with the air of a man who knows a good thing when he sees it, and then knows how to cash in on it.

PORKY HALLORAN halted the deliberate blows he was plunking into the sand bag to try his speed with the punching bag. The leather seemed to flash from the back board faster than it used to; Porky's ponderous arms moved desperately to keep up with it but he bungled the job, and the bag flivvered to a halt just as Willie Donklie sauntered over.

"Still got something on the ball?" Willie asked. He leered at Pork's sweating back as the bag started on its ra-ta-tata again.

Porky waited until the bag had again evaded his bludgeoning hands before replying.

"Enough," he grunted. "Enough." And turned his back squarely upon Willie. Two months before, Willie had refused him an opening spot on the grounds that he was too old. Porky wondered what was up today.

"Want a spot Friday?" Willie asked.

"Nope. Not me," Porky replied. "I'm saving my shots for the navy eliminations."

Willie lifted a skeptical eyebrow.

"Just a conditioner against some unknown," he wheedled.

"Not interested," and Porky turned again to the sand bag, which began to lurch under his blows.

"There's a fifty in it for you," Willie said easily.

"There's no fifty in it for me," Porky came back.

"How's a century?"

"A century's okay, but I can't be bothered."

Willie lost his leer and frowned uneasily. His round shoulders waggled ingratiatingly.

"Come on, Porky. The boss says to me, 'Get good old Porky. He'll show this punk how to fight and the navy still backs good old Porky! So I says, 'Sure, ol' Porky'll fight for me.' I've got to getcha, Pork."

"You ain't got to get me at all, and it wasn't so long ago I wasn't good enough for an opener. So peddle your century somewhere else and leave me alone."

Porky growled his answer this time, and Willie edged away, nervously tugging at his thin nose. Willie was scared; scared because of the ominous frown which creased Porky's flushed forehead, and scared because he saw the old campaigner slipping away from him for the main event. He knew Sport Dillon, and realized one mistake would be his last. He took a chance.

"I'll offer one-fifty, Porky, for old times."

"Old times?" Porky was stubborn now as well as sore. "Will I ever hear anything but 'old times?'"

Willie rushed to salve his indiscretion, and recklessly offered two hundred. The offer leaped by fifties to four hundred, Willie in a sweat of fear at the prospect of losing Porky, and trembling at his boldness in going higher than Sport's hundred-dollar limit.

When Willie's trembling voice squeaked, "Half a grand, and that's final," Porky took stock. Five hundred dollars would come in handy and mean a swell time in Panama after that championship was safely stowed away again for the *Valiant*.

"Let's sign," he growled at Willie.

Nervously, Willie drew up the papers, carefully tucking away the club's contract. No use letting Sport see it just yet. He offered Porky his clammy hand, but Porky looked past him and went out—out and down to the Service Men's Club, without even asking the name of his opponent.

IN the Club, where he knew they they would be, was the old gang. There was Jarvis, Smoke Davis and Teddy Deering, Don Lassiter and Lefty Snell. There, also, was Jim Bell.

"The old sea-horse still in harness, eh, Porky?" Smoke asked.

"Still in harness and going strong," Porky responded. "Feel that," and he bulged a right arm. He danced a few steps and shadow-boxed.

"Not still fighting!" Smoke exclaimed.

Bell interrupted. "No, not still fighting. Just hauling his carcass through the ropes as an animated punching bag for any young punk who comes along. I saw him this afternoon, and he was as slow as a recruit on a Jacob's ladder."

"Listen," Porky said slowly, "I got plenty of stuff left, see? And I'm go-

ing after the heavyweight title again. I guess there's always a place for Porky Halloran when the *Valiant* clears the for'ard deck for fighting. What d'you say, gang?" Porky looked appealingly around the circle, ignoring Bell.

"Sure, always a place for good old Porky," Smoke answered. "You oughta be able to pass along some pointers to this youngster, Chopper Fione. We've talked him into transferring to the *Valiant*."

"What weight?" Porky demanded.

"Oh, he's a heavyweight," Smoke answered uneasily.

The light in Porky's eyes died. His shoulders sagged and his head drooped. The old gang didn't want him! They'd gone after some kid to take his place on the *Valiant*. He swung from the circle and slouched out of the club.

"The poor sap," Bell said brusquely. "We need Fione more'n we need Porky. Besides, Fione's a whirlwind compared to Porky. He'd chop Porky to pieces."

"Yeh," Smoke replied. "This Fione can fight, but he ain't the man Porky is. He's a cocky cub. I wisht someone would wale the cockiness out of him."

"There's no one in the navy can do it," Bell persisted. "He'll bring the championship to the *Valiant* sure. He's a smart aleck, it's true, but, boy, how he can sock! We'd better string along with Fione. Porky's a glutton for punishment, like he always was, but he's old. Old and don't know it. He's a sap. I'm through with him." And Bell flung himself out of the room savagely.

PORKY awoke the next morning to his last day on the little tug *Dandy*.

"No place for a sailorman," he told himself, when he rolled out for duty. "I need the sea and action. And some fights." He flexed his stiff muscles, and moved heavily across the narrow deck.

"Good morning, Halloran," shouted the skipper, Lieutenant Hamlin. "Understand you've got a fight on tonight. Better take it easy today. You're not as young as you used to be." Hamlin grinned in a friendly way, but Porky growled to himself.

"Insolent pup."

Young Jackie Stengler was streached in the sun, a sport sheet in his hand.

"'Lo, Porky," he said. "Know who this Fione is you're fighting tonight?"

"Fione, did you say?" Porky queried sharply.

"Yeh. They say he's the next navy heavyweight champ. Some puncher, they say. And can take 'em, too. Better take it easy today if you want to make much of a showing."

Porky was young Stengler's hero. Every kid on the boat from the skipper down looked to Porky for salty tales of the old days at sea and in the ring. But Stengler, like everyone else on the tug, knew Porky was through. So throughout the day Porky was allowed to sit quietly in the sun on the *Dandy's* tiny, rolling deck, staring glumly across busy San Pedro harbor.

THE preliminaries were fast, and, when the vanquished battler in the semi-windup had dragged himself weakly through the ropes and staggered away to the dressing-rooms, the huge crowd was yelling for more action to top off a program crammed from the opening bell with speed, punch and power.

The arena was hot and close with drifting tobacco smoke as the crowd settled back. Now came the class of the show. The fans had read the blurbs of the sports writers, Porky Halloran ripe for a comeback. (Sport had smiled when he read this. The old come-on.) Fione, a tough, green youngster with promise, favored to win, though lacking experience. (Sport had laughed openly at this one, his own message to the sports writers. Green? Ha! He knew something about Fione the rest of the boys didn't. That swell record in Florida, for instance. And that grand of his was covered by the *Valiant's* old-timers!)

The crowd waited for the drama they

knew was coming; drama packed with fighting skill and power; youth versus experience; the old day pitting brawn and courage against the new.

Fione skipped down the aisle to vault the ropes lightly and bound across the ring to the resin box. He waved jauntily to the gallery and to youngsters of the *Valiant's* crew who gave him a great ovation.

The *Valiant's* old-timers, who filled a good part of one section, stirred silently during the ovation for Fione and strained their eyes into the shadows which hid the dressing-room doors.

When Porky trudged stolidly toward the roped enclosure, they found themselves on their feet cheering as in the old days when Porky had carried the navy's hopes into the ring the world around. All but Jim Bell. Jim spat impatiently and waited for the clamor to die down. Sentimental saps! And most of them had placed money on Porky merely because he'd been a former shipmate.

The announcer shrieked introductions. Fione leaped up, gloves raised, to answer the clamorous encouragement of the *Valiant's* youngsters. Others in the crowd took up the roar of approval at the sight of his lithe, brown body. Muscles rippled across his back and down his legs. He looked every inch and pound the fighting man as he received the ovation of youth, and then scowled menacingly across the ring at Porky.

Porky didn't move when the announcer waved to his corner.

"—and in this corner, Porky Halloran, former heavyweight champion of the navy, one hundred and ninety-two pounds."

Smoke let out a yelp. Lefty Snell came to his feet with an answering roar. Porky's little band of shipmates led the feeble cheer which, for all their efforts, came slowly from the crowd and died an early death. Jim Bell growled its epitaph:

"Hope Fione kills him."

Porky heaved his pink body into the center of the ring for the usual instructions. The crowd sized him up unfavorably beside the taller, more agile looking Chopper. As the Chopper danced on his toes, eager for the bell, Porky stood quietly under the arc lights. He touched gloves soberly with Fione, and turned to his corner. Stolidly he stood. No place in the crowd to look for friends, he thought. He felt old tonight. Old and a trifle sick. Was Bell right? Fione swung gracefully from the ropes to loosen his muscles.

The gong!

THE Chopper tore into Porky's corner and caught the veteran only half prepared. Back into the ropes Porky lunged. Fione poured lefts and rights to Porky's middle, then broke free, evading a clinch. He danced backward into the center of the ring, then lunged out again.

This time a left flicked Porky's face. Another left stung over Porky's right eye. A right smashed into the jaw and another into the mid-section. Porky arched his back when he saw the next right start for that roll of fat around the top of his trunks. He half turned from the blow, already feeling the punishment. His bulky arms caught Fione in a clinch as the youngster, sensing the kill, cocked his right for the last, stunning wallop.

Porky hung on, and, when the referee pried him from Fione, he bobbed and wove his way into another clinch. His ring experience came to his aid and he warily blocked off the rushing Chopper time and again, tying him up in close but unable to keep those battering fists from his stomach and jaw at long range. He felt those blows; they jarred him to his heels. His brain felt scattered, knocked into fragments which jostled and jolted to the tune of Fione's crunching fists.

When the bell gave Porky a breathing spell, the crowd had already picked its man. This Fione was no green young-

ster! He moved like a flash, with the assurance of a master and the ferocity of a Dempsey.

The bell pulled Porky to his feet heavily, on shaking legs. It yanked the Chopper off his stool with a flash, both hands lashing out for the red, swollen face of the veteran. Again the relentless stalking of a prey fast weakening before an onslaught of whirling gloves. Rights and lefts smacked home to Porky's battered jaw, his heaving middle. Red welts rose where Porky rolled against the ropes to slip again and again from a corner where Fione had crowded him for the kill. There was no fighting back. At the end of the second round Fione was unmarked. Porky hadn't raised a glove against the Chopper, while his own fighting strength was being battered out of him.

The crowd thundered its approval when the Chopper opened the third with another rush. The round became a repetition of the first and second—the Chopper, steel-sinewed fighting machine, hitting like a trip hammer; Porky, canny veteran of many a ring battle, pitting his ebbing strength and dulling brain in an uneven struggle against youth and brawn.

Rounds four and five slipped by with Porky achieving the apparently impossible—still on his feet, fighting blindly now, guided only by instinct.

The Chopper smashed in blow after blow; Porky took them all. Took them like the Porky of old. But it could not go on. When the bell sounded the end of the fifth round, the veteran stood dazed, like a lost man, in the center of the ring. Fione had to turn him toward his corner. Porky staggered across the ring, lurching to his stool. He did not see a group of dejected old-time navy men sitting hunched together, silent under the clamor of approval for Chopper Fione which rolled over their heads toward the ring.

"I can't stand it no more," Smoke muttered, and left his seat. Davis hid his face in his hands. Jarvis bit savagely at a pipe stem until it snapped in two. Lassiter's lips were white around an unlighted and forgotten cigarette butt.

ONLY Jim Bell had sat stolidly throughout the fight, watching the Chopper cut Porky to bits in workmanlike, relentless fashion. Fione, flashing to the attack, lithe and eager, reminded him of the fighter he himself had been. He saw Fione press in; studied his style. There it was! Bell groaned quietly to himself when Porky tried to clinch. Fione had dropped his hands low as he came in, confident in his strength, intent only on whirling uppercuts with both hands underneath Porky's guard. Bell had tried that twenty years ago. But twenty years ago Porky had flashed back, one-two, and the fight had ended.

Bell's companions did not see his narrowing eyes nor the glint which shot them with steel as he sat, outwardly unmoved. Bell's knuckles grew white under the taut skin of his clenched fists during that fifth round. He watched Porky stumble, his guard down, flush into a stinging haymaker, and flinched with the blow. He saw Porky cringe from a right to the body, and Bell's own frame moved with the punch. He saw Porky try desperately to raise his hands in a fruitless, gallant effort to fight back, and Bell's own hands seemed to rise in supplication at the sight.

