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ACTION STORIES of the PRIZE RING

FIGHT STORIES

Vol. I, No. 1

JUNE, 1928

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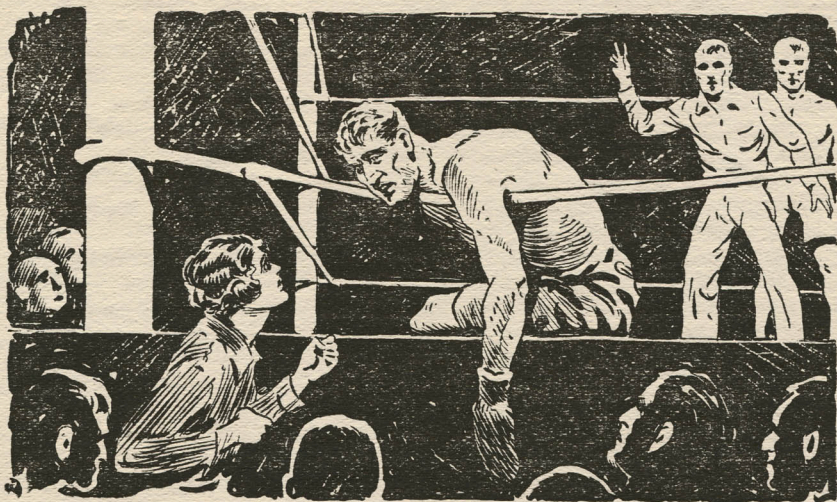
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"Shoot That Left!"



By GEORGE BRUCE

Moan Cassidy had made him. Moan Cassidy, with the ceaseless advice to "Shoot that left!" had brought him to a battle with the champion. But there came a time when the frantic cries of a heart-broken Cassidy were not enough—when the referee's count climbed slowly upward—and Buster Martin did not stir!

Complete Fight Novel

"SHOOT 'at left, Buster!"

The booming order came from one corner of the roped-off space, defying the Commission's order against coaching from the corner. The mouth that uttered it was the most prominent part of a rather large, red face—a red that at the moment threatened apoplexy. The heavy roll-necked sweater lettered on the back with the name "*Buster Martin*" heralded the pugilistic affiliation of the man who wore it. He shook his head disgustedly and looked around at the news-writers at the press table for sympathy.

"Look at that!" he moaned to the crowd at large. "Look at that! He's got that monkey tied up in a knot—he's

got him ready for the pay-off and he's in there playing tag with him instead of sockin' him where it'll do the most good."

He lifted a large checkered cap off his bald head and mopped a perspiration-beaded forehead vigorously with a large red handkerchief.

A moment later his eyes were again following the two fighters in the ring. His face was redder and apoplexy was a stride nearer. He made clutching motions with his stubby fingers. He danced around in the limited space about him and feinted imaginary opponents into large and free openings; he crossed his right at the empty air to register a mental knockout.

Around the corner of the ring the radio announcer, a smile upon his face, was telling the listening universe:

"This is a laugh. 'Moan' Cassidy, the manager of Buster Martin, is over there in his corner fighting the fight for him. Cassidy is a fat individual who has managed the lightweight sensation in all of his fights and he sure puts his heart into his work. There! Cassidy, with a right swing at empty space, has just succeeding in knocking the empty air for a loop—yea, boy!—what a swipe! Cassidy nearly took a nose dive into the press table—oh, it's a great life!"

"Shoot 'at left, Buster!" The booming voice again swept over the ring.

Inside the ropes, on the resined canvas, Buster Martin heard the message. He straightened up. There was a grin on his face; no mistaking it—it was a grin of pleasure. He glanced at his opponent for an instant, looking him over; his right arm moved forward—*flashed* forward, rather.

The party of the second part, Kid McCabe, ducked the right he thought was about to arrive—and ran his face smack into the left glove of Buster Martin. The sharp spat of the blow could be heard all over the huge building. A crimson flow started from the nostrils of McCabe.

Martin was dancing easily away—the grin more pronounced. He glanced toward his corner and saw the same grin on the face of Moan Cassidy.

"Yea boy! Stab him goofy, Buster!" Cassidy was yelping. "Use 'at left! Whoops—who's this guy, anyway? We could lick him every night for a week!"

Back in the ring, McCabe put his head down and bored in. He was a dangerous body-puncher. Low-hung, squat, hard-headed, cauliflower-eared, bullet-domed, hairy-chested, he looked more like a heavyweight coal miner than a lightweight boxer. He was coming in close, his arms working from his hips like tireless pistons.

Martin danced away; now and then that lightning-like left flicked out and

smacked against the almost unprotected face of McCabe. Each time it landed it damaged that face. It had one eye closed and purple. It had McCabe's nose battered flat. It had McCabe's lips raw and bleeding. But McCabe bored in.

Still grinning, Martin walked into the hulking Kid. He measured him carefully and let go a left and right to the head. They went home with a velocity of a mule's kick. McCabe settled back upon his heels and shook his head rapidly to clear away the effect of the punches.

Up in the gallery, in the dark shadows of the roof, a shrill voice screamed down: "Oh, what a sock! Oh, what a sweet baby! Nail him, Buster—slap the big boob for a row—Yow—did you see that left? Write him a letter, Buster, the big hick forgets to duck—Whoopee!"

Buster Martin, in and out, a gliding phantom with a punch of a Dempsey in either hand, played with his man. The whole crowd, including the newspaper men and the radio announcer, knew that he was playing with McCabe. He evaded the slower-moving Kid with ridiculous ease. He hit him at will. In the clinches he tied him up in knots. Usually Buster had one arm free while McCabe was completely helpless. Whenever this happened, Martin would tap him playfully on the back of the head or pound him in the ribs—merely to show him what could be done if Buster decided to do it.

The radio announcer was telling the listeners in:

"He's a nice boy, this Buster Martin. Up there in his trunks and gloves he looks more like a Sunday school kid than a fighter who has knocked out every good boy who has faced him. McCabe hasn't so much as mussed his hair up yet and this is almost the end of the second round.

"Martin's skin is white and he's beautifully formed. His arms and legs have those flat muscles that are the joy of a trainer's heart, and his face is young

and fresh—just like a school kid's. If he's taken any hard knocks in the ring game—and he's taken plenty—they don't show. He hasn't a mark on him anywhere. No flat ears. No flat nose—bright eyes, and a smile that kind of makes you want to laugh with him.

"Every time he looks down here and grins I have to grin back at him—his smile is that contagious. He's been playing with McCabe all the way through the fight. Dancing around him—peppering him with straight left jabs mixed up with a flock of hooks and short rights that remind you of Dempsey at his best. He doesn't bore in like Dempsey did—he's a boxer, not a fighter—but, folks, he has about the stiffest punch in either hand that we've ever observed in a lightweight and he knows how to use that punch.

"A couple of seconds ago he almost flattened McCabe with a one-two to the jaw. McCabe was hurt—no doubt about it—and Martin went dancing away. He's holding McCabe now—in a clinch, a big grin on his face, and he just looked over McCabe's shoulder—down here at us—and believe it or not, he winked at us deliberately. He's sure having a lot of fun up there if appearances count for anything and McCabe doesn't seem to be bothering him at all—'Bull' McCabe, rated as being the toughest lightweight in the division with the exception of the champion, Sailor Madden. It looks as if the Sailor was due for a stormy night when he meets this Martin boy for the championship—which he must do. There's the bell, folks—turning the 'mike' over to our friend, Boston Blackie for a few seconds of fun."

BUSTER MARTIN jogged to his corner in a dancing shuffle. He ignored the ready stool for a moment to look out over the house. Finally, Moan Cassidy hauled him to a sitting position on the stool through sheer strength so that the seconds could work on him.

"Nix on the towel," he grinned, wav-

ing away the man in front of him. "I ain't got a sweat up yet. I ain't breathin' at all."