The seconds between rounds grew into a minute. Bell suddenly leaped to his feet, jerked off his blue jacket and flung it into the seat behind him as he dashed down the aisle toward the ring.

The *Valiant's* old-timers noticed the dash; wondered what it meant. They saw Bell clamber into the ring, shoving one of Porky's seconds out through the ropes as he grasped a sponge in one hand and smelling salts in the other.

"Porky," Bell gasped into the veteran's ear, "it's me, Bell. I'm going to go down with you." He shook Porky's bloody head between his hands and looked into Porky's glazed eyes.

But there was no recognition.

Cracked lips moved instead: "Take 'em, boy, take 'em. The hoarse whisper came in gasps, as though propelled in gusts from tortured, seared lungs. "The fifteenth coming up. Blast that sun! Only five more rounds."

Bell leaned closer as Porky's words died away. Bell became conscious of the heat of the big arc lights overhead, heat which crept to his skin through his thin white shirt. Heat which took him back through the years—

Manila! Twenty rounds for the championship of the navy—that was it! Porky thought he was fighting his greatest fight over again. He *was* fighting it again in that brain numbed by a hail of terrific, nerve-deadening punches; fighting it again in that lion's heart that knew no defeat. Bell's memory came slipping back to the beaten, bruised fighter, limp before him on the stool. He leaned toward Porky, his mouth against the battered fighter's ear.

"It's the fifteenth coming up, Porky. You're right." His harsh phrases cut against the dull tide of the crowd's roar. "Go out fighting. That palooka Bell can't stand much more. He's shot his bolt. He's—"

The bell interrupted. But Porky had heard. Heard, and, without waiting to understand, shot out of his corner to meet the Chopper blow for blow; hands raised, eyes glittering with a new fire, and legs strengthened from a hidden, untapped source.

The Chopper's right swished in a flashing uppercut, flushed to Porky's jaw. Porky shook it off, came charging in. Fione rocked back into the ropes, shaken by a crushing right. Startled, the Chopper dropped his guard for a moment. Smash! A left hook drove home. Now the Chopper was on his guard. He fought back, and, in the center of the ring, they locked. Blows rained upon body and head. For a moment neither would yield. Then the frenzied crowd came to its feet as the Chopper backed up—back across the ring with a bobbing, weaving terror of a fighting man pursuing him.

The gong!

PORKY staggered dazedly at the bell's command. Bell had to run into the center of the ring to guide him to his stool.

"The sixteenth coming up," Bell rasped. Porky *must* hear him!

"The old sixteenth coming up. Bell's groggy. He's beaten. You'll reach him this round. He's shot his bolt and you've got something left. Pour it in. You can take 'em, boy. Take 'em and keep coming. Bell's a sucker for that one-two when he's coming in. Make him come to you. A quick left jab, then the right. Pour it to him when he comes in after you. He's through—"

Porky nodded, sat up. An amazed second who had listened to Bell's intense instructions climbed out of the ring, concluding that both fighter and handler were punch drunk. Porky pounded his gloves together, trembling like a thoroughbred at the barrier, one eye cast toward the timekeeper. The sixteenth coming up! Porky's round! His eyes glinted with the battle light, but they were the eyes of a man living in the past. It was Manila . . . for the championship . . . he was Porky Halloran who could take 'em, and take 'em. Bell was through. He'd go down this round.

There — the gong again! Its clang fired the fighting man in Porky, and he leaped across the ring toward his foe. This time it was the Chopper who arose stiffly to meet a fury behind two pounding gloves; a fury that concentrated every ounce of weight into smashing, ripping punches that battered down the Chopper's defense. There was the old Porky, no longer a has-been! Fione's backers sat stunned for a moment. But down in one section, with a roar from fifty throats which had been tight with pity a moment before, same the fuse to set off an explosion of acclaim for the gallant old-timer who didn't know when he was licked.

Fione gave way before Porky's mauling rush. He flung out his left hand again and again into the veteran's battered face. Those lefts came in hard and true. Fione knew it, but his rally died before the flailing fists of a guy who could take 'em, and had proved it in Manila twenty years before; a forty-year-old veteran of a hundred fights who knew this was his round, the sixteenth.

Now was the time. Porky stalled, slowed down. He fell into a clinch, and Fione sensed the change. He called upon the reserve strength of his youth, and flung himself at the retreating Porky. Into one corner . . . but not yet. Porky slid away, strangely light on his feet. The Chopper shuffled after him, his left flicking constantly, his right cocked high for the finishing blow.

That right never landed. Fione pulled it down for a fatal moment as he came charging in, and out of the meaningless whirl of Porky's gloves shot the left he had been saving. It came straight from the shoulder and landed on the side of Fione's jaw. The Chopper's knees sagged, then stiffened. His arms reached helplessly toward his foe. Porky's stunning right flashed home. In it was wrapped the old kayo punch of bygone days. Stiffly, still bent forward, Fione swayed, then fell face downward as the bell sounded.

Porky heard the bell, but didn't care. He knew that prostrate figure would not arise in time to resume hostilities. Not with that punch laid away on his chin! Porky reached his stool and sat down. Jim Bell had vanished. Jim, too, knew the fight was over; he had recognized that punch, and had returned to his seat, silently.

INTO Porky's dressing-room crowded the *Valiant's* old-timers.

"When'll you board ship, Porky?" Smoke asked, with a grin.

"Me board what ship?" Porky growled. "I'm going back to the *Dandy*. Those kids know a sailorman when they see one."

"Hey, what's this? Think the *Dandy* wants a heavyweight champ as bad as the old *Valiant?*" Smoke demanded.

"My fighting days are over. I'm quitting," Porky grumbled. He turned sheepishly to Bell. "I didn't know what I was doing after the fourth round," he grinned. "Guess you're right, Bell."

Bell shifted awkwardly. Porky didn't know. Never would, either.

"You're a sap, Porky," Bell barked gruffly. "A sap. If you quit fightin', I suppose you'll start flyin' a kite off the *Dandy's* deck. You were lucky to win. That kid had you licked. Well, guys, I'll be amblin' along. Gotta see how Fione is."

Bell went out.

"Come back here," Porky roared after him. "Put on the gloves with me right now. I'll show you if it was a lucky punch or not."

But Bell didn't turn.

He knew more than Porky did.

When Porky went to collect his purse, he found Sport Dillon with a headache —considerable of a headache. The memory of a grand now resting in the pockets of a lot of sailor suckers didn't help it, either.

Sport peeled off ten tens and shoved them sourly at Porky. Willie Donklie shuffled his feet, poked his hands in his pockets.

"Well," Willie smirked, "guess I'll be going."

"Going?" asked Porky. "Not till you fix this up." He tossed his contract before the widening gaze of Sport Dillon. Willie edged toward the door.

"You going?" Sport rasped out. "Come here," and his fingers closed around the back of Willie's scraggly neck. "When I get through with you, you're going, quick—but I'm not through with you yet. Sign this palooka for half a grand, will you—" Willie's head bobbed. His teeth chattered. His hands flopped helplessly. But Willie was thinking even as he bobbed and jerked in Sport's jolting grip.

Willie's head flopped back.

"Glub," said Willie.

"Yawrrumf," growled Sport.

Willie's head flipped forward.

"You sure—" Willie was gaining, but another jerk cut him short.

"You sure, sure c-c-can p-p-pick 'em, b-b-boss," came finally from Willie's chattering lips. Sport's grip slackened.

"Yes, sir," chirped smart Willie. "You sure can pick 'em. Porky sure's got the stuff. You know 'em. You sure do." Willie's shoulders waggled.

Sport straightened his vest carefully, re-arranged his twisted cravat, and lighted a cigarette. Willie, he told himself, was a bright lad, after all.

"Here's your five hundred," Sport told Porky when he was again his fastidious self. Porky grinned and shuffled off for the *Dandy*.

"Can I pick 'em, Willie?" Sport asked dolefully, fingering a wallet much too thin.

"Oh, boy, can you pick 'em," gloated Willie. "*Can* you!"

THE END

GRIFFO'S EVIL STAR

NOT many men lived a harder life than Young Griffo, admittedly the cleverest boxer that ever drew on a glove. Griffo, whose real name was Albert Griffiths, was a son of a coal-heaver in Sydney, Australia. When his mother died, he was adopted by people named Allner, at Miller's Point, better known as The Rock. Griffo sold newspapers for a while, and the many street fights into which he was forced developed his natural skill.

He joined a gang called the "Rock Push" and engaged in that organization's warfare with other mobs in the neighborhood. His first fight, which took place in 1887, was on the green at Dawes Point, where he beat a lad named Billy Griffith.

After numerous victories in Australia, Griffo came to America. He had no education. He was unable to read or write, and continually dissipated. He drank heavily and threw away his ring earnings as fast as he received them. For years before his death, he hung around the Times Square section of New York, panhandling old-timers who had known him in the hey-day of his glory.

We should feel sorry for Griffo instead of criticizing him too severely. The conditions of his birth and his environment made anything but the sad life he lived almost impossible. From the beginning to end, poor Griffo lived under an evil star. Had he been able to lift himself from the morass to which he had fallen, it would have been nothing short of a miracle.

THROUGH *the* ROPES

By HYPE IGOE

Racing typewriters telling their stories at first hand; clicking telegraph instruments relaying each move to the waiting presses; the swift shuffling of feet in the resin; the smack of wet leather on flesh; the heavy breathing of the combatants—that's ringside. And there's Hype Igoe! Up through the ropes he has watched each blood-tingling charge of all the great fighters since John L. Sullivan. There his keen, appraising eyes have gathered together the threads of fistic drama. Meet Mr. Igoe, friend of champions and master story-teller of the ring. Each month in this department he will sit down with you, figuratively speaking, and tell you many a rare, first-hand tale of the squared circle and its followers.

MEET THE MANAGER!

BOXING today is big business. Fighters get more for short, easy bouts than champions of the past were able to pick up in a dozen fights. Nowadays no one wants to gamble. The boxer and his manager are certain of what they are going to get long before the warrior laces on his gloves.

Thirty or forty years ago it was the general custom for star rivals to get sixty per cent of the gate and split the purse in any way they liked. It was not uncommon for them to fight on a winner-take-all basis, although the usual practice was seventy-five per cent to the winner and twenty-five to the loser.

The first real business man of the ring was Joe Choynski. Though little more than a middleweight, Joe was ready and willing to go on with the best big men in an era that had no equal so far as star heavyweights were concerned. Among the famous performers of that period were James J. Corbett, James J. Jeffries, Bob Fitzsimmons, Tom Sharkey, Gus Ruhlin and others. Though Choynski was outweighed more than sixty pounds, he held Jeffries to a draw, and gave Corbett slashing opposition. He had the heart of a lion and a deadly punch in either hand.

Choynski enjoyed fighting, but he looked on his business as a most uncertain one. Though he could whip ninety per cent of the fellows he faced in the ring, Joe always insisted on a fifty-fifty split in advance.

Once he was matched with Joe McAuliffe, a big, hard-hitting heavyweight. Eddie Graney, who was acting for Joe, remarked that there would be an even split as usual.

Barney Farley, representing McAuliffe, let out a squawk.

"So Chrysanthemum Joe's afraid he's going to get licked, and wants as much as the winner, eh?"

"No," said Graney, "but that's the way Choynski likes to do business in all his matches."

"McAuliffe will never fight that way," countered Farley.

Graney looked doubtful. "Well, how would you suggest splitting the dough?" he asked.

"We'll take ninety per cent for the winner and ten for the loser out of the sixty per cent of the gate."

They parted, agreeing to argue the matter out later in the day. In the interval rumors had been current that McAuliffe was to be dropped and Alex Gregeains substituted. This had Farley worried, and he was not quite so outspoken when the next meeting took place. Joe was so anxious to sign that he was willing to agree to any sort of division. Barney Farley kept insisting on a winner-take-all agreement.

Graney then spoke up and said, "Barney, let's be reasonable. Fighting is a matter of business with Joe. He wants to split the purse evenly because he thinks it's better that way."

Farley hesitated a little, and then said, "Gentlemen, it's all right. We'll divide the purse as you say."

The fighters' share for that bout was $2,968.40. Of this sum, Choynski, who won the fight by a knockout, received only half. Had he agreed to split the way Farley wanted, he would have been way ahead.

Sometimes his system worked out a lot better. Joe was signed for a bout with the diminutive Joe Walcott. Choynski's friends urged him to make it winner take all. But he refused. They pointed out how foolish he was to accept the fifty-fifty split with Walcott, but Joe replied:

"You may think that, but prize fighting is an uncertain business. One punch on the right spot and you're gone."

That's exactly what happened. The Barbadoes' Demon reached up and clouted Choynski on the chin, knocking him stiff in the first round. It was a most disturbing happening, but Joe had the satisfaction of collecting fifty per cent of the purse, anyway. Other managers and fighters began to see that there was an element of sound sense in Choynski's method. A man gambled when he went into the ring with a good rival. What was the sense of risking one's financial return as well? From that period on there began to be more demand for guarantees and equitable splits between the fighters than there ever had been before. The old bare-knuckle men, who took terrible beatings and received nothing at all—save bruises—for their pains, were out-moded, and the big business era of the prize ring was definitely launched.

Two Shrewd Managers

TWO of the shrewdest managers that ever operated in the game were Billy Nolan and Doc Kearns. What they didn't know about prying out advantages for their protégés never has been written.

Kearns won his greatest fame as manager for Jack Dempsey, and the vast sums earned by the Manassa Mauler were partly due to the suave doctor. Some people point out that he wasn't really so smart when he demanded a $300,000 guarantee for the Carpentier match, when, if he had agreed to work on a percentage, he would have collected a sum greatly in excess of that.

These wise fellows are just second guessers. At that time $300,000 was an absolutely unprecedented guarantee. It was so staggering that Bill Brady and others associated with Tex Rickard in

the promotion of the Dempsey-Carpentier fight, withdrew. They said it was insane to give one man—no matter who he was—that much money. Rickard gambled, though, and came out way ahead. Even though he did miscalculate, Kearns showed a lot of nerve and imagination in even thinking of a $300,000 guarantee. I don't believe another manager of that day would have gone quite so far.

Then there was that fiasco at Shelby, Montana, when Dempsey and Tommy Gibbons went fifteen rounds and ruined the town financially. Kearns demanded a king's ransom for that bout, and he hung to his demand in the face of threats from desperate men who saw their last dollars slipping away. Shelby went bankrupt paying the doctor's demand, but he and Dempsey walked off with $210,000. Cold-blooded, you may remark, yet probably no different than the attitude of our great banks and business institutions.

Looking back through the past, I can recall only one other manager who was as thoroughly cold and capable as Kearns. That was Billy Nolan, who reached his greatest degree of efficiency while handling Battling Nelson. His head was continually buzzing with money-making schemes. He bluffed his way against some of the greatest promoters in the game, Jim Coffroth being one.

Nolan had an aloof, reserved personality. He stood ace high as a bluffer. Take the Gans-Nelson fight at Goldfield as an example. Gans was recognized as the lightweight champion of the world, but you would have thought he was a preliminary fighter by the way Nolan bossed arrangements. Joe had difficulty in making weight, but Billy insisted that he make 133 pounds ringside and take the smaller share of the purse. He got away with it, too, which is all that counts from a manager's point of view, anyway.

What a treat it would have been to see Nolan and Kearns each handling a title-holder and trying to outguess each other! It would have been as good as any championship battle you ever saw in your life.

Business astuteness always has been a considerable factor in ring success, though the recognition of it did not come until comparatively recent years. Look at Tommy Burns as a bright, particular example. Tom literally worked a shoe-string into a fortune. He claimed the heavyweight championship when he defeated Marvin Hart in 1906. A lot of people laughed at him, but Burns capitalized that title to its fullest extent. He worked the United States from coast to coast, and hied himself to London, Paris and Australia, collecting large sums and ballyhooing himself as a champion. He did this so effectively that people who had laughed at him for this claim began to accept it. Why not? There was no one, after all, who had a better claim.

Even when he was cornered at last by Jack Johnson and knocked out in fourteen rounds by the giant negro, Tommy could still laugh. He had collected practically every penny that was taken in at the Sydney Stadium.

Burns may not have been a great fighter, but he was a first-class business man. I don't know anyone with his equipment who gained more from his profession than he did.

There's no need scoffing at a pugilist because he takes care of his financial future. As a matter of fact, a chap who doesn't is very silly, indeed. When Tommy Burns left the ring behind, he was well padded with cash and securities —and, after all, no fighter, no matter how much he loves his profession, stays in the game for honor alone.

In most cases, it is true, the manager, and not the boxer, is the one to arrange money-making stakes, as well as to care for the returns that flow from them. Nolan and Kearns will be remembered for years in the industry, but they do not stand entirely alone. No, no. There are plenty of others.

Loyalty

FRANCOIS DESCAMPS rode to fame and fortune on the ability of Georges Carpentier. It mustn't be forgotten that Francois — who loved Georges like a brother—taught his protégé and led him through the devious paths that culminate in championships. What a shrewd little fellow the Frenchman was! How carefully he stepped in the determination that no one should get the better of him or his beloved Georges! What amazing precautions he took to prevent New York sports writers from seeing Carpentier box when the Orchid was training for Dempsey. Carpentier, you know, was much lighter even than his reputed poundage of 175. The vast difference between his weight and Dempsey's, even when one was scaled down and the other up, would not stimulate interest in the bout at Boyle's Thirty Acres. So the scribes who went to Manhasset literally found themselves thrust away with bombs and machine guns.

There are those who say that Descamps rushed Georges too fast because the Gorgeous Orchid was fighting such fellows as Billy Papke and Frank Klaus before he had reached his twentieth year. But these people forget that Descamps started his boy in the ring when Georges was no more than fourteen. The latter was hardened beyond his years when he faced the famous American sluggers. The fact that Carpentier lasted for twenty seasons of bitter action is proof enough that he was not burned out by the rigorous campaign Francois Descamps laid out for him.

They were saying that same thing about Joe Smith when the nineteen-year-old Tommy Loughran was mixing with such stars as Gene Tunney and Harry Greb. Yet more than ten years have passed and the Philadelphia Adonis is still in action.

Smith and Loughran are about as perfect an example of loyalty between manager and fighter as can be found in the ring. They started together when Tom was a newsboy in South Philadelphia, and, though many offers have been made, neither would part from the other.

They always worked on a fifty-fifty split. This was shown when the New York State Athletic Commission made all boxers and their managers file copies of their contracts. It is a rule of the Commission that the managerial split shall be no more than thirty-three and one-third per cent for the business man of the outfit. The contract between Loughran and Smith had to be amended to conform with this ruling—but the solons could not prevent Tom from turning the balance over to his friend after every bout, which he did.

Loyalty like this is a grand thing. It is beyond price. When Loughran and Smith first came to New York years ago, they couldn't get any work in spite of the fact that Tom had piled up an impressive record in Philadelphia.

Some of the boys who were on the inside approached the pair with propositions. If they were cut in, they would see that Loughran was kept busy. They could have carried out their propositions, too—but the Quaker City duo turned them down.

"We'll stick it out together, Joe," said Tommy. "Maybe it will take longer to catch on, but, when we do, there won't be any need of cutting in a lot of other people on what we earn."

They did stick it out. The first trip to New York was not a success, and, as a matter of fact, several years elapsed before the Philadelphia boxing master was in demand in the big town, but they held fast to their principles.

They certainly played the rôle of two-thirds of the Three Musketeers. Both for one and one for both.

Relatives in the Ring

IN some cases a manager is just a manager to the man whose business he is handling. In others, there is this genuine feeling of friendship. I have

cited Smith and Loughran, and Descamps and Carpentier. Kearns and Dempsey were inseparable for many years.

It is not always well for too deep an affection to exist between manager and fighter. Gosh! I remember Willus Britt and his brother, Jimmy, out in California in the old days. Jimmy was one of the grandest lightweights that ever lived. He had a left hand like a foil, speed and all the courage in the world.

Willus was crazy about him—so much so that he couldn't stand seeing his brother whipped. If Jimmy was getting the worst of it, it took several men to keep Willus from hopping in that ring and taking a hand in the proceedings. While this is commendable loyalty, it's darned bad tactics. The manager, above all, should be cold and calm, even when his man is taking a licking. No matter how the pilot may be hurt by what is going inside the ropes, no one should guess it from his manner.

The New York Athletic Commission took cognizance of that sort of thing when it passed a rule prohibiting a father or brother from seconding a fighter. Billy Stribling was always handled by Pa, but, in this case, even the strictest commissioner could find no fault with the actions of the parental second. No matter what happened to Young Stribling, his father was calm and collected.

I sat at the ringside in Cleveland when Billy was knocked out by Max Schmeling last July, and Pa's expressionless face in the bitterest part of that battle was a marvel to behold. He never gave way to such nervous outbursts as characterized Willus Britt. His heart was torn with disappointment and anguish, but he kept his feelings to himself and played the rôle of an accomplished second.

Other fathers who have handled their boys in recent years were the dads of Tony Marullo, the "New Orleans Iron Man," who was the Battling Nelson of the heavyweight division for quite some time, and Armand Emanuel. Neither of these fellows went as far in their profession as was expected, but they probably wouldn't have done any better had they been handled by others than their fathers.

The latest relative to invade the pugilistic ranks is Mrs. Lena Levy, sister of King Levinsky. The King fought around Chicago as a youngster, and didn't appear to be getting as many matches or making as much money as he should have. Mrs. Levy blamed this on his manager. When the contract was terminated, she took over her brother's contract herself.

Of course, commissions won't permit a woman to appear in the corner during an actual battle, but Mrs. Levy sits at the ringside and cheers her brother on.

She does more than that, though. Being a good business woman, she is in contact with promoters all over the country, and arranges the King's bouts. Not an afternoon passes that she does not appear in the gymnasium where Levinsky is working to direct his activities. She has found out what it is all about, and she is the one person in the world who can make Levinsky do exactly what he is told.

Stribling, Marullo, Schmeling

PERSONALLY, I am against any blood relationship between manager and fighter. Usually the viewpoint of the pilot is dimmed or warped by too close contact. More than one expert has said that W. L. Stribling might have been heavyweight champion of the world long ago if he had been managed by anyone else but Pa. There is no way of proving this, of course, but there seems to be an element of logic in the statement.

In the first place, W. L. is a very good looking fellow, and the family doesn't want that beauty spoiled. Against the

second and third-raters, whom Stribling has knocked out by scores, there never was any danger of his being marked up. But he took a terrible beating from Paul Berlenbach, and was out-pointed by Jack Sharkey and Tommy Loughran, to say nothing of the disastrous experience with Schmeling. In short, each time he had his big chance he failed to come through. If he had been managed by some hard-boiled boss, who didn't care whether he got a cauliflower ear or a busted nose, Billy Stribling might have developed into a more savagely aggressive fighter. Certainly he had the speed, punch and ring canniness to cope with almost anyone.

Pa Stribling is one of the finest characters in the game, but he might have done a lot better had he been managing someone other than his own son.

On the other hand, he might not. Father Marullo never took the easy ones for Tony, but that hard-chinned young gentleman didn't get in the championship class for all of that. It's always easy to second guess. Grandstand managers are never wrong, but the fellow who's in there trying to figure them out in advance is the one who has the hard job. Managing a fighter may seem to come under the head of soft money, yet it's anything but that. You have to get up early in the morning and sometimes stay up most of the night to outguess the men who are trying to put something over on you.

Take Bülow, the man who brought Max Schmeling to the United States, as an example. In Germany he was rated as a pretty shrewd chap who knew all the ins and outs of the fistic game. But, when he arrived in New York, he was doubly handicapped. In the first place, he knew the language only sketchily. Secondly, he knew none of the ramifications that make up the boxing world. Bülow was at a complete loss. For a long while he couldn't secure a single bout for Schmeling. No one paid any attention to his demands or requests. To get anywhere with the Black Uhlan he had to cut in some of the smart New Yorkers—and he wound up without any fighter at all. Schmeling turned to Joe Jacobs, and Joe has handled him ever since. A heavyweight's possibility is such a valuable piece of bric-a-brac that everybody in creation wants a piece of him.

Jacobs is fortunate in having Billy McCarney associated with him, for Billy is one of the finest characters in the game. A trouper at heart, he had charge of Schmeling's exhibition tour through the United States, and there was nothing in the world that could have pleased him more. He is known in every town through the sticks. Wherever there is a boxing promoter or a fighter, the name of Billy McCarney brings chortles of delight. Bill is a grand story-teller and his experience covers so many years that he's half ashamed to admit them.