Cassidy's face was anxious and ominous. "Listen, Buster," he warned, speaking rapidly. "Don't play with this Kid McCabe—don't play with him for no sucker, either. He's too good a boy. Don't make no mistake like that. You listen to old Moan Cassidy. You go back in there and knock his block off in ten seconds if you can—hear? Don't monkey. If that bird ever cops you with his short right to the jaw—well, you remember Phil Ross—the kid that was billed as a coming champ just before you came up?—well, McCabe ruined him forever with a right to the heart and a short right to the jaw. Now Ross is out—done for. Don't play—please, Buster—"

"Forget it!" advised Buster with his grin. "I can take him when I want to. What do I want to make a palooka out of this guy for? He's o. k. I don't have to make a monkey out of him in front of this gang, do I? Let him ride—let him go on. Who wants to take his bread and butter away from him? I don't. I'll get him—but—"

Cassidy shook his head in exasperation. "Listen, boy!" he half shouted. "That egg over there will knock you out from under your hair the first chance he gets. He ain't worried over *your* bread and butter. He ain't worried about nothin' except a shot at Sailor Madden for the title. He'd knock you kickin' in the first round if he could. Bull McCabe—that's him. You paste him for keeps and contribute to his old age if you want to, but don't play with him in there—get me?—paste him—stab him with 'at left and hook him with the right—put out the lights—right *now!* These birds down here are sayin' that you're givin' him a ride, that you're gettin' soft hearted. What they say goes a long way—them guys pull in the money at the gate—and they got a lot to say about your gettin' a title shot. The guys in the gallery want a socker

and rocker. Show 'em that ol' punch and they'll rave over you—"

The ten second whistle—then the gong.

"Remember," Cassidy sang after Buster. "Use 'at left—and make it curtains for the night!"

CHAPTER II

The Count of Nine

MARTIN shuffled forward into the center of the ring. McCabe came out—a blue lump under his jaw where Martin's sharpshooting right had caught him in the previous round. His eye looked better. His seconds had been working on him furiously through the minute rest. His head was down, bobbing from side to side, his hands at his hips, his square jaw set in a snarl. He was shuffling forward, almost like a tank over rough ground. His little, deep-set eyes were fixed on Martin's face. He meant danger in large letters.

Martin laughed at him—at the attack. He stepped in and belted him on the jaw with a long, looping right. It shook McCabe but it didn't stop him. Martin clinched and tied him up. He looked toward his own corner in the clinch, the big grin on his face and his eyelid drooped in a wink at the worried Cassidy.

For answer, Cassidy ripped the checkered cap from off his head, threw it down on the floor amid the cigar butts and jumped up and down on the unoffending headgear.

Buster Martin laughed outright and, pushing the lumbering McCabe away from him, stabbed him with a straight left to the injured eye. McCabe muttered feelingly and charged like a mad bull.

They were in a neutral corner with Martin close to the ropes. Martin liked work at the ropes. He was clever and fast and usually he could feint a man into any old position, then duck out into

the open without being hit. This time he feinted the enraged McCabe into leading with his left, and, as he did so, Martin nailed him with a stiff right to the jaw—and then it happened—but listen to the radio announcer:

"Martin is trapped in a neutral corner. He's grinning at McCabe. McCabe leads a left and Martin crosses with a right to the jaw—Martin ducks—ow! McCabe starts a right for the heart from down around his hips. It hit Martin under the heart and lifted him fairly off his feet.

"Martin's eyes are glazed and his mouth is hanging open—he's hurt—badly! McCabe is all over him, throwing punches at his jaw. Martin is trying to cover up. He's sagging at one knee. Ow! McCabe lands a right flush on Martin's jaw—flush on the button!

"Martin is going down, folks—he's folding up, kind of. McCabe shoots another right to the jaw as the boy is falling—he's on the floor—Martin—a knockdown! The timekeeper is counting—McCabe is being waved to the far corner of the ring. The referee is listening for the timekeeper's count. He takes it up at three. He lifts his arm—listen—you can hear him count—'Four!' Martin is quivering on the floor; McCabe is over in the neutral corner glowering like a tiger that has tasted blood. He looks as if he'd like to kill the referee for keeping him off the fallen Martin.

"It looks as if Martin is out cold—he's trying to struggle to his feet—his limbs are trying to move—the referee is still counting—'Seven'—hear him? The boy's eyes are clearing. Moan Cassidy is over there chewing the neck of his sweater to ribbons—"

Cassidy was moaning in agony. "Buster—Buster—get up, boy! Please—for old Moan—get up, son! Don't take it down there! Get up and cover. That's the lad, Buster—please—!"

The radio announcer again:

"He's struggling, folks. Martin is trying to get to his feet. 'Nine!' chants

the referee. He's up—*Martin's up*, people!—the first man who ever got up after McCabe hit him with a short right to the heart and jaw! He's up—he's groggy—but he's covering up and backing away.

"McCabe is swarming all over him, shooting punches wildly. They're mostly hitting Martin on the head and shoulders or missing him altogether. He's down again—down on one knee—taking another count for a rest—to let his head clear some more. The round has twenty seconds to go; Martin will use nine of those precious seconds before he gets up. He's up—at nine! His head seems cleared. He's tying McCabe up—there you are!—he's trying to grin again. McCabe is trying to tear himself away—the bell—!"

MARTIN staggered to his corner and threw himself wearily down upon the stool. Cassidy was on him in an instant. The smelling salts were under Buster's nose. A second was rubbing his stomach muscles. Moan Cassidy was whispering in his ear:

"I told you, lad—I told you if he hit you it was curtains. Buster, look at me. Don't never do that again—it ain't in the game! Don't try to carry this bird. Look at him over there—glowerin' at you. He's thinkin' that he's goin' to take you next round. You stay away from him, boy—stay away until you feel yourself. Play for a draw. Two knockdowns is bad—"

Buster Martin's face was red and his breathing was almost normal again. A great red welt showed beneath his heart where McCabe's plunging fist had almost shocked the heart into stillness. A robin's egg was forming on the side of his jaw. His eyes were blazing. He seemed a fighter transformed. He leaned forward eagerly in his chair after fifteen seconds of the minute's rest.

"Draw nothin'!" he breathed in Cassidy's ear through set teeth. "I'm going out and punch that guy through the canvas. I'm goin' to hit him with

everything except the referee. I won't play with him *this time*—you watch!"

The bell rang.

Martin leaped half across the ring before the echo of the gong was still. He trapped the slower moving McCabe coming out of his own corner. He set himself, his fists at a slugging position, and greeted McCabe with a solid right to the jaw; then he tore in, working both hands from underneath. The *spat*—*spat*—*spat* of gloves on flesh could be heard above the roar of the crowd. He was driving jolting, bruising, man-killing body punches from his knees into McCabe's mid section. McCabe tried to back away, to give ground, but the furious fighting machine that was Buster Martin smothered him under an avalanche of blows and drove him to the ropes, hands working tirelessly, pumping through McCabe's weak defense—over-hand rights, short lefts, left hooks to the jaw, jolting uppercuts.

He stepped back and looked McCabe over coolly. There was no grin on his face now. It was drawn up into grim lines—the lines of a fighter—and his eyes were gleaming like the eyes of a wild-cat. His right flashed out. The sock, as it landed, jarred the newspaper men below the ring. They were forgetting all about typewriters and newspapers for the minute. They were watching Martin—speech forgotten, cigarets forgotten—the sight of a "nice" body transformed into a demon of scientific destruction.

Cassidy's voice was heard again—despite the rule against coaching! "Use 'at left, Buster. Use 'at left!"

As if Cassidy's voice was the signal, Martin's left flashed out. It tilted McCabe's bullet head backward a trifle; there was an almost imperceptible pause, then Martin's right lashed out.

It did not travel more than eight inches. It went in, shoulder high, landing squarely on the jaw, and the thud shook even Martin's body. McCabe stiffened on his feet while Martin stepped back. The boy did not so much

as look back at his handiwork. He deliberately walked away to a neutral corner and McCabe plunged face downward into the resined canvass.

NO one was interested in the count. The referee might have counted to a hundred and ten. The seats—back in the darkness away from the brilliantly-lit ring—were rocking, screaming, yelling, bellowing. The men around the press tables were standing on their chairs, gazing at McCabe on the floor—for the first time in his life.

In the neutral corner, Martin waited until he saw the referee's hand rise and fall with the tenth count, then he walked straight to his corner, donned his black and gold bathrobe and climbed through the ropes.

The Arena was in an uproar! They were shrieking his name to the high heavens. His face had lost the grim look of concentration. The grin was also absent. He looked like a serious-faced boy who had been near to danger.

A surging mob of fans grabbed him as he came down the steps from the ring. They lifted him high and danced away with him in the direction of the dressing rooms. A police squad battered its way into the mob and rescued him. There was a look of pain on the boy's face. Cassidy was raving and tearing at the shoulders of the gang that barred him from his precious boy. They merely laughed at him.

In the dressing room with the door barred, Cassidy went over the lad with minute care. He shook his head as his hand pressed down on a soft spot beneath the heart that was still red from McCabe's terrific body punch. There was a peculiar softness there. "A broken rib, or I'm a bum guesser," muttered Cassidy.