If Joe Jacobs is the active "front man," McCarney is the ideal public relations counsel. He has more friends among newspaper men than all the other managers put together. He is the sort of chap who would go out of his way any time to do a fellow a favor. That this bread cast upon the waters eventually comes back to him is only fair and just. Jacobs gets his name in the papers more than McCarney does these days—what with flying trips between New York and Berlin—but Billy is an invaluable member of the firm of Schmeling, Jacobs and McCarney.

Managing the Palace of Sports

IN talking of the business side of the fight game, no one could possibly overlook James Joy Johnston, who recently became managing director of Madison Square Garden. That palace of sports had just gone through a perilous financial siege. Its fights had drawn less than was normally expected. Johnston went in and immediately arranged such cards as Carnera and Campolo, Canzoneri and Chocolate, Loughran and Pau-

lino, Battalino and Singer, and others that brought the fans in droves. He knows a match when he sees one—and he knows how to make those matches. It's an old game to him.

No one in Fistiana has had more solid experience than Johnston. He was running the old Madison Square Garden when Tex Rickard first leased that building. Since then, Jimmy has managed dozens of fighters and managed them well. The friendly co-operation he always has had from the New York State Athletic Commission also has been a great factor in his success. This friendliness was broadcast so widely that, when Jack Sharkey thought his chances for a championship bout with Gene Tunney might become imperiled, he gave Johnston ten per cent of his earnings to represent him in New York. Unfortunately, however, even Johnston's astuteness could not overcome the poor showings the Boston Sailor made against Tom Heeney and Johnny Risko.

For a number of years there was bad feeling between Jimmy and Joe Jacobs. They finally buried the hatchet last Christmas Eve. This was sound business, since Johnston represented the largest invested capital in any sporting venture in the United States, while Jacobs controlled the heavyweight champion of the world. It was to their mutual advantage to get together—and, being good business men, they decided to do so.

No yarn about managers would be complete without mention of Ike Dorgan. Here is the prize of them all, as far as personality goes. Ike is as conscientious and delightfully friendly as the day is long. For years he handled the publicity at Madison Square Garden and did a marvelous job, but managing fighters was his primary interest. Among others, he had Frank Moran, when that heavyweight's famous "Mary Ann" right hand was the talk of the sports pages. Dorgan, the brother of Tad, most famous of all sporting cartoonists, is taking things more or less easy these days. His only prominent fighter is Harry Ebbetts, the "Freeport Thunderbolt." Ike labored long and hard with Ted Sandwina, trying to build that German strong man into a heavyweight championship possibility, but nothing he could do overcame the inability of Sandwina to take a punch without going to the floor. And eventually Ike sold Ted to another manager.

Charlie Harvey, Specialist

SOMETIMES managers specialize. There's Charlie Harvey, with his walrus mustache and gentle smile, who for forty years has been interested in importing English warriors. Charlie handled practically all of the good British fighters who came to America seeking money and glory. His last was Tom Heeney, the old Hard Rock. That Harvey was able to maneuver this rugged puncher into a championship match with Gene Tunney was a tribute not only to his shrewdness but to the great affection in which he is held by the sporting writers.

Harvey is a grand old fellow and everybody who writes boxing on the metropolitan newspapers looks on him as an old and dear friend. When he started engineering Heeney into a titular duel with the fighting Marine, he had the solid support of the writers. They weren't particularly interested in Heeney, as fine a fellow as the Hard Rock was, but they did want to see Charlie Harvey get a break.

The crop of English boxers, however, became so scarce that recently Charlie has had to turn to the home-bred product. His latest star is Steve Hamas, the slugging football player from Penn State College. It's not impossible that Hamas may turn out to be a champion some day, and, if he does, everyone will be tickled stiff for Charlie Harvey's sake.

Jimmy Bronson is another pilot who is held in high esteem by those who re-

cord the doings of the ring. Bronson was a Knights of Columbus athletic director during the war. He was one of those who stimulated in the heart of Gene Tunney the desire to win championship honors. And he refereed several of Tunney's army battles. After the war he specialized in soldier talent, and handled Bob Martin, who was the A.E.F. Inter-Allied heavyweight champion; Eddie Burnbrook, welterweight title-holder of the United States Army, and Bobby Garcia, who held the featherweight crown among those who wore the olive drab. Of course, it's so long now since the great conflict ended that there are no more boxers in action who saw service in France while the guns were thundering their litany along the Western Front. But Jimmy, with his bowtie and pleasing manner, still has a large stable of boxers whom he keeps in action.

One of the most picturesque of all managers was Leo P. Flynn, whose bushy white mane and ruddy face was the center of many a famous conflict. Flynn sometimes had as many as forty or fifty fighters in his stable, and had the knack of keeping them busy. He was so well known for his activities that, when Jack Dempsey attempted a second come-back against Gene Tunney in Chicago, he elected Leo to handle his business affairs.

Flynn had a hobby. He was bitten by the golf germ in its most violent form. Though past fifty when he took to the links, so great was his concentration and determination that, within three years, he was shooting in the 70's. This is an almost unparalleled feat, but it was just added proof that whatever Flynn set out to do he accomplished. He ballyhooed the game as it had not been ballyhooed before, and Broadway habitues who had never risen before noon in their lives soon followed his example and were out on the fairways every morning.

Golf, incidentally, was the contributing cause of Leo's death. He was at the Grassy Strain Country Club, practicing shots one day, when it began to rain heavily. Flynn refused to capitulate to the elements, and stayed out until he was thoroughly drenched.

Then he called his car and drove home. Pneumonia developed from that exposure, and Leo was dead within a few days.

Maneuvering Mickey Up Front

BUT I started to talk about Billy Nolan and Doc Kearns, who epitomized their eras more clearly than anyone else I know. If Nolan were operating now, he would unquestionably be among the big shots. That boy was never afraid to speak his piece, as Tex Rickard found out at Goldfield nearly a quarter of a century ago. There was no sentiment in Billy; he was 100 per cent sound business sense.

In bringing Mickey Walker to a Schmeling match, Kearns achieved one of the greatest managerial feats in history. Six years or more ago, Mickey, then a welterweight, lost his championship, and a few weeks later was stopped in eight rounds by Joe Dundee at Madison Square Garden. We were all willing to concede that the Rumson Bulldog had written finis to his career.

Those two defeats came under Doc's management, and most other pilots would have been discouraged at the setback, but not Perfumery Jack. Almost before we knew it, Walker had another title, the middleweight crown which he took from Tiger Flowers. He met Tommy Loughran for the light-heavyweight championship and lost a close decision in Chicago. Kearns, however, walked off with the bigger part of the purse for his man.

Then Walker began clamoring, through Doc, for a shot at the heavyweights. Since he stands only five feet eight inches tall, and is little more than a middleweight in poundage, anyway, this clamor was ignored by most of the experts. But Mickey knocked out K.

O. Christner and beat Johnny Risko, and then surged through his great fifteen-round battle with Jack Sharkey. There wasn't one person out of a thousand who thought the Jerseyman had a chance with Sharkey—but after that battle Mickey was riding pretty. The boy who was supposed to be all washed up six years ago was reaching out for the greatest financial plums in his life. As splendid as are Walker's fighting qualities, it took more than courage and punch to get him into a ranking position among the heavyweights. It took something of managerial genius, and Doc Kearns showed that he possessed the required talent.

Yes, sir, steering fighters along the winding, narrow paths that lead to championships is a highly specialized profession. You have to be a quick thinker, a good bluffer, a master of psychology, and a hard-bitten man of the world. You must know when to hold out and the right moment to give in. It's a hard game in which to find success. There are thousands of managers, but only a few who may be rated among the really good ones, just as there are only a few fighters—comparatively speaking—who are remembered among the uncounted numbers who have sought for success since Tom Figg won the first bare-knuckle championship.

THE CAREER OF AL SINGER

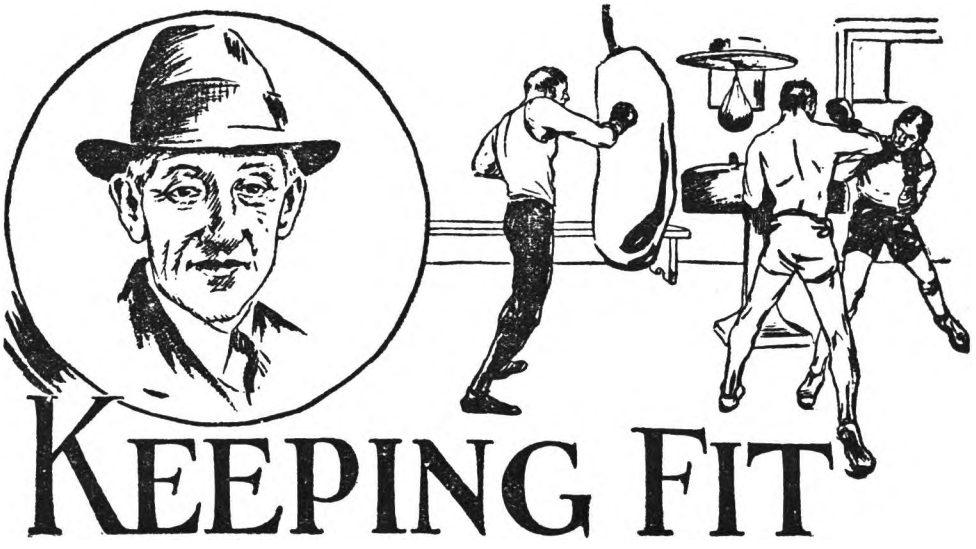
THE most disastrous happenings ever experienced by a lightweight champion of the world are written down in the record of Al Singer. Though only twenty-four years old, the New York City youngster is an ex-champion and practically through as a headliner.

Starting in 1927, Al ran up a sensational string of victories, marred only by a knockout at the hands of Ignacio Fernandez. That defeat was wiped out, and a lot of other sensational victories, including a three-round knockout over Andre Routis, were credited to him. He was then matched with Sammy Mandell, and won the lightweight title by a kayo in the very first round.

His handlers were convinced that Singer was capable of whipping any man within ten or fifteen pounds of his weight, and they foolishly put him into the same ring with the murderous-hitting Jimmy McLarnin. That was proved a mistake, for McLarnin flattened Singer in the third round. Still, Al retained his lightweight title. When he defended it against Tony Canzoneri, however, he went out after a minute and a half of abortive fighting.

Singer remained unconvinced that he was through. After a half dozen victories over more or less obscure opponents, he was pitted against Battling Battalino in the Christmas Fund Show at Madison Square Garden. So pitiful was his showing that night, and so quickly did he finish on the floor, that even his most enthusiastic admirers gave up all hope that Al would stage a comeback.

The turning point of his career undoubtedly came in the fight with McLarnin. The punishment he took that night destroyed his confidence and toppled him from the heights he had attained. Physically, Singer is still young enough to blaze a new trail in the fistic game, but it is unlikely that he will succeed in doing so. He has been knocked out too thoroughly, and it would require a tremendous psychological change to enable him to go into the ring against a first-class rival with any real hope of winning. And so, at twenty-four, Al Singer is definitely out of the big money competition. What's the answer? Was he pushed along too fast?



KEEPING FIT

By JIMMY DE FOREST

Trainer of Champions

Jimmy De Forest knows every phase of the fight game. In his career extending over a period of more than thirty years he has served as a match-maker for various clubs, as manager of fighters and as a trainer and conditioner. In this latter work he is world-famous, having trained champions in every class, including Jim Jeffries, Jack Dempsey, and many others. Perhaps his most notable work was his preparation of Jack Dempsey for the Willard fight, when Dempsey won the championship. In this department in *Fight Stories* he will give you the benefit of his extensive knowledge on matters of physical fitness. He will answer your questions, advise you of correct training methods, exercises, diets, etc. Young men who pride themselves on a clean, healthy body, high school and college athletes, men in all walks of life, in fact, may turn to him in these columns for help. His experience is at your disposal.

HOW TO DEVELOP A KAYO PUNCH

FOR more than a year this department has been bombarded with appeals from young men of the fighting fraternity. Ambitious fighters in their twenties and boys still in their teens have been pounding away at me on the same idea.

"How can I learn to punch?" has been the theme of thousands of letters coming from all parts of the United States, from England, France and even from Tasmania. I have counted no less than two hundred letters on the subject in the last month.

Each correspondent, of course, has dealt with his own particular problem. A soldier at a post in Honolulu, working manfully on the big bag in the hope of developing Dempsey's tigerish punch, fears that he is becoming muscle-bound. Or a youngster in Sitka, Alaska, toiling with weights and dumb-bells to build up the herculean shoulders of a Carnera, finds that he's losing weight. A young amateur boxer in Venice, California fast as lightning on his feet and a conscientious daily worker at shadow-boxing and the light bag, can't understand why his arms grow weary after two rounds of any bout in the ring. All want to know how a punch may be packed

with dynamite and what trick or secret they have failed to find in endeavoring to develop a knockout blow.

This letter, postmarked from a small town in Ohio, may be taken as an expression of the thoughts of thousands of young men who today are centering their hopes on the glories of the ring:

DEAR MR. DE FOREST:

I am a young fighter of nineteen, and am just beginning my professional career. I have fought for three years as an amateur in nearby towns in Ohio, taking part in twenty bouts. Three of these were no-decision battles, although my friends say that the edge was all mine. Five ended in draws. The remaining twelve engagements were victories for me.

In all these fights I was the faster man and better boxer. I could hit most of my opponents almost at will. I put everything I had behind my best punch, a left hook, but never scored a knockout. I weigh 190 pounds, and my occupation keeps me outdoors most of the day. I can lift hundred-pound weights easily with either hand, and spend three or four rounds every day hitting the heavy bag. Yet in three years I have been able to knock down only one man, and, judging by the speed with which he regained his feet, the effect of the blow was more an accident than otherwise.

Why can't I get steam into my punches? It means all the world to me to become an important fighter, but I've sense enough to realize that I can't become a heavyweight champion without a powerful punch. What's the matter?

I have looked up the correspondent's record through friends in Ohio, and find that his letter under-states his potential abilities. He is regarded as one of the best boxers in an entire county, and his name on a fight card will jam the halls in a dozen sizable towns. Yet the wise men in Ohio shake their heads when his future is discussed. The boy hasn't a punch and doesn't seem able to acquire one.

My Ohio friend's problem is not new to the game. In every town and city of the country can be found boxers renowned for cleverness but rated in the secondary division, nevertheless, because of a hitting weakness. They are men who just miss greatness, and they fret, worry and strain throughout their ring careers in vain efforts to win that needed fraction of added power.

It would be foolish to say that all of these men could be transformed into champions by some mysterious training process. Some fighters, outwardly strong, possess hidden constitutional weaknesses that no system could correct. But it is true that a great many fighters of today could be developed into dangerous hitters under proper handling and personal discipline. A great deal of new ring talent is going to waste simply because young men won't stop to listen and learn

In answer to the flood of letters asking guidance in developing a knockout punch, this article will discuss in a general way the "secret" of the punch, and will lay down simple rules which every fighter or novice can follow with profit to himself. In writing this, I have the hope that a good many beginners will read in my generalizations a valuable lesson to be put in practice at once.

Developing the Inner Tissues of the Body

THE secret of a powerful punch is really no secret at all. The development of a man's hitting power rests upon no more difficult grounds than those of careful training, perseverance and patience. Any veteran trainer can lay down the rules, but it's quite another thing to make hasty young men of 1932 understand the need for a sound, physical foundation. Ambitious youngsters, gifted with big bodies and hard, strong muscles, are inclined to laugh at the trainer who shouts, "Go slow!" When it's too late, they find themselves in the position of my Ohio correspondent. He, fortunately, is young enough to make an effort toward remedying his trouble, but the majority of might-have-beens don't wake up to the truth so early in their careers.

At the outset, let me emphasize that the possession of sturdy muscles doesn't necessarily mean that a fighter is strong enough to put a rival to sleep. It isn't difficult to develop exterior muscles. When a man ties his shoes, combs his hair or carries a parcel, he is developing

exterior muscles. A lumberjack can show powerful biceps, and his forearm will be as hard as iron. The gymnasium worker who tugs at weights and handles the dumb-bells regularly can build himself up into the proportions of a Samson. But neither the lumberjack nor the gymnasium worker necessarily possess a punch. The physique of a Hercules doesn't mean a Dempsey punch. Carnera, with all his astounding measurements and mighty frame, can't hit as hard as some middleweights I know.

Strong outer muscles are necessary, of course, but the real basis of the knockout punch rests in the inner muscles and tissues, those vital, hidden mechanisms of shoulders, arms and legs that most fighters of today never appear to think about in their training. The foundation of the terrific punches of Dempsey and Jeffries lay far beneath the skin. Dempsey didn't develop his outer muscles first. His first real work was done with the deep muscles within the biceps and triceps. From the inside out, was the root of his training. That's the one proper method.

The inner tissues of the body are hard to reach. Stubborn work for a period of eighteen months to two years is required to strengthen them for the demands of the ring. In every case, prospective fighters should first complete this work before beginning formal training. My reasons for this statement will be explained a little farther on.

The attack on the inner tissues and muscles of the arms and shoulders may be started after a youngster has reached the age of sixteen A period of fifteen minutes a day, carried out every day, will do the trick. The required exercises are not strenuous and shouldn't overstrain any normal, healthy youth.

The first ten minutes of the exercise period should be spent in this fashion: Plant feet firmly on floor or canvas, a one-half pound dumb-bell in each hand; then swing each arm in turn in the manner of a windmill, upward forward, downward and backward in an arc, the movement to be similar to that of an overhand swimmer, the body twisting and bending naturally.

The last five minutes brings this exercise: Feet firm, one-half pound dumb-bells in hands; arms held out sideways on a level with the shoulders, then a sharp twisting of the arms so that the palms of the fists are turned back, then front in a swift movement. At the instant of the twist, the youngster draws in his stomach and raises himself on his toes.

Two simple exercises, these, but the best I know for hardening the inner tissues of the biceps and those deep, hidden muscles lying just above the shoulder blade, the two well-springs of a fighter's steam and reserve power.

So much for the foundation work on the internal mechanism of arms and shoulders. Now for the legs.

The Part the Legs Play

IT must be remembered that a powerful punch is one that co-ordinates the full strength of the body, and that such a blow is impossible without power in the legs. The same general facts relating to the outer and inner muscles of arms and shoulders apply with equal force to the legs of a fighter. The leg-weary man can't put full steam into his blows because he can't get the needed twist to his body at the moment of striking.

Many fighters have the impression that road-work is the only requirement for muscular leg development. That idea is as cock-eyed as the theory that a man can build up a punch by starting in on the heavy bag. The only method for hardening the internal tissues of the calf and thigh rests in shadow-boxing, which calls into play every part of the leg, internal and external.

This development of the inner leg tissues should go hand in hand with the work on shoulders and arms. In addition to the fifteen minutes daily devoted to the arm and shoulder exercises described above, there should be two

rounds of shadow-boxing, allowing a minute of rest between the rounds; the fifteen minutes on arms and shoulders to be carried out in the morning, the shadow-boxing in the afternoon.

Perhaps some young men may pooh-pooh the idea that eighteen months to two years of work should be devoted exclusively to this development of inner muscles, but if a fighter wants eventually to reach the peak of his powers and build up sufficient strength to allow a long period of active ring work, he can't afford to ignore these instructions.

The soldier in Honolulu, afraid of becoming muscle-bound, has failed to get at the inner muscles first, and is paying the penalty. The youth in Sitka, attempting to develop the shoulders and arms of a Hercules, and losing weight in the process, also has failed to toughen the inner tissues before beginning the heavier tasks. He's wasting himself away by concentrating first of all on the external parts of his body. The weak inner muscles can't stand the strain.

In fact, almost every young fighter who has complained to me about his lack of a punch, is pushing away at exercises fit only for men of firm physical foundation. Rope-skipping, weight-hauling and heavy dumb-bells are proper only for thoroughly seasoned men who know the restrictions of their use. No beginner should waste time on an exercise that doesn't reach the interior muscles, and any other form of exercise may actually be injurious to his body or heart.

Hidden Force and the Snap Punch

I RECENTLY expressed the foregoing opinion to a group of young men in a New York gymnasium.

"But why can't I develop myself first as a boxer? argued one youthful amateur. "Seems to me that the interior muscles can be developed at any time after a man has found out whether he's fit for the ring."

I gave him the answer known by long experience to every veteran trainer:

"The young man who first builds up his external muscles so that they are tough and strong never can reach the internal tissues late. Remember this, my boy. The outer muscles, once thoroughly developed, form a band of iron around the arm or over the shoulder blades. Arms and shoulders become accustomed to having the outer muscles do all the work. From then on, no form of exercise will penetrate through to the hidden tissues."

Then I raised another point for the benefit of the audience of ring hopefuls who clustered around this amateur boxer and myself.

"Not only is it important to have your inner muscles developed to aid in your hitting, but a firm foundation in arms, shoulders and legs is absolutely necessary for stamina and endurance. Weariness causes more defeats than knockouts, and the majority of men I've seen beaten in Madison Square Garden in the last year lost because they were outwardly strong, yet inwardly undeveloped. They didn't have the necessary reserve force hidden in the calves, thighs, biceps and shoulder-blades, and couldn't stand the pace of a fast ten-round go. Also, boys, a weary arm ceases to be an effective guard against a fast punch."

I mentioned the names of fighters known to everyone in my audience, and was glad to observe that my words then began to get home.

In the interesting discussion that continued for an hour at the gym, I was able to stress one more important factor of inner-muscle need.

In any ten-round bout, the cleverest boxer can't escape some punishment. He may be an adept at ducking and slipping punches, but most of the blows he blocks must be taken on his arms. Now, no matter how strong an iron box may be, if it's hollow inside, or stuffed with a soft substance, the outer covering can't remain unscathed under the blows of a sledge hammer. Dents

will appear on the outer surface of the box. Nor can the hard outer muscles of a fighter's arm act as protection indefinitely for the soft, inner substance of the biceps. A rival's blows begin to hurt after the fifth or sixth round, not enough to do any real damage, but often enough to slow down a fighter and hasten weariness.

The mere mechanics of any punch delivered in the ring should serve to show the necessity for inner muscular development.

Whenever a fighter strikes a proper blow, his forearm, from hand to elbow, is rigid, with shoulders and biceps flexible to aid in the direction and speed of the punch. Untrained fighters have a habit of hunching and tightening their shoulders at the moment of striking, slowing the blow and causing many misses

A free swing hardly ever is used in the heat of a battle, and experts favor a snap punch as the most consistently deadly weapon in the ring. For a more thorough understanding of my point, strike one fist against the palm of the other hand as if landing a regular blow. Then try the same stunt, *snapping* your fist into the palm *and away again* in one quick movement. The added jar and shock of the snap blow will be evident.

The snap punch, as with every other, is delivered with a twist of the body into which the fighter's full strength must be thrown almost in a fraction of a second. The steam of the blow depends upon the man's ability to instantaneously pack behind the darting fist every ounce of his power. It stands to reason that he can't do this if the inner tissues of arms, shoulders and legs won't respond with the same celerity and strength of the outer muscles.

Contrasting Examples

THE cases of two of the most famous of present-day fighters will provide striking examples of the warnings this article contains.

The cleverest heavyweight boxer of today is Tommy Loughran. In fact I don't believe there is a more efficient boxer in any division. Yet Tommy Loughran, as thorough as he may have been in his training, has missed out somewhere on this matter of inner muscular development.

Tommy possesses a splendid physique, with muscles of arms, shoulders and thighs standing out powerfully. He has the advantage of superhuman ring judgment and the ability to strike at the slightest opening afforded by an opponent. Yet Tommy has never been able to develop a knockout blow, and this inability is what has blocked him for years from the heavyweight championship of the world.

Some of the greatest physical experts in the world have wrestled over Tommy's problem, and they know that the outer muscles of his arms and shoulders have hardened hopelessly over the inner tissues, and that no amount of work will rectify a condition which might have been averted so easily in the earliest years of Tommy's career.

I don't say with certainty that Tommy would have developed a terrible knockout blow, but I'm convinced that a boyhood conditioning process such as I have described would have made him a much more dangerous man in the ring. As it is, I believe Tommy could improve his offense by adopting the snap punch. His system of attack has been based as much upon fast footwork as upon the use of his fists, and his speedy sidestepping and charges and countercharges make it almost impossible to employ the snap. It might be said that Tommy is stepping away on the very instant of striking a blow. A snap punch demands more inside fighting than Tommy ever has attempted. He is not yet out of the championship race, but if he ever wears the "diamond belt" it will be solely on the strength of his superlative boxing.