"Hurts like the dickens," informed Buster, trying to grin. "That bozo has a punch like a battering ram. Believe me, I heard the little birdies singing when he hit me with that right to the heart and pounded me on the jaw. I

felt like Niagara Falls on a big day—going down—could hear you yellin' at me to get up—but I couldn't. Don't press so hard on that rib!"

The house doctor confirmed Cassidy's diagnosis; Buster had a fractured rib. They bound him tightly about the middle with adhesive tape before he left the dressing room. Outside, the fans howled the louder when they learned that Buster had staged his great rally with a fractured rib.

Cassidy was telling him things again. "Don't never do nothin' like that again, Buster," he was begging. "When you was on the floor I nearly swallowed me teeth. If he had nailed you for keeps—well, there'd have been two of us out. Now it's nothing but this Madden bird—and we're the champs. A little lay off until that rib heals and a little light work after that—and you'll wake up one of these mornings to see your name in the papers in big type—"*Buster Martin, Lightweight Champion of the World!*" and old Moan Cassidy will be the happiest man this side of Canarsie."

Buster patted the old man on the back affectionately. "Don't you worry about me, Pop," he said happily. "From now, on, when you yell 'Shoot 'at left!'—I'm Shootin' it!"

They left the Arena by a back entrance. The street out in front was filled with a wild mob of rabid fans who wanted a look at the newest and brightest star in the constellation of Caulifloweria.

CHAPTER III

Newsboy to Contender

MOAN CASSIDY was a wise manager. Moan knew all the tricks of the trade and was still honest. He never cut a boy more than thirty-three and a third and he always gave him a square shot. He never sold a leather-pusher out in his life—merely for the jack he could collect from the other

camp—and as a consequence his bank roll was not so fat as it might have been.

The newswriters had a habit of kidding old Moan Cassidy whenever he breezed into town with a new "prospect" under one wing. Moan was always about to break forth with a champion of the universe. Up to now Moan had never watched the announcer raise the mitt of one of his boys as "the new champion of his class and of the world" and Moan's fiercest and greatest ambition was to manage a champion some day.

Moan was getting old, up around the sixty mark; still no champion. Then he had happened upon Buster Martin. It was a street fight. Buster was employed in giving another newsboy a tasty beating—a very tasty beating from the standpoint of ringcraft. He was using that famous left hand with telling effect—and exactly one minute and twenty seconds, by Moan's watch, after Moan's approach he flattened his bigger and stronger opponent with a right cross to the jaw. It was then that Moan had stepped in.

"Who's trainin' you, lad?" asked Moan.

"Trainin' who for what?" demanded the newsboy of the laughing blue eyes.

"Trainin' you to handle your mitts like that?" repeated Cassidy. "Where are you fightin' when you ain't sellin' papers?"

"Nobody's trainin' me," responded Buster proudly. "When I hit 'em they stay hit—at least, they always have."

Moan departed from the corner thinking deeply. Next day he was around again and the next day and for many days after.

Finally he startled the kid by offering to get him a fight—a preliminary at one of the clubs. Buster looked his amazement. But it took him just as long to accept as it did to say 'Yes.' And Buster Martin had been launched on the route to fame and fortune.

That first fight of Buster's had been

a joke. Buster had walked into the ring, looked at the bird in the opposite corner, grinned at Cassidy, moulded his gloves over his knuckles, and when the bell rang—it was a four-round affair—he leaped across the ring, speared the other boy with a straight left which pushed his chin up in the air and slammed home a right hook. Moan went out front and collected sixty bucks while Buster was tying his shoelaces in the dressing room.

Neat boy, Buster; clean and fast; no bad habits. A little too friendly and not quite ready to finish his man until he was hurt. Cassidy didn't like that very well. He tried to break Buster of the habit of carrying a man along—but Buster, filled with the joy of life and with compassion stamped all over him, never did like putting his man away unless he had to or unless the other fellow stung him badly and aroused that flaming fury that was pent up within him.

Cassidy brought the boy along in rapid strides. There was very little Moan could teach him about the fight game—that is the fighting itself. Buster seemed to have everything a fighter needed—instinct. He hit, blocked, ducked and thought like a veteran of a hundred ring battles. Cassidy merely taught him the tricks that dirty fighters employed in the ring to cripple an opponent and then showed him how to protect himself from such tactics.

For the most part, Buster fought on the West Coast during those early days. It was not until the press of the country boomed him as the coming champion that Cassidy brought him to New York and the really big time. By that time, however, Martin had decisions over Shocky Grady, Young Hogan, Kid (Twin) Green and Billy Edwards—most of the good boys in his class. He was bowling them over, one after another, with no trouble at all and with a startling ease.

It was no wonder that Sailor Madden looked over the sport pages with a new

interest and followed the ring doings of Buster Martin with a keen eye. Sailor Madden was the lightweight champion of the world—and didn't care much about such contenders as Buster Martin. Life was too soft and money too easy. Hard fights were things to be shunned.

When Madden was challenged the first time, he told Cassidy to get a reputation for his man—to have him beat some one good. Cassidy sputtered and mentioned Edwards and Hogan and Grady, but Spike O'Toole, Madden's manager, sneered.

"Get a man," he advised. "Go push over the 'Bull.' Push over Kid McCabe. After that we'll talk business."

So Cassidy got the match with McCabe and Martin had knocked out the boy Madden's manager had termed "a man."

CASSIDY was happy, happy for the boy and for himself. He was happier when the New York State Boxing Commission ordered Madden to defend his title against Buster Martin within the next three months or to forfeit the lightweight belt. Cassidy knew that he was about to become the manager of a champion at last, because he honestly believed that Buster could take Madden. The newspapers were whooping things up and Martin's name was the chief item on the sport pages.

Buster Martin was happy. He was a kid, twenty, full of fire and life. He still liked to chase after fire engines and go to the movies. Up to this point Martin had never known a single girl.

Cassidy had shielded him from such temptations with practised hand. Always he used to tell Buster, "Lay off the dames, Buster; they're bad medicine for a fighter. Like counting the house before you have your man put away. Plenty of time for them things when you're the champ. Forget the frails until then and you'll make the grade. Right now anything can happen. Lay off—get me?"

And Buster would grin and sink a glove-padded fist into Cassidy's side as a playful gesture, and for a minute the gym would be a madhouse of flying fists and grunts and slapping blows—until Cassidy's wind was gone and then he'd heave a medicine ball at the grinning Buster and stamp away down the stairs, inwardly grinning but outwardly shaking his bald head. Cassidy had been able to go some himself when he was young—but this Buster Boy—well, he was a regular flash—a rapier—a super-fighter.

Cassidy's happiness was marred a trifle by a visit from Spike O'Toole. Cassidy knew Spike of old. He knew that Spike was a bad actor, a tough customer and a plain crook. He knew that he had other activities on the side beside the management of Sailor Madden. It had worried him plenty—to have to buck such a combination as the O'Toole-Madden outfit could put in the field.

He knew several stories; he knew that Sailor Madden was the champion because Spike O'Toole had fixed the fight that brought him the championship. He knew that an innocent kid had been sold out by his manager to make a Roman holiday for Spike O'Toole and Sailor Madden. He knew that fight had taken place in another state, where it was safe from the investigations of a regular commission—and that while Sailor Madden was a hard-hitting, ugly customer in the ring he hadn't won the title on the up-and-up. It was quite probable that he was ready to defend it in the same way.

O'Toole sauntered into the lobby of Moan Cassidy's hotel, and offered him a big black cigar. After a minute he led him to one of the easy chairs in the lobby and lowered his voice.

"Listen, Moan," he began. "There ain't no use of two old friends quarrelling over this coming scrap. No need for it. Let's fix things so that no matter what happens or who loses, we win."

Cassidy said nothing. Inside he was

boiling, but prudence demanded that he listen to the proposition.

"You see," went on O'Toole with what was meant to be a friendly smile, "this thing is too good for one show. Let's have the boys meet, put on an interesting scrap—looks good to the suckers—and have it a draw, and then rematch them. The Sailor wants to keep his title for another year. After that he'll blow it to your boy, but before that they can fight one or two good exhibitions for the dough—get me?—and we're sittin' pretty."

Inwardly he was gloating. If Moan Cassidy would send his boy in there believing that Sailor Madden was not going to try for anything but a draw—and if Cassidy would swallow the bait—well, Madden knew his oats. Buster Martin would not be a contender after that night. He watched Cassidy's face eagerly.