Now for the other case, that of Billy Petrolle, as perfect a specimen of the

knockout hitter as the ring has developed in many years.

Somewhere back in his boyhood, Billy had the advice of an expert fighter or veteran trainer, and he learned to develop his inner muscles. As a result, Billy's arms, legs and shoulders are hard, flexible and tireless, and he has been able to develop a snap punch with fearful force and precision.

It was Billy's snap punch that knocked the lion-hearted Jimmy McLarnin from his feet. It was the snap punch, landed with perfect accuracy ten or twelve times in one round, that crumpled the defense of Justo Suarez and left the Argentine fighter a helpless target for a pile-driver right to the jaw. Billy throws his body into every punch he delivers, and, confident of the deadly power in both of his fists, always charges at his man to get at close quarters. Tommy Loughran, far more clever as a boxer, never is really dangerous to a man of strong physique. With Billy, it's a knockout; with Tommy, a decision. The one has no physical weakness; the other lacks full power inside.

A word of advice for the adult beginner. All trainers recognize that a man starting late on a fighting career is apt to slight his preliminary training in the hope of making up lost time. Nothing could be more dangerous. A man who tries to rush heavy work to build up his muscles runs the grave danger of becoming muscle-bound—and it takes no less than two years of careful work to unknot the muscles once that condition occurs.

Also, a man's muscles usually become set at the age of twenty-five or twenty-six. After that there is little chance for systematic development of the inner tissues. Yet a man starting late must expect to remain fighting until he's thirty-five or thirty-eight to obtain an adequate reward for his efforts. No such stunt is possible unless the inner man is developed in time.

For any fighter who hopes to continue a ring career into the thirties, irrespective of the age at which he started, strong inner muscles are imperative. Often a young fighter who has neglected this training will lose his punching power almost entirely after twenty-five, whereas the man who has trained thoroughly will keep his punch until thirty-eight or even forty. Bob Fitzsimmons was a deadly hitter when crowding forty, but Bob belonged to the older, more careful school of fighters.

A last caution to all beginners who start in on the inner muscles. The unaccustomed exercises at first may cause a pain in the side, due to the working of gas within the body. Whenever this occurs, stop work at once and rest for a day or two. The sensible fighter never overstrains himself, nor should the beginner.

Correspondence

NOW for problems of individual correspondents:

DEAR JIMMY:

Will you please look over my measurements and tell me where they are faulty. I enter into all high school athletics, playing on baseball, basketball and football teams.

My measurements: Age, 18; height, 5 feet, 9½ inches; weight, 139; wrist, 7; forearm, 10; biceps, 11¼; calf, 13¾; thigh, 19¾; waist, 29; chest, normal, 33; expanded, 35; neck, 14½; ankle, 9.

BOB,
St. Louis, Mo.

Your weight is poor, Bob, and your thigh is under-developed. Even though you never intend to become a fighter, you could profit by doing once or twice a week, the inner-muscle exercises I have outlined above. Your chest and shoulders need development, while your waist is too large. I'd cut out basketball and football, which are too strenuous for any young man who is underweight. Baseball is a good, healthy game, and deep breathing in the morning would help out.

DEAR JIMMY:

I am twenty years old, and 5 feet, 7⅜ inches tall. How much should I weigh? What foods

are good for building up the body? I need some good exercises for development of the chest and abdominal muscles. Is the lifting of bar-bells, which I am gradually increasing in weight, good for developing the chest? Are chest-weights better, and, if so, what weight should they be?

C. BERNHARD,
Toledo, Ohio.

I should say that a young man of twenty, of your height, should weigh around 145 pounds. For a sound diet, I know nothing better than clam or beef broth and beef stew with plenty of fresh or stewed fruits. Fatty foods should be avoided.

For abdominal exercises, stretch yourself out on the floor, with hands above your head, then raise your body, bending over until you can touch your toes with your fingers. Take this exercise gradually, and do not bend over all the way at first. When your body has become accustomed to the exercise, you may do it five times each day. Avoid all bar-bells. Never use a chest-weight of more than a pound in weight.

DEAR JIMMY:

I want to become a football player, and, as I read *Fight Stories* regularly, I feel you will help me.

My measurements: Age, 15 years, 10 months; height, 5 feet, 8 inches; weight, 140 pounds; chest, normal, 33½; expanded, 35; waist, 30; neck, 15; calf, 13½; ankle, 10.

My chief sports are boxing and football, and, when I get through high school, I intend to go into the ring. Do you think my measurements are okay?

NORMAN,
Cambridge, Mass.

I feel that I must advise you strongly against attempting to play football, particularly in view of your decision to enter the ring. Football is a game only to be played by boys whose muscles have reached full growth, and this doesn't occur before seventeen or eighteen at the earliest. A fracture or a sprain can happen easily to a boy of your years, and such an injury would prove a serious handicap to any work in the ring. You are a husky boy for your years, but your chest measurement is poor. For the next year or so I'd avoid any regular exercise, except a few minutes of deep breathing in the morning and such outdoor games as baseball, swimming or skating.

DEAR JIMMY:

I am greatly interested in fighting, and request some advice. I would like instructions on exercising. At present I work out every night by rope-skipping, shadow-boxing and bending exercises. Also, I walk three miles home from school every day.

My measurements follow: Age, 16 years; height, 5 feet, 9½ inches; weight, 175; chest, normal, 37½; expanded, 41; waist, 31; thigh, 22; calf, 14; biceps, 13; neck, 15½; wrist, 7½; reach, 72 inches.

CHUDLEIGH COCHRAN,
San Antonio, Texas.

If you walk three miles a day, you're doing all the exercise that is safe right now. Remember that while you're a strapping big youngster, you still are young and your heart can be easily overstrained. Rope-skipping is particularly dangerous, and no professional fighter would attempt it daily.

The long walk you take keeps you outdoors a good deal, and that's enough for the next year or so. Then, if you can eliminate the long walk, you could start the inner conditioning that I have suggested in this article. You have plenty of time to enter the ring.

DEAR MR. DE FOREST:

As a reader of *Fight Stories*, I'm writing to ask advice. I am sixteen years old, and have been ruptured ever since I was a small child.

My measurements: Height, 5 feet, 7½; weight, 146; chest, normal, 33; expanded, 36; waist, 31; hips, 34.

I would appreciate it greatly if you could give me some exercises. I'd like to reduce my waist and hips. Would you advise me to play any games in high school? I think I will have an operation for my rupture next summer.

J. H. TUCKER,
Mt. Holly, N. C.

For a boy who has been incapacitated as you have been, your measurements are surprisingly good. I'm glad to hear that you hope to have your rupture remedied. In the meantime, avoid all exercises and do not play any games at school. It never pays to take chances with your health, and a boy with a rupture may receive a severe injury. Keep a stiff upper lip and you'll have time for sports later on.

DEAR JIMMY:

I'm interested in fighting as a profession, and wonder if I have the makings. My measurements: Age, 15 years; height, 5 feet, 9½ inches; chest, normal, 38; expanded, 40; waist, 31½; neck, 15½; wrist, 6½; forearm, 12½; biceps, 13½; thigh, 23; calf, 13½; weight, 160.

I have a little excess weight around the waist, and would like to get rid of it. Do you think it too early to box at a few smokers?

YOUNG KEEBLER,
Albany, Oregon.

For a boy of fifteen, your proportions are unusually good, and you may easily develop into the heavyweight class in a few years' time. But don't do any boxing now. I've repeatedly harped in this department upon the need for careful preliminary training before a boy does any boxing at all. It's foolish to risk a possible career by starting too early.

As for your waist, a few bending exercises in the morning would help, but wait until you're sixteen before attempting them. Plenty of outdoor air is the best thing for you at present.

DEAR JIMMY:

My age is 15 years, six months, and my other measurements are: Weight, 138 pounds; height, 5 feet, 9½ inches; neck, 13¼; wrist, 7¼; forearm, 10½; biceps, 11; chest, normal, 36; expanded, 39; ankle, 9¼; calf, 13¾; waist, 29.

I am graduating from high school this June, and intend to go to the City College of New York. I've been training with the C.C.N.Y. boxing team, and the coach says I probably can get a place on the team. I have a speedy left jab and a hard punching right hand.

OSCAR BLOOM,
New York, N. Y.

If you are planning to enter college, and have been looked over by the coach of a boxing team, there doesn't seem much for me to say. I think your weight is below par for a boy your size, and the chances are you have been doing too much work. Take it easy and don't attempt any real training at least until you are sixteen. Deep breathing exercises in the morning wouldn't harm you.

DEAR MR. DE FOREST:

As a steady reader of *Fight Stories*, I would like to have some advice as to my chances of becoming a boxer. My measurements are as follows: Age, 17 years; height, 6 feet, 1¼ inches; reach, 74½ inches; weight, 210 pounds; biceps, 15½; neck, 16¾; chest, normal, 36; expanded, 41; waist, 34; hips, 39; thigh, 23; calf, 16; ankle, 11.

Am I in proportion? If not, please tell me how I may get into trim. Am I too heavy, considering that my bones and muscles are large? I have plenty of wind and can easily run a mile without much fatigue. I have a pair of boxing gloves, and I'm willing, but nobody around here wants to box with me.

SAMUEL GREENWALT,
Albany, Pa.

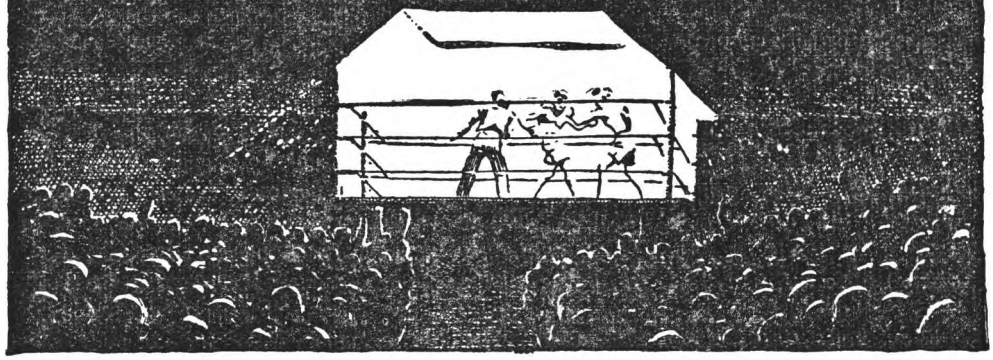
I must confess myself completely amazed at the chest expansion you report. It is the largest expansion I have heard of in my forty-odd years of association with the ring. Even Jack Sharkey, with his tremendous chest and shoulders, can't show better than four inches. In size, at least, you have the makings of a champion.

You are too heavy in the calf and thigh. Your thigh should be no more than 21 inches, and your calf 14 inches. The best form of reducing is to shadow-box. Do three rounds of shadow-boxing daily. You can also do one round of calisthenics to help the shoulders, and deep breathing exercises.

I can well understand why the boys in your town don't care to box with you. Your reach is as long as a champion's and a good many champions have been two or three inches under your height.

Read over my article on the development of inner muscles. You can profit greatly by it. If you should decide to follow out these exercises, cut out the round of calisthenics. If you decide not to follow the inner conditioning, you can do three rounds a day on the light bag.

The NEUTRAL CORNER



The Neutral Corner is the meeting place for all fight fans, boxers, promoters, readers, authors and others interested in the red-blooded sport of the ring. It is the department of Fight Stories wherein you may air your views, ask questions, indulge in some timely gossip of scrappers and spin a yarn or two out of your own experience. The Neutral Corner is your corner. Make yourself at home in it.

THE comeback of Billy Petrolle has been one of the most amazing in recent pugilistic history. Several years ago the Fargo Express decided that he was about through as a headline performer. He quit the game for nine months and began looking around for some other occupation. But he missed the ring so much that he decided to take another fling at it. His first big victory was over Tony Canzoneri. He followed it with a triumph over Jimmy McLarnin, another outstanding star. Within a very short time Billy Petrolle was the leading candidate for both the light and welterweight championships. The Express took on bigger men with no more fuss than he did the smaller ones—and held the unique position of being cheered and respected by the rulers of the two classes.

Petrolle's sensational knockout of Eddie Ran was really the climax of a brilliant string of victories. Ran, one of the hardest hitting welterweights in the business and a fast, game young fellow, was figured to be just about the type that might derail the Fargo Express. But Eddie's whistling right-hand shot failed to find its target. Billy punished him cruelly before knocking him out. That match was the ultimate proof, if any were needed, that the boxing fans are more interested in potentially great scraps than they are in famous names. More than fifteen thousand fans crowded into Madison Square Garden to see the battered veteran from the West and the good-looking kid from Poland wage their little war.

So far as gameness, durability and the knack of keeping punching at all times goes, Billy Petrolle is well worthy to rate with the great lightweights of the past. He is a grand performer in every way.

Watts Replies to Blanchard

EDITOR, FIGHT STORIES:

Mr. Tommy Blanchard, of deah o'le Lunnon, is one gentleman in the Tight Little Island who knows his boxers, and, reading his excellent letter in reply to my railing one about the fighters of the old school, I am here to say that Tommy has me on the ropes and gasping for breath and renewed arguments.

I agree with everything Tommy says. He's too logical for any difference of opinion on my part; then, besides, we have no argument. I was referring to the old school as a class, and not as individuals. Why, I even selected Fitzsimmons as the greatest of all champions in the recent FIGHT STORIES contest.

Hype Igoe to the contrary, I think Fitz the greatest of the great. I didn't care so much

for him personally, but as a fighter—well, that was different. Now, as an individual, I am very fond of Jack Dempsey. He is my ideal ring character, but, nevertheless, a cold and impartial study of the history of boxing should prove that the crown of being the greatest fighter of all—champions or otherwise—goes to Ruby Robert, a fellow countryman of Mr. Blanchard's.

Perhaps, if I had specified where the old school and the new school began or ended, I would have spared myself the rap on the chin Tommy gave me when off balance. I consider McAuliffe, Gans, Erne, Matthews, Haley, McPartland and Kid Lavigne of the modern school. It is true that some of them ruled and ruined in the old school period, but they were ahead of their time; therefore I am forced to class them in the new school, and this should win Tommy's approbation.

Some day, if Tommy will furnish his address, I may have the pleasure of letting him shake the hand of the man who shook the hand of John L. Sullivan. I mean by this that, if fortune smiles on yours truly—and it never has—I may re-cross the pond and visit England once again. Until that time, Tommy, I must say "so long"—until we meet in some decent pub and have a glass of "arf an' arf." Eh, what?

A. P. WATTS,
Dallas, Texas.

Fair Play for Gene

EDITOR, FIGHT STORIES:

Why do the fans rub Tunney so,
Belittling his style?
Because he learned to dodge a blow,
Fighting back the while?
Because he coupled brain and feet
With brawn and powerful sock?
Because he didn't rush to meet
The punches he could block?
Shades of Corbett! What's the matter?
This is *science* in the game!
To what end this idle chatter,
Placing blots on Tunney's fame?
Never man was more deserving
Of an even break than Gene;
Nor more capable of serving
As a heavyweight champion.

LEWIS SISTERS,
Rome, N. Y.

A Ketchel Fan

EDITOR, FIGHT STORIES:

All of the issues of FIGHT STORIES I have read so far have given me a great kick, but I should like to ask a favor, and that is to publish the life-story of Stanley Ketchel.

MICKEY AMBROSE,
Lackawanna, N. Y.

The life-story of Stanley Ketchel appeared serially in FIGHT STORIES some time ago.

Disagrees with Igoe

THE NEUTRAL CORNER:

If space permits, I would like to add a few words to the never ending debate.

Hype Igoe, as a sporting writer, has a lot of data at his command, but I believe that, in defense of his friend, Dempsey, he frequently soars too high. I am inclined to agree with a recent article in another publication, replying to a Dempsey admirer who deplores the fact that most of the old-timers do not give Dempsey the credit to which he is entitled. The article points out that the old-timers were familiar with the battlers of their day as well as with Dempsey, and then goes on to say that Dempsey could not have laid a glove on Corbett when Jim was at his best, and that Fitz would surely have stopped the mauler in five or six rounds. Igoe may scoff at this, but no doubt he has read the item to which I refer, and I would remind him that the author also has seen them all.

I rate Jeffries as king of them all, and believe that Dempsey, fighting his usual rushing fight, would have been easier for Jim than Fitz was. In fact, I doubt very much if Dempsey would have gotten by the stumbling blocks to a crack at the title had he been fighting prior to 1905.

Igoe himself often refers to Choynski, one of the fighters of that period, as a reason why Jeff was only a punk, but he raises an awful howl if anyone criticizes Dempsey for his failure to stop Gibbons. Admitting that Hype has a right to his opinion, I simply cannot see his line of reasoning. At that time Jeffries was only a novice fighting his fifth or sixth fight, while Choynski was a master. But when Dempsey failed to stop Gibbons, he was champion and still in his prime. In other words, Hype scorns the work of the novice but doesn't dare refer to the champion's poor showing.

A comparison between Gibbons and Choynski is very much in favor of the latter. Joe was as fast as Tommy, and compares very well in boxing, as shown in his fight with Corbett, but in hitting he was miles ahead. His critics refer to his defeat at the hands of Walcott, but forget that he knocked out Jack Johnson.

Gibbons has a nice record, but would Hype make us roar with laughter by saying that Gibbons would have stayed the limit with Jeff in his prime?

One of Igoe's strongest points in replying to those who differ with him is that he saw the fights while his critics did not. I admit that a sporting writer's vocation enables him to acquire what might be termed first-hand information, but does that make his judgment any better? No. On the contrary, it has a tendency to lessen it, for the simple reason that sporting writers are the world's poorest guessers.

Don't take my word for that. If you question such a statement, go back through the files and read what they say before and after. Note that the outstanding subject afterwards is "Dope Upset." Offhand, I can think of

only one recent major sporting event in which the experts were fairly consistent in picking the winner, and that was the victory of the U.S.C. football team at Pasadena, January 1st. They went wrong in the annual battle of U.S.C. and Notre Dame in both 1930 and 1931, and that is a game that attracts national attention. The experts failed dismally in the last World's Series, and how many predicted Schmeling to win by a knockout? Igoe wrote some very convincing articles on why the year's layoff would do the German no good, but, on the contrary, he was actually better.

I respect the opinions of all sporting writers, Igoe included, but I do say that the so-called first-hand information of a sporting writer does not improve his judgment beyond that of the average fan, and in that respect I have their own records to substantiate my claim.

I have cited only a few instances, but there are any number of well-defined instances should anyone desire more proof.

I have noticed also that Hype frequently cites Jack Kearns' opinion in which Kearns stated that Dempsey would have kayoed Jeff in a couple of rounds, but he doesn't comment very much on Kearns' statement that Dempsey was only a fair fighter at best. I would gently remind Igoe that Tex Rickard, Jack's closest personal friend and the one who made it possible for him to go so far, also says that Jeffries at his best was the greatest of all heavyweights. No doubt Hype will have an alibi for that, and, as I do not expect him to agree very strongly on what I said concerning first-hand information, I would remind him that Bob Edgren, generally recognized as a leading authority on sports, also says Jeffries tops them all.

As I write, I have before me an article by Edgren referring to some of the fights Jeff had while champion. This sentence stands out: "Personally, I do not believe the man ever lived who could have beaten Jeffries that night." I am quite sure that most fans would place Rickard's opinion above Kearns', and will Igoe or anyone else put their opinion above Edgren's?

In conclusion, I will say that I enjoy reading what Hype has to say even though I do not always agree with him, but I would appreciate him more if he would not refer to the opinions of others as foul balls and errors, and admit that, though they differed with him, they might be right, and also that Jeffries could not have been altogether a punk when he won the championship in his eleventh fight, a record never even closely approached, and retired undefeated for the obvious reason of being just too good.

A number of authorities, both fans and writers, have stated that at no other time in the history of the ring has there been such a galaxy of stars as those Jeff met and defeated for the highest honors of the game. Surely they aren't all wrong.

CHAS. THORNTON,
La Grande, Ore.

Mickey's Tough Breaks

THE NEUTRAL CORNER:

I believe that big time box-fighting is strictly on the up and up. Unsavory rumors to the contrary are just a lot of baloney. The big bouts are not fixed. Any uncertainty among the boxing bugs on that score is a detriment to the fight game in general. The utmost care should be exercised in choosing officials, however, as there is, at times, a dismal lack of precision on the part of referees and judges in the big-money fights. Such laxity can easily be mistaken, and, besides, it is grossly unjust.

To my mind, the recent Walker-Sharkey draw decision was a poor one, with the popular Rumson Bulldog serving as the goat. The opinion that Mickey should have been given the decision was shared in such preponderance among those who saw the fracas, fans and experts alike, that the unfairness of the verdict is manifest. Facing seemingly insurmountable handicaps in height, weight and reach, the gallant little battler beat the recognized champion of America, fairly and squarely—a feat reminiscent of the immortal Fitzsimmons.

What a tough break Mickey got! His momentous achievement was of no avail. The National Boxing Association virtually ignores the match in rating the leading heavyweights. Sharkey, the lucky gob, is rated next to Schmeling, and Walker is mid-way down the list. In all fairness, Mickey should be listed number two. Sharkey, the inveterate in-and-outer, surely doesn't deserve such high status. It's a sight, how the sailor stays at the top, regardless of everything. His poor showings don't count.

Mickey Walker is a hustler. There is no stalling when he is in the ring. He always gives the crowd a run for their money. Scrappers of his type are all too few and far between. The Bulldog deserves better breaks than he has been getting. He can't beat Schmeling, but he can hold his own with the rest of the current crop of heavies, despite physical handicaps. Courage and tenacity outweigh disadvantages in size.

WILLIE WALKER,
Mountain Home, Texas.

Cheers for Pete Martin

THE NEUTRAL CORNER:

Just a line, gents, to let you know that the novelet in the February issue of your mag., "Jungle Fighter," by Pete Martin, went over with a bang. My work as a reporter on a local sheet, the *Montreal Herald*, has made me kind of cynical when fiction stories are suggested. However, that story put your mag in good with me.

The combination of Devil's Island, the Foreign Legion and the prize ring was unusual. Keep up the good work.

JACK ISAACSON,
Montreal, Canada.

"Dempseyitis"

EDITOR, FIGHT STORIES:

In a recent issue of your magazine Hype Igoe answers a letter of Mr. Rallins. It is quite apparent that Hype is seriously afflicted with a disease called "Dempseyitis." The disease has grown so bad, in fact, that friend Hype cannot see the woods for the trees.

Describing the big moment in the Firpo-Dempsey fight, Hype intimates that a friendly little "shove" on the part of Firpo is what put Dempsey out of the ring and into the laps of the sports writers. Once there, Hype tells us, Dempsey rolls off, and, with a smile and an "Alley-oop," boosts himself back into the ring. In a recent series of articles Dempsey describes his reaction at the critical time above named, and intimates that his mind was almost a blank. He did not know clearly what did happen, but thinks he was helped back into the ring. Once there he was confronted by six or seven Firpos. Dempsey says he did not know which one to clinch or hit. Now, if the friendly little "shove" described by Hype affected Dempsey in such manner, Firpo would likely have killed the champion had he let one go and hit him.

Jack Dempsey proved himself a wonderful fighter against slow, plodding pugilists of the truck-horse variety. He was never tested in a long fight. Wonder what he would have done against Peter Jackson in sixty-one rounds? Furthermore, he never had the competition the old warriors had. He never looked so good against men who could box and move—like Gibbons and Tunney. He did not look so good against Moran in their twelve-round fight, after he became champion. It is said that, at Toledo, after his terrific exertion for three rounds against Willard, he was all burned out and ripe for the kill, had Willard had anything left. He did not look so good against Jim Flynn when the latter knocked him cold. But the Dempsey press agents pass lightly over all such matters as these.

FIGHT FAN,
Clearfield, Pa.

Rates Darcy High

EDITOR, FIGHT STORIES:

As a constant reader from far New South Wales, I wish to express my appreciation of the finest fight magazine published the world over—FIGHT STORIES.

I did not know such a work existed till seven months back, and, as I was at the time out of reading matter, I visited my news agent and selected a magazine that seemed of interest. It was, and I immediately left a standing order for the publication every month.

Jack Kofoed and Hype Igoe are certainly remarkable men in their departments, and one cannot help but enthuse over Kofoed's writing.