Cassidy was red faced. He was on his feet looking down at O'Toole. Spike leaped up in alarm; Cassidy's hands were clenched.

"Listen, you snake," hissed Cassidy. "You take that talk to some of your crooked friends; don't bring it here to me. I don't play that way and you know it. So the Sailor wants to keep his title for a year—eh? Well, listen, my crooked friend; Buster Martin will knock him from under that title exactly two months from today—understand?—two months from today he'll be champion—and by a *knockout*! Take that back to your bootlegging gang. You never were a manager, anyhow—and your fighter never was a fighter—he was a crook like yourself. The two of you are too rotten to be in the fight game which is made up for the most part of clean boys fighting clean fights—but your days are numbered, me laddybuck—and Buster Martin is the boy that has 'em counted. Go back to the dive on 14th Street and tell the Sailor that he better come loaded for bear. There won't be any second fight—not for *his* title!"

And Moan Cassidy walked away, leaving Spike O'Toole standing in the lobby staring after him—his cigar out—and his derby hat tilted on one side of his head.

CHAPTER IV

Throwing the Boomerang

SAILOR MADDEN'S training quarters were a haze of tobacco smoke; it hung in the air like a foul cloud and with a reek of something stronger than water. In one corner of the room sat the Sailor himself, and close to him, her ear an inch from Madden's mouth, sat a blonde girl with lips a more violent red than Nature had intended any lips to be. From her attitude one knew that she was very much interested in Sailor Madden. From the Sailor's attitude it was very evident that he was aware of the fact and regarded it as nothing to be puffed up about.

Spike O'Toole was making one of six at the poker table which held down the middle of the floor. His black cigar was oozing smoke as he gripped it with his teeth, bringing half a dozen yellow-gold teeth into prominence. A brilliant diamond glittered on the third finger of his left hand and another nestled in the exact center of a red necktie. A checked suit, much like one observed at race tracks, adorned his person but not quite hiding the splendors of a pink silk shirt. He was studying the cards in his hand. A pile of chips were in front of him.

"Pass," he declared, throwing his hand. "I was just telling the Sailor here that it's time he was tunin' up for the go with this guy Martin if we ever intend gettin' in shape. I'm tryin' to get the Sailor to do a little road work—see?—but he's busy wit' other things." He nodded largely toward the other end of the room where the Sailor sat talking to the blonde girl.

The surly voice of the champion cut

through the tobacco smoke. "You cut your end and let me do the fightin'," he suggested with heavy sarcasm. "You 'we boys' give me a pain in the neck. 'We' do the trainin'—'we' do the fightin'—'we' can lick 'em—"come on, get up; we ain't hurt"—Blah! The only thing that tires you out is countin' the dough I'm gatherin' for you. I sock and you collect. I'll start trainin' when I'm good and ready."

Spike laughed uproariously. "Now that's what I been tellin' them newspaper boys. I'm tellin' them that the Sailor, he don't need no conditionin'. He's in shape right now. 'How do you know?' they asks me. 'Listen, I tell 'em. 'I been around that boloney for the past four years. When he gets nasty he's on tap—get me?' Well, ain't he nasty now?" He glanced around the circle for the laugh that was sure to come. He got it.

"Nasty," laughed one of the hangers-on—"Ho, ho! That's hot—he's *always* nasty!"

One of the players, familiarly known to the fraternity that frequented the quarters of Sailor Madden and Spike O'Toole as "Frankie the Gyp," didn't laugh. Instead, he shocked everyone present by raising a rasping voice. "Yeah! He's nasty, o. k. He better be more than nasty or he'll never have another chance to be after that guy Martin gets started. Babeee! What a sock! I could feel that right to the jaw he clouted McCabe with clean up to where I was sittin'."

Sailor Madden frowned deeply and pushed the girl away from him. The Sailor could not bear to hear of the fistic prowess of a rival. It got under his skin. He walked across the floor to the poker table and "put the eye" on Frankie.

"Listen, you," he said to the pasty-faced youth who had remarked on Buster Martin's punching ability. "If you think this palooka is so good, why don't you go over and hang around where he hangs out and not mop up

the space around here? Huh, why don't cha—"

"Well, I was only sayin' that this Martin bird had some sock," defended Frankie weakly, shrinking away from the rage in Madden's eyes. "No offense, Champ—just a little friendly tip."

"I don't want no friendly tips," snarled Madden, "and I'm sick of seein' your ugly mug around here. Get out—and stay out. G'wan, clear the door. Lemme see space between your feet and the floor. Outside, bum—and next time you want to come in call me up—and if I want you around I'll whistle."

Spike O'Toole nudged the boy Frankie with his elbow. "Better beat it," he advised in a low tone. "Better take the air, Frankie. Get out until the Sailor is himself again. You ought to know better than to yap about that bozo bein' good at this stage of the game. G'wan, take the air. I'll tip you off when the storm blows over."

Frankie the Gyp climbed to his feet. His hands were twitching.

"I'm tired of bein' the fall guy for that cheese champion," he declared in a loud voice. "I'm tired of bein' Frankie this and that one minute, when I'm needed, and a bum the next. I'm tired of doin' all the dirty work around this camp—like that job on Ray Mitchell—that rotten fight—and standin' around to get the rap if anything goes wrong, and then gettin' no thanks from the guys I'm the sucker for. I'm through! The next time—"

Sailor Madden had stepped up behind Frankie. He was standing close, very close, and his eyes were filled with a swirling rage. He whipped his right hand from the floor and it landed behind the unknowing Frankie's ear with the crack of a pistol shot. Frankie, cut off in his spech, fell forward on his face, down like a pole-axed ox, down among the cigar and cigaret stubs and lay quiet.

Spike O'Toole leaped to his feet in

wild alarm but he was too late to prevent the blow. He charged angrily down upon the raging Sailor.

"How do you get that way?" he demanded. "What do you mean by hittin' that guy in the back of the head like that, you big bum?" His voice was shrieking. "What you tryin' to do, bust a fin or somethin' so you can run out of this Martin fight and leave me holdin' the bag? Hittin' a guy on the head with your bare hand—why, you ain't got the sense of a louse!"

He whirled, facing the group at the poker table. "Get that guy out of here! Put him on the back steps—anywhere. I'll take care of him later." He continued to glare his indignation at the Sailor. He cleared the whole room so that the Sailor and he were alone.

"Nice thing," he continued when they were all out, "if the Commission would find out that you had a busted hand. Nice thing, with that stack of jack from the Martin fight lookin' us in the face—"

"Ah, get down to your weight," scoffed the Sailor. "I could win that fight with two broken arms. Ain't it in the bag?"

Spike O'Toole's eyes were narrow slits. For a moment he seemed about to explode with wrath. "It may be in the bag, Big Boy," he snarled, "but if it is, Frankie and me told you how to put it in the bag. Unnerstand? I'm not saying anything for Frankie; he ought to have more sense. But I'm not goin' to kiss my dough goodbye—not the biggest take we'll make while you're champion. I told you how to frame this Martin guy—you're doin' it. I got the brains and you drink all the rum and do all the girl chasin'. Listen, bozo, if anything happens to gum this fight I'm off you for life—see? I'm through!"

"Well, there's plenty of other guys lookin' for a soft livin'," hinted the Sailor. "I don't need to worry much about losin' no manager."

"You'll worry if you lose *me*," warned O'Toole. "You'll be champ as long as I'm with you and not a week longer.

I made you and I can break you—and don't you forget it!" His tone was pregnant with meaning.

"Oh, forget it," offered the Sailor with his crooked-mouthed smile. "We'll be the champs till the cows come home. Come over and hear the report I've got for you on the strict q.t. It's a hummer."

TOGETHER they crossed the room. Sailor Madden piloted to a far corner and they stood conversing in whispers. "Don't let Stella hear this," he warned, with a nod of his head in the direction of the blonde girl. "She thinks I wouldn't look at another frail—but this Molly kid, the one that thinks I'm a little hero—you know, the one I met at that society jaunt that night and gave the stall that I was a home boy and only in the fight racket because I had to make some rapid dough to send to the old folks at home—Molly O'Connor—well, that's the kid I've sicked on Buster Martin. Molly is nuts about me. Tryin' to reform me and all that boloney. And sister—she's gettin' in the work with Martin in a way that would knock your eye out. She had Buster himself down among the white lights until the milk wagons drove home this morning. She's one fast-working kid."

"Listen," warned Spike. "Tell me I'm throwin' cold water again—but when I gave you that plant I didn't know nothin' about this Molly girl, that she was goin' to have anything to do with the works. I thought you'd send Stella. You lay off this Molly, unnerstand? You'll be sorry if you don't. She's out of your class entirely. She's a good girl. She thinks you're somethin' you ain't—and when she finds out you been givin' her a stall—well, boy, you better duck. I don't mind you hangin' out with some of the fancy janes you pick on for company—like Stella, for instance—but this Molly kid—well, you lay off her!"

"Too late now—she's on the racket,"

announced the Sailor. "She's working on Martin now and she's the only one who could do it. It ain't my fault she's nuts over me. I met her that time and I been meetin' her ever since. Course, I gave her a line. Told her how much I hated fightin' and how I was tryin' to get enough jack together to lift the mortgage on the old home. That's a laugh, ain't it? If I wanted to lift a mortgage on me old man's home I'd have to buy out a couple of speakeasies down on 14th Street. She thinks I'm in the game because I need the dough. Honest, every Sunday she cuts want ads out of the paper and brings 'em around to me—guys wantin' to hire salesmen for this and that. Can you imagine me ever being a salesman? Hot dog—that's the limit!" The Sailor laughed uproariously.

Spike shook his head dubiously. "She's a good girl," he said slowly. "I don't like to see no good girl taken for a ride. I've got a sister of me own."

"Ah, act your age!" said Madden, with a slap on the back. "I couldn't drive that Molly woman away from me with a bull whip. She thinks I'm nuts over her."

"She don't know nothin' about this Stella woman, I'll tell the cock-eyed world, or she wouldn't think so."

"No," admitted Madden, "she don't know nothin' about nothin'! Just a nice high school kid that I smiled at. Say, listen, when I take her out I remember grammar and everything; she's uptown o.k. I put the works on for fair—no wise cracks or nothin' like that. Fancy language—and the movies. Not like Stella there"

"Well, what's the lay? What's she put across?"

"Boy, she fixes everything o.k., I'll tell the world," gloated Madden. "I tell her to stick around the athletic club where Martin is doing his road work. Does she? Listen, she gets a tennis bat and she rigs out and goes over there. Seems like her brother or father or somebody is a member of the joint, and

she hangs around until she gets introduced to the Buster.

"After that it's coffee and doughnuts—easy pickin's. She has him dated up for every night in the week and the Buster is losin' more sleep than any three hounds on the White Alley. Funny thing—he keeps working days just the same. He's burnin' himself out—fast—won't be anything but a shell a month from now when the fight comes off. Why, I could be punk that night and still gallop around him fast enough to make him fall over his own feet. The scrap's in the bag. This Molly girl has put in the works."

Spike shook his head again dubiously. "Well, I hope she has—we need this fight to keep up our reputation. The fans didn't like that Murray go at all; it was cold."

"Well, can I help it if the palooka gets the signals mixed and takes a dive when I sock him on the elbow. I don't blame the boys for gettin' sore. A guy like that don't belong in the ring. He could give 'em their money's worth by lettin' me hit him a decent punch—to make it look like a k.o.—but he does his dive from a punch on the elbow—fooeys!"

The Sailor strutted back across the room to where the blonde girl with the red lips was waiting. "What you say, kid, if you and the Champ step out of here for a breath of fresh air?" he suggested. "Let's ankle down to the Dutchman's for a pail of the real old-fashioned. These hay-burners around here have this place smelling like a cabbage factory."

Spike O'Toole watched them go. There was a queer expression on his face.

Outside, Frankie the Gyp picked himself up and rubbed his swollen ear. His ears were still ringing from the dirty punch from behind. His hands were shaking. He wobbled slightly as he stuck close to the wall and made painful progress down the avenue. In his whirling brain he was thinking of how

he could even the score with Sailor Madden.

CHAPTER V

The Contender Skids

MOAN CASSIDY watched the lithe form of Buster Martin as Buster danced about the gym punishing the light bag. He shook his head. There was a light of dismay in his eyes. Buster was down too fine. He looked drawn, white, stretched-out. He was laboring at his training and Buster had never labored over his training before. Buster was the sort of lad who could work at an easy gait for hours at a time—three minutes after three minutes—and never blow hard nor show signs of fatigue.

These days Buster Martin was not working like that. Buster was making training a labor. His chest heaved, his muscles were becoming hard, and they were not retaining that flexible roundness. His punch seemed to have lost its old sharpshooting snap and certainty. His cheeks had lost much of their color. His eyes were dull and lacked the old spirited fire of a few months past.

Then, too, Buster was becoming silent, almost morose. He had little to say. He was not the Buster who bubbled over with animal spirits and went about the gym taking sly pokes at any one with a turned back.

He was training perfunctorily—as a duty—and, above all, when he looked at old Moan Cassidy he had a guilty look; his eyes would drop and study the floor. Moan watched him throwing punches at the heavy sandbag. It seemed an effort for the boy to throw his arms. Moan called him aside.

Buster came over to him a look of half-defiance in his eyes. His gloved hands were hanging at his sides. He was breathing heavily. Moan went straight to the point. He was not one to beat about the bush over anything. He placed his

hands on Martin's shoulders and looked him full in the eyes.

"Buster Boy," he said in a low voice, "are you goin' to throw old Moan down at this stage of the game? You intend making me see you get a beating that will finish us both?"

Martin glanced up in surprise. "What's eatin' you, Old Timer? Where do you get that line?" he asked. But as he spoke he shifted his eyes from Moan's face to the floor and stood with his head bowed.

"Listen, boy," begged Cassidy. "We've been through too many things together, you and I, to split up now. Howsomever I'm going to take a chance. I'm going to tell them newspaper boys that I won't stand for you goin' into the ring with Sailor Madden."

"You *what*?" exploded Martin.

"Just that," assured Cassidy. "I can't stand to see you take a beating like you'll get from that bird. I've always got my heart riding in there with you every minute. I'm not goin' to be a party to sendin' you in to a guy that hits like trip-hammers and see you pounded to a bloody mass, just because you're out of condition and can't get into condition in time for the fight."

"Who's not in condition?" demanded Martin guiltily. "I'm feeling great right now. I could knock Madden's block off at this minute."

"Talk," said Cassidy disgustedly. "Just wind! You know as well as I do that you're not in condition. You puff around here like a steam-engine with asthma. You've lost the snap to your punches. Your timing is rotten. You couldn't knock over a feather pillow. Just yesterday afternoon that young kid of Farrel's made a monkey out of you when you were in there sparrin' with him, because you didn't have the legs to go after him and land him. How many miles did you do this morning?"

"Three," replied Martin.

"Three!" mocked Cassidy. "And you

promised me to do six at least—and you trainin' to fight the champion!"

"Oh, that guy," scoffed Martin.

"Yeah, that guy," answered Moan hotly. "Listen, he may be a crook and he may fight dirty and he may make everybody believe that he's not training—but Sailor Madden can hit and he can fight like a wild cat, don't forget it. He can fight—and he will."

"Well, I was tired when I got up," defended Martin.

Cassidy snorted indignantly. "What time did you get to bed?" he demanded.

"Twelve o'clock," lied Martin.

"Don't tell me that, Buster, don't lie to old Moan," begged Cassidy. "That's always the beginning of the end—when a fellow starts to lie to his best pal. If you want to quit scrappin', I'm with you. But don't lie to me. You're kiddin' yourself—not me. Don't lie just to make me like it—and then go in there and take a shellacking from the Sailor that's liable to finish you. That egg hits—Oh, boy, how he hits!"

"Well, a fellow has to have a little fun some time," growled Buster. "I've been a Sunday school boy for years—and now that the folks want to see me I have to give the fans a run for their money. They'll think I'm another false alarm if I don't go out some."

"Don't kid yourself," laughed Cassidy bitterly. "I know them fans; I've been around 'em all my life. They're strong for you now because you knocked McCabe kickin'. The minute somebody does the same to you they'll be off you and on him. They want action. That's what they lay their good dough down on the line for—action. If you want to give 'em a run for their money, let them see you in the ring stoppin' Sailor Madden in two rounds."

"Fightin's your game, not giving night clubs a dizzy whirl. I looked for you last night. I do every night. Kind of a habit, I guess, to see that you're in bed o.k. and covered up so the damp don't get at you. I looked in your bed every half hour. I waited up—I'm an

old fool, I guess—but you didn't come in. Four a.m., Buster Boy—four a.m. when you rolled in and you're trying to work out today—trying to kid old Moan. Better quit on the spot—you're only kiddin' yourself."

"I'm tired of having you run me around like a grandma," announced Martin. "It's Buster this and Buster that—and don't do this and that'll hurt you—and hey! you mustn't eat that—hey; put down that ice cream cone. What fun do I get out of life, anyway? A guy ought to have some fun."

There was a hurt look in Moan Cassidy's eyes. "Lad," he quavered, "I never put you on a wrong steer in my life, did I? I never did nothin' that wasn't for your own good, did I? I never told you a lie or held out a penny on you or sold you out or stacked you up against a boy that was too good for you, did I? I'm not money greedy, am I? I never would take a chance on your gettin' hurt bad when you didn't have no ring experience, would I?"

"I kind of thought that we meant more to one another than just a fighter and his manager. Never had nobody much of my own—been alone all my life. You're kind o' like the kid I would like for my own lad if I had one. Kinda loved you, I guess. That's why I sneak in at night to see that you're covered up—and—I'm a hard old guy—but, boy—I kinda thought we was different—specially them times when you used to feel good and call me 'Pop'. I like that. I always wished you was—most times I think of you as 'son'—darn ol' fool—always was—but, anyway, that's me."

"Howsomever, if you think somebody else can do you more good, why, you're free, Buster, free as air. Ol' Pop'll step right out of the picture wishin' you all the luck in the world, contract or not. I couldn't hold you to no contract; I tore it up long ago. I ain't had no contract for over two years now, so you're free if you think I'm doin' you wrong. You know best—"

THERE was a furtive tear in Buster Martin's eye. He dashed his glove angrily across his eyes and sniffed suspiciously. He punched Moan playfully on the nose, then threw his arms around him. "Listen, Pop," he begged. "I know I'm slippin'—you don't have to tell me—but Pop, she's a wonderful girl—one in a million—and she likes me and I like her and she likes to go out with me. I ain't never met nobody like her, Pop. She's too good for me."

Moan Cassidy snorted. "There ain't no girl too good for a young clean-livin' and thinkin' square-shootin' boy like you," he said hotly. "A girl would know that even if you didn't."

"Well, she likes me," went on Martin. "We get along swell together. She's teachin' me to dance and wear a Tux and everything. I feel like an awful boob alongside of her."

"Does she know anything about straight lefts and a right cross? Does she know how to stagger up off a floor like you did against Kid McCabe—and then go on to win? Can she—"

"She don't know anything about fightin'," said Buster earnestly. "She thinks it's all wet as a dough-getter. She says I ought to make a good bond salesman because I've got a good personality. She wants to help me find a job—"

"She *what!*" shrieked Cassidy. "A job? Say, what does she think you're makin' now. Does she know that you pulled down twenty thousand for four rounds against McCabe and that you've got enough salted away to buy a few fancy bonds yourself?"

"No, I didn't tell her anything about money," admitted Buster, "but she thinks it's a bum racket. She wants me to quit after this fight."

"Well, she should want you to quit before it," stated Cassidy. "She don't know that you'll have to quit."

"What do you mean?" demanded Martin.

"I mean that when Sailor Madden gets through hammering them soft ribs

of yours—well, you won't never fight no more."

"I'll beat him—easy," predicted Martin with a swipe of his glove. "He'll be duck soup."

"What's this girl look like?" demanded Moan.

"Say, who do you think I am—Gari-baldi, or whoever that wop is that writes all that poetry? Well, she's about up to my shoulder, and has black hair and eyes, and the funniest tilted-up nose you ever saw, and her face is as white as your shirt—and—Oh, boy, can she dance?"

"What's her name?" asked Cassidy. "Her name is Molly—Molly O'Connor."

"Well, there's some hope—she's Irish," sighed Cassidy. "Get your shower and let's get out of here."

Martin bounded away with some of his old-time pep to run the stinging water over his naked flesh.

CHAPTER VI

The Stool-Pigeon

IT was then that Frankie the Gyp approached Cassidy. He sidled up to him and coughed slightly to attract Moan's attention.

"You're Cassidy, ain't you?" he asked when Cassidy looked around. "Moan Cassidy what handles Buster Martin?"

Cassidy surveyed the sharp features of Frankie for a long minute. "I am," he announced, "what's it to you?"

"You don't know me," went on Frankie, "except maybe by reputation—I got a bad one—and I got it from kickin' around in the same stable with guys like Sailor Madden and Spike O'Toole. They call me Frankie the Gyp down on the street. It's a good moniker. I guess I earned it framin' other guys, but right now at this minute I'm on the level. See this mark on my jaw? Well, the Sailor hit me there from behind when I wasn't lookin'

and dropped me on the floor like a sack of flour because I told him he better do some trainin' for this fight.

"Threw me out, they did; out on the back steps to lay like a dog—me, Frankie, that's been doin' their dirty work for three years—and they did it for nothin'. Now I'm through—get me?—out—done. Listen, Cassidy. I don't know you and I don't know this Martin kid, but from what I've seen of him in the ring he's a real guy and a clean boy. I know you're a square shooter. You take a tip from Frankie; keep your lamps skinned for a dame by the name of O'Connor, and if you see her around here run her off with a shotgun—see?"

Cassidy looked at the Gyp through narrowed eyes. "Whats' the game?" he asked. He had no idea but that Frankie was playing on the level with him at the minute. The entire attitude of the gangster was too earnest for anything else.

"Listen, Cassidy. They've cooked up a sweet layout for Buster over there at Spike's joint—get me? This O'Connor broad is nuts about the Sailor. Thinks he's a little tin god—goin' to reform him, and all that bunk, and all the time he's givin' her a phony play—see? On the side he's hanging out with a flock of other frails, the best of the lot being a jane that answers when somebody sings out 'Stella'—see?"

"Well, this Stella is the Sailor's skirt, ya unnerstand? But this Molly O'Connor thinks the office is in for her—so she falls easy for the rackets. They back her into a neutral corner one day when the Sailor comes in from the road work, and he's groanin' like he was killed. He hadn't been near no road; he'd been out shootin' Kelly pool with the gang and this is a stall they're handin' Molly—see? He's holding his ribs and groanin' like he's dying on the spot, and she's all nervous and anxious and asks him what's the trouble. He tells her that he fell and busted a rib—fell on a big rock while he's runnin' in the park—and now

he's sure to get a bad beatin' from this Buster Martin guy. He tells her that this Martin is one tough egg and wouldn't think nuthin' of takin' advantage of a busted rib.

"She hates bloodshed and fightin' and seein' guys get hurt worse than poison, and right away she's all sympathy for the Sailor. She asks him why he don't call off the fight, and he strikes one of them movie poses—you know—'The Curfew Shall Not Ring Tonight'—'Sign the Papers or Drink the Ink,' and tells her that he can't call off the fight on account of his 'honor' bein' involved and the fight public would be off him for life and he'd never lift the mortgage on the old homestead. Can you imagine any one falling for a lie like that from Sailor Madden? But this kid is an uptown people—and she don't savvy the Double-X—see? She falls, hook, line and sinker.

"Well, after a lot of skull work that was thought up by me and Spike O'Toole—oh, I'm not lettin' myself out!—the Sailor tells her that if she thinks anything of him or wants to see him get ahead, she'll help him out of the mess he's in by trying to keep Martin from murderin' him.

"He tells her that if she can meet Martin and make dates with him and keep him out at night so he'll be just a little bit tired and won't train so hard, why, everything will be jake and the Sailor won't get hurt so bad. The upshot is that the dame Molly agrees to help the Sailor and promises to meet Martin and to take him for a few turns on the merry-go-round—to keep him out of top condition. Then the Sailor goes to work in earnest for the fight. He's working out like he never worked for no fight in his life. But he's workin' early in the mornin'—from daylight—so that nobody will know that he's trainin'. They're keepin' it a dark secret.

"Ya understand? On the form of the Sailor the last time out and on the form of Buster Martin against McCabe,

the odds is a million to one that Martin will knock the Sailor kickin' if he gets a decent break. If the Sailor don't train none, why, it'll be Martin in a breeze and name your own ticket. So the Sailor is laying around Spike's joint all afternoon makin' his friends believe that he ain't gettin' in any work and don't intend to—and Spike and him are fixin' things to make a killin' on the bets—ya get me? They think that not even their friends can tip the lay—and that nobody will know that Buster is not in condition—sweet little layout, eh? Well, the Sailor is workin' hard, hidin' out in a gym up on 125th Street, and he's roundin' into shape fast. I saw him work. I know form when I see it. That Sailor guy is punchin' that sandbag groggy. It's one sweet little plant."

Cassidy was looking out the window. A deep frown creased his forehead. His hands were clenched in his pockets. Suddenly he whirled on the Gyp and shook him like a terrier shakes a rat. "You sure this is on the level, this line you're handin' me?" he hissed through set teeth. "If I thought you was a spy for that gang over there comin' here to pump me for what I know, I'd knock your brains out."

"It's clean," gasped Frankie. "It's on the up-and-up. That guy has hit me for the last time. I'm through!"

Cassidy dug down in his pocket and fished a twenty off his roll. "Here, take this for the trouble," he growled. "It better be straight."

Frankie the Gyp shrugged his shoulders. "I don't want no dough," he protested. "I'm just over here givin' you the office because I don't want to see no dirt done that boy Buster. I'm in deep enough now. I've pulled many a wise one, but this is the first white one I've pulled in a long time—kinda balancin' things a little. I don't want no dough for tellin' the truth. Just ask Buster to smack that Sailor guy once in the kisser ~~for me~~ and we'll be square."

FRANKIE sidled out of the Gym. It seemed to be his natural gait—a shuffling, half-side step.

Across the street a furtive-faced gangster stopped in passing and ducked around a show window. He watched through the window while Cassidy and the Gyp were talking; he saw the earnest look on Frankie's face and the thoughtful frown on Moan Cassidy. He hurried around the corner just as Frankie emerged from the doorway.

Five minutes later he was pouring the tale of Frankie's indiscretion into the stunned ear of Spike O'Toole over the telephone.

At the other end of the wire, O'Toole was muttering to himself. "The dirty, double-crossing rat! The dirty stool-pigeon!" He hung up the receiver with a bang when the spy had finished his report. He was silent for a long minute. In his mind was the thought that he could never trust the Gyp again—not in any of the various shady enterprises that flourished under the direction of Spike O'Toole.

He lifted the receiver and called a number; when an answering voice sounded over the wire in his ear he spoke cautiously.

"Hey, Dominick, is that you?"

"Yea, this is me," came from the other end in a foreign voice.

"Well, listen close. Frankie the Gyp has just turned stool-pigeon and gave a certain party a line of talk about somethin' that shouldn't be mentioned. See? He's dangerous—he's turned rat. I want you and the boys to 'take him for a ride tonight—understand?"

"Sure. O.k. I understand," came the thick voice.

"K.o." grunted Spike. "There's a grand here for a split in the morning—don't mess up the job."

The receiver clicked.

That night a curtained automobile swept down Fourteenth Street, slackening speed as it approached Second Avenue. Frankie the Gyp was standing on the corner of Second Avenue, &

cigaret between his lips—his back turned to the curb.

The curtained car, its license number obscured by a thick layer of grease and dust, lurched in toward the curb. An automatic—several of them in fact, barked viciously and Frankie was making a frantic attempt to reach his own hip-pocket even as he slithered down on the curb and rolled off into the gutter. He twitched for a minute and became quiet.

The darkened car roared down Fourteenth Street to lose itself in the traffic.

Frankie the Gyp had been taken for a ride. . . .

CHAPTER VII

Buster Discovers Broadway

THE music at Stern's Paradise was intoxicating. Saxophones crooned weird harmonies. The rhythmic tap of drums and cymbals beat a nerve-tingling tempo. At the piano, Charlie Johnson was giving his educated fingers plenty of exercise. Dim lights, discreet booths; "tea" in tea-cups; constant laughter; swaying dancers; white tableclothes; glowing table lamps, pink and blue and cherry; sheen of dull silver; white shirt fronts; glowing jewels on fair ladies; blondes, titians, brunettes—everything that men preferred.

Part of New York's night life! Two in the morning and blaring like a circus side-show! Tipsy old men, bright-eyed girls; ermine wraps and jeweled coronets; haze of cigaret smoke; stamp of black-bottom dancers; smell of a hundred perfumes. Here a movie celebrity, there a stage star, over here a champion gate-crasher, over there a flat-nosed "pug," one eye still black, spending last night's "takings," escorted by a hilarious group of "backers" and several too-painted women who looked more at home on Fourteenth Street than on the White Way.

Back from the dance floor in a little

booth for two, sat Buster Martin and Molly O'Connor. Buster's eyes were ringed with black shadows. He looked weary. His shoulders slumped. He was puffing on a cigaret. His face was a glaring white in the shadow light. Still, he was drinking in the false gayety of the night club. It was all new to him, this kid up from the corner newsstands—up through hard work under the Spartan guidance of Moan Cassidy.

There was a fascination in the music and the crowds—free spenders who threw it away with a flourish and a laugh. Men you knew only through the columns of the newspapers; orchestras you heard only over the radio; dances you saw only on the stage; hectic gayety—fatal for a leather-pusher.

Molly O'Connor, looking as fresh as a rose in a florist's window, watched the white face of the boy sitting across the table from her. There was a frown of perplexity upon her face—almost the look of a mother as she hovers over the bed of a sick child. Molly found herself liking this quiet, good-looking, broad-shouldered chap, who wore evening clothes as if he were moulded to them.

There was a doubt being born in her heart. She felt a guilty something within her every time she looked at the dark circles under his eyes, and knew that she was responsible for them being there—and that she held the future of Buster Martin in her hands.

These stories Sailor Madden had told her could not be true. Buster was not a man-killing, blood-thirsty fighter who cared nothing for the hurts of others. He could not be a cruel, heartless maunder who would take advantage of a serious hurt in his opponent and use that hurt as a pathway to victory. It could not be true. Molly O'Connor knew human nature; her woman's instinct told her that Buster Martin was clean all the way through and a gentleman, in spite of his lapses in English.

He could not be heartless. Two nights before she had paused with him on a

street corner where a frail, emaciated-looking newsboy was selling papers and fighting the chill of a March wind. Buster had stopped and looked at the kid for a long minute; then he took the kid's papers and sold them all for him—sold them to men who worshipped him as a fighter, standing there on the corner with the papers under his arm until they were all gone. After that he took the kid across the street and bought him a warm overcoat and a pair of shoes and slipped him a bill. Buster Martin could not be a heartless fighting machine if he could do a thing like that. It had made her wonder.

He glanced toward the floor. "Want to dance, Molly?" he asked, half shyly. He always spoke to her that way, as if he was afraid that she was only a mirage that would vanish forever if he lifted his voice above a low tone. She almost loved him for it. The look in his eyes when he spoke to her! The gentleness of his hand as he helped her in or out of a taxi!

She gulped down a sob of remorse—she was double-crossing him—leading him to ruin—

She shook her head and tried to smile. "No, I'd rather sit here and talk with you. Talk to me, Marty," she begged. "Say something to me. You sit so silent—watching everything. What are you thinking about?"

"I was thinking about all this," he told her. He was making painful efforts to improve his speech, since the first night he had escorted her about New York. "I was thinking how much I missed when I was a kid. How lucky these guys are that have nothing to do but sleep days and play nights. It must be a great racket—"

"Don't you sleep days?" she asked, knowing the answer in advance.

He looked at her for a long moment, "No, I don't sleep much days. You see, I have to work like the deuce for this fight with Sailor Madden. It means a lot to me, and I don't dare sleep—not with Pop Cassidy riding me and telling

me how rotten I am." There was a rueful grin on his face.

"Does he tell you that you are rotten?" she asked with interest.

"Does he?" he grinned. "He can tell me that in seven languages. And the funny part, is that he's telling the truth; I can feel it. I'm not much interested in this scrap, yet it is my chance—my chance to get to the top. I know I can take this Madden bird like Grant took Richmond."

There was a panic in Molly's heart. She was hearing the result of her carefully planned campaign, from the lips of the man she was ruining. For an instant the face of Sailor Madden was far away and only the white face of Buster Martin filled her mind.

"Am I the cause for that?" she asked softly.

He was silent for an instant, looking deeply into her eyes. The tingle he had known for the first time on meeting her was alive again, he wanted to leap across the table and to crush her in his arms. Instead, he shook his head and toyed with the knives and forks on the table.

"No," he said slowly, "it's me, I guess. Pop don't seem to understand that I've been starving for this sort of thing all my life. He don't seem to understand that I love music, and laughs, and lights, and more music. No, Molly, it's that little newsboy kid out on the corner, looking in through the window of some swell restaurant, wishing he could be inside with his feet parked under the table, stowin' away the good grub he never tasted. That's me . . .

"You see, I wasn't nobody much—just a newsboy—until Moan Cassidy got hold of me and pushed me to the top. He's done everything for me, Moan has. He tucks me in bed at night. He worries like a grandaunt when I'm not in the hay when he thinks I should be in. But Molly, it's different somehow, now that I have you here with me—a lot different. I used to think that nothing in the world existed, except the smack

of gloves, and the gym, and trainin' trunks, and soft shoes, and old Pop tellin' me to 'use 'at left, Buster.'

"It's different now. Gee, everything is gone. I can't think of nothing any more except you, you are in my mind all the time . . . Funny, ain't it?"

THERE was a tear in Molly O'Connors' eye. More, it trickled down over her nose. Within her was a feeling that she was a rotter, that somehow *she* had been tricked. At first she had accepted Madden's game to destroy Buster's chance of victory just as she would have accepted a commission to blot out something hideous from the face of the earth. She had steeled herself to endure an uncouth bully who had to be gentled down to a point where he would no longer be a man killer. Now she felt that something was wrong. Not with Buster Martin, but with Billy Madden—Sailor Madden—the man she believed she loved.

"Mr. Cassidy must have been wonderful to you," she ventured in a trembling voice.

"Gosh, wonderful don't cover it by a long shot," said Buster earnestly. "He watches every mouthful I eat. He tests the water I drink. He makes my bed and shines my shoes, and combs my hair. Tonight when I came out he fixed the studs in my shirt—I ain't used to them movable buttons yet—and he just said 'goodbye'. And I know he was broken-hearted because I was going out when I should have been in the hay . . .

"But he don't understand, Molly; he don't understand how a wonderful girl like you can change everything. Gee, Molly, if I only had you and Pop Cassidy all the time, I could lick the world. Just to have you somewhere near me, where I could look at you once in a while—see you smile . . . Molly, dear, do you think you could ever learn to like a mutt like me who makes his livin' pushin' other guys in the mush?"

She lowered her head so that he could not see her trembling lips and tear-filled

eyes. She seemed suffocated. For she knew now that she cared . . . How could she repay the wrong? How could she make things right so that he would not hate her—curse her?

"I do like you, awfully," she half-whispered, "even if you do make your living pushing other guys in the mush. I feel that perhaps I have done you a great wrong—that I've been tearing you down instead of building you up. I've been keeping you out of bed and all that—"

He reached out his hand and covered her own tiny, white hand. "Shucks, Molly, that ain't nothin'—excuse me—that isn't anything. I could lick this Madden guy with one hand if I thought you were for me. I could just get one night's sleep, and go in there as fresh as a daisy—if you were sitting in my corner. How about it."

"Take me home," she said in a hushed tone. "Take me home, Buster, I can't talk to you any more. I must think. I have made a big mistake. I have committed a great wrong. Please take me home"

He was standing beside her in an instant. "What?" he demanded. "If anything or anybody has done anything to you I'll wipe the street up with 'em. What is it, Molly?"

She tried to smile. It was a wan attempt. "Nothing that you can do anything about—now," she told him. "It's only me. Before I can talk with you any more I have to think things over, find things out that are buried in my own heart. Please, Buster, take me home."

Buster Martin said good night to Molly at her door and ordered the taxi driver to take him to his hotel. For an hour he sat on the edge of his bed, dreaming of the girl and her voice and the touch of her hand, until Pop Cassidy, old Moan, came in from the next room and helped him to undress.

Cassidy's eyes were troubled. The conversation with Frankie the Gyp was fresh in his mind, but he held his peace.

It was too late to interfere now, with the fight only four days away. It was too late for anything—but to pray, and let Fate decide.

That night Frankie the Gyp lay in the gutter, his frail, sinsodden body riddled with 45 slugs. "Taken for a ride" for the first white thing he had attempted in years.

CHAPTER VIII

Molly Learns the Truth

MOLLY O'CONNOR was going to be sure. She was going to charge Billy Madden with lying to her; with sending her out to lure an innocent boy to destruction, merely because Sailor Madden feared to meet him in a fair fight. She knew now, that she did not love Madden. She wondered how it had been possible for her to ever believe she had loved him. She thought of his queer eyes and the hard metallic ring of his laughter; of his companions—all of them looking like so many gangsters and thugs.

Yes, she was going to have a showdown with Sailor Madden and tell him that she was through trying to put Buster Martin in such a condition that his climbing through the ropes, in any ring, would be a farce.

She got out of the taxicab in front of Spike O'Toole's office. As she alighted she stood across the street and watched a group of foreign looking thugs come down the stairs and out of Spike's "office". They were laughing loudly among themselves and one was counting a roll of bills. She did not know that Spike had just finished 'splitting the grand' he had promised for the ride given Frankie the Gyp.

She passed along the hallway and into the little room at the corner of the hall, where Spike ran a poker game and took his "clients" for private conversations. She beckoned to a sweater-clad, evil-faced, shifty-eyed youth, and asked

him to tell Sailor Madden that she wished to speak with him for a moment.

The budding gangster looked her up and down in open admiration and winked one eye suggestively. "I gotcha' kid," he grinned, showing a row of yellow teeth. "I'll get him out of the front for you."

He ambled along the hall, puffing upon a cigarette which dangled from one corner of his mouth. Knocking discreetly on the door to Spike's office, he stuck his head through and motioned with an eloquent thumb toward the rear of the hall.

"That swell frail is back there and wants to whisper in yer ear," he grinned at Sailor Madden.

Madden started in surprise and glanced at O'Toole. "It's that Molly broad," he announced in a stage whisper. "You see? I told you that I couldn't keep her away from me with a baseball bat."

"Listen, guy," answered Spike in the same hoarse whisper; "you take a fool's advice and tie the can on that dame, get me? I feel wrong about her, see? She's not in your class, you're going to trip yourself up!"

"Baloney!" grinned the Sailor with his crooked mouth. "I've got her tied down and counted out. She thinks the sun rises and goes down in my back yard. Look at the play she's been givin' this Martin guy! He ain't done a lick of training and ain't been in bed one night since I sicked her on him. What do you think of them bananas?"

Some of the gloom on Spike O'Toole's brow lifted. "Well, I admit she did a clever piece of work there, but remember, she did it in the dark. She wasn't tipped off on the up and up. You never can tell with a jane like that, best thing to give her the air."

"You let this jane to me," boasted Madden expansively. "I know how to handle girls. I got a way with 'em."

"Blah!" grunted Spike in disgust. "Blah! You talk like you didn't have

a busted nose and a split lip and two flat ears. Out of my life!"

The Sailor took a hitch at the top of his trousers and lifted his coat off the back of a chair. He glanced into a cracked mirror hung on the wall, straightened his hair and with a mocking wave of his hand, strutted out into the hall.

The page boy—the coming gangster—watched him go, admiration shining in his eyes. He heaved a deep sigh as the Sailor disappeared through the door.

"What a lad!" he sighed. "And what a line he hands them wimmin."

Spike snorted. "What a false alarm, and what a sap he is for them wimmin!" he mimicked in the same tone.

IN the back room Molly was waiting impatiently. Sailor Madden entered, an anxious look upon his face. He was clever, this leather pusher—a great actor. He managed the anxious look to perfection.

"Molly," he whispered; "Molly, is there anything wrong?"

He placed both hands on her shoulders and bent to kiss her. She suffered the caress, and he could not sense the shudder that passed through her as his face brushed against her cheek.

"I just wanted to come in and say hello," she began. "I haven't seen much of you since I went out to entertain Mr. Buster Martin. I thought maybe you had forgotten me."

"Forget you?" lied Madden. "Why I think of you every minute. Every minute I say to myself—'What a wonderful little pal she is. What a wonderful girl, to go out and sacrifice her happiness for three whole weeks just to save her boy friend from getting hurt too badly!'"

"Not that I care, Molly; I don't mind being hurt. But I don't want to lay in a hospital for a couple of months with a punctured lung or something, after the office is in at Martin's camp that I have a fractured rib. I've got too much to live for now that I have you." He was

speaking as if from carefully rehearsed lines.

She glanced up at his face. In her heart she knew that he was lying. "Are you sure?" she asked in a low tone. "Are you sure you think that much of me and appreciate what I'm doing for you?"

"Do I? Why kiddo, I was just sayin' to Spike, that we owe everything to you—everything."

"Billy," she always called him Billy, rather than Sailor—"it is true that you injured your ribs, isn't it? It isn't just a trick to get me to secure an easy victory for you over Martin?"

His eyes glowed