The greatest life story I have read up to the present time is John L. Sullivan's, and, carefully weighing the facts and reading between the lines, he would be my selection as the greatest heavyweight of that time.

Could you inform me if the life stories of Jack Johnson, Griffo, Carpentier and Jimmy Wilde have ever been written.

If only Kofoed would delve into the particulars of the greatest boxer-fighter the world (or rather, "our world") has ever seen, the incomparable Les Darcy! It would, as far as I was concerned, set the seal of fame upon that great writer of fight stories.

Also ask K.O. Brown, George Chip and Jimmy Clabby if anyone in the world could have beaten Darcy. I think they will agree with me, that even the Dempsey of Toledo would not have hit Darcy as hard as he did Willard on that occasion, for the man who struck Les Darcy with more force than he (Darcy) quite liked, invariably took the long count.

To this you will say Dempsey was a heavyweight, and Darcy a middle or light-heavy. I quite understand this, but all I ask is fairness to the greatest fighter of all time is this—ask Chip or Brown, or communicate with Referee Wallis, of Sydney Stadium, N.S.W., for his opinion.

RAYMOND H. BASCHALL,
Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.

We agree with you that Darcy was a first-rate fighter. We'll get around to his life-story as soon as the opportunity offers. Carpentier's life-story appeared in FIGHT STORIES some time ago, and, though we have not published the life-stories of Jack Johnson or Jimmy Wilde, a number of articles about these fighters have been printed in our columns from time to time.

Liked "Jungle Fighter"

EDITOR, FIGHT STORIES:

Wish to again express my enjoyment and appreciation of FIGHT STORIES magazine.

I just finished the February number and read every word. Enjoyed Pete Martin's "Jungle Fighter" especially. An interest-holding story.

Wish your magazine came out twice monthly.

RAY RHAUME,
Asheville, N. C.

Ranks Fight Stories First

EDITOR, FIGHT STORIES:

I started saving FIGHT STORIES one year ago, and have been greatly pleased with it, and especially with the life of Tommy Loughran and of Kid Lavigne. I would like to read the life story of that great little fighter,

Tony Canzoneri, and of Terry McGovern, during 1932.

FIGHT STORIES is the only magazine I buy, and I am always at my newsdealer's on the tenth of each month to get my issue. This book is the best of its kind I have ever seen, and a great credit to the fight game.

HUGH WILSON KETCHUM,
Paragould, Ark.

Questions and Answers

In directing queries to the "Questions and Answers" department of FIGHT STORIES, please do not request replies by mail. Letters will be answered in the columns of the magazine in the order of their receipt.

EDITOR, FIGHT STORIES:

(a) What do you think of Loughran's chances for the title?

(b) Could you give me some dope on Young Perez, who recently defeated Frankie Genaro?

(c) Whom do you consider the toughest fighter in the ring today?

(d) What is your idea of Ernie Schaaf as a championship contender?

HUGH KETCHUM,
Paragould, Ark.

(a) At this stage of the game, Loughran's chances of winning the title are exceedingly slim. The Loughran who boxed rings around Ernie Schaaf and Max Baer and Vittoria Campolo last year is an utter stranger to the Loughran who took it on the chin from Levinsky and Hamas. It is possible that the Loughran of last year may have left-handed his way to the title, although there are many who doubt it, but the Loughran of today is no longer on his toes, his speed has dwindled, his timing is off, and he is a mark for wild punches that formerly wouldn't have come within a mile of him.

This condition may be a temporary one. It may be, as he says, that he has gone stale from overwork and that he will come back to lick the last two boys who took his number, and to work his way back to the front rank. He is now on a vacation in Mexico, with this end in view. But many of his friends have advised him to hang up his gloves, believing there is no point in continuing further. However, Tommy will not be content until he has had another fling at it, and that should tell the tale.

(b) Perez has won practically all his fights in Europe, and is highly regarded by such an expert as Sparrow Robertson, sports editor of the Paris *Herald*. He probably will show in America soon.

(c) If you mean most rugged, we'd be inclined to pick Bat Battalino, in spite of his recent fiascos.

(d) Schaaf has a fair chance of some day wearing the crown.

THE NEUTRAL CORNER:

What is your opinion of Angus Snyder, the Kansas heavyweight?

"SATCH" BUTCHER,
Newton, Kans.

Angus Snyder's recent kayo at the hands of Ernie Schaaf would appear to put him out of the running as a front-rank possibility.

THE NEUTRAL CORNER:

Please give me a complete list of all the battles of the following fighters: Roberto Roberti, Babe Hunt, King Tut, Kid Francis and Jackie Fields.

GEORGE HOMINUK,
Cleveland, Ohio.

We do not have the space at our disposal to print complete sets of records such as you request. All of this information is available in the many excellent boxing record books now on the market.

This answer also applies to the query of George Nelson, of Bemidji, Minn., who requested a complete set of records on Otto von Porat, Knute Hansen, Haakon Hansen, Nisse Ramm and Edgar Norman.

A number of queries have come into the Neutral Corner requesting the private addresses of certain fighters. We prefer not to make public information of this nature, but, where possible, will be glad to forward letters addressed to boxers in care of FIGHT STORIES.

THE NEUTRAL CORNER:

What are the different divisions in boxing, and the respective weights?

S. J. SAUNDERS,
Camden, N. J.

This information was printed in detail in a recent issue.

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STRAIGHT TO THE BULL'S-EYE

Here's the hot news on the other FICTION HOUSE publications for April: In *Action Stories,* ride the outlaw trail with the law pack baying behind in Walt Coburn's "Man Hunt." It's a yarn that will have you standing up in your stirrups and hipping for Wade Hart, the cowboy who drew a bead on the gun circle that ruled the rangeland—and whose running irons carried the Cain brand. Albert Richard Wetjen has all canvas aloft and hatches fast in a Typhoon Bradley novelet of guns and gold that will make you throb to the war drums of the South Seas.

Black Aces, the 1932 Big Shot of the magazine world, hits the deadline with a big array of 100-proof fiction. Here's the real McCoy in up-to-the-minute action. Stories of Broadway and the Loop, the Blue Chip boys, the muscle men, the bright lights. In the current issue—all stories complete—four big novelets by Franklin H. Martin, Theodore A. Tinsley, George Bruce, Carroll John Daly.

There's thunder-and-lightning action in the take-off of the Big Three of the skyways. Rattler Rhodes meets mystery and Java magic in "Crossbones in the Sky," the Arch Whitehouse complete novel which rides in *Air Stories.* Theodore Roscoe and other old favorites meet again in the first air magazine. . . . George Bruce gives to *Wings* the puzzle pilot of the Western Front—"Captain X" is the first of three complete war-air yarns. . . . *Aces* is away with another George Bruce tale, "The Marked Ace," wherein Drop Colby bucks the air barrier above the guns. And in the same book is the full story of Germany's first ace—Immelmann, the Eagle of Lille. . . .

Frontier Stories packs a full charge of story-powder, with 'Gene Cunningham's western novel topping the field. Don't miss "Black Snake," the story of Ranger Jeff Starr and the serpent band they set to crush him. More stirring yarns of the old West by Walt Coburn, Theodore Roscoe, James P. Olsen, and others. . . . *Lariat* trails out a full-blooded herd of prime fiction manned by as salty a string o' story-wrastlers as ever signed on a spread. Read "Hog-Leg Law" Walt Coburn's red-hot yarn of the Cantina Mejicana knife-artists. Also stories by Dabney Otis Collins, Eugene Cunningham, James P. Olsen, Art Lawson and other top stringers, cowmen all at point, swing and drag! And in *North• West Stories* you can shoot the white-water rapids of an Arctic river with H. S. M. Kemp or ride the High Sierra trails with Rogers Terrill and his longrider band. Six other big stories, too, of the North and West, fast moving outdoor yarns spun by your favorite authors. . . . *Action Novels* swings the standard still higher with "The Green Doom," William Chamberlain's novel of adventure and mystery south of Singapore, plus Eugene Cunningham's yarn of a gun-smoke cloud on a Texas sky, and two other complete novels.

Fight Stories wears the champion's gloves this month with an article by Jimmy De Forest on "How to Develop a Knockout Punch" and Seaburn Brown's story "Navy Blues."

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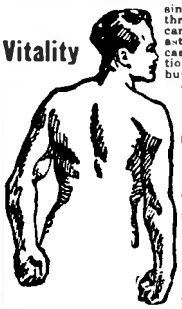

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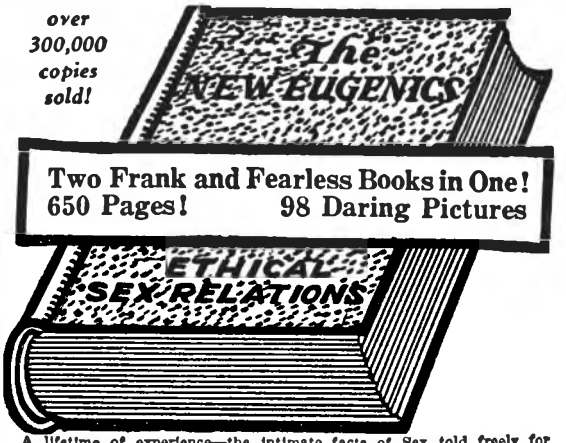

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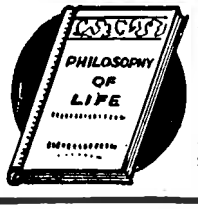

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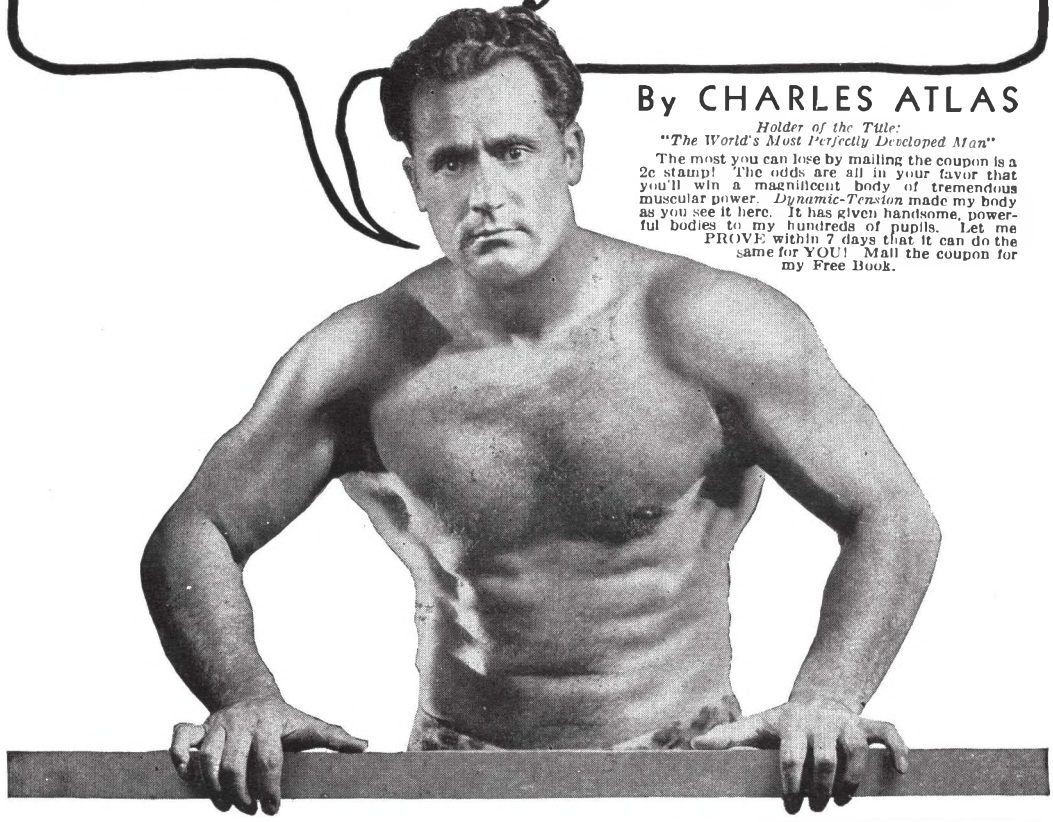

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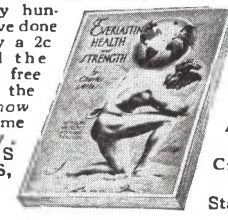

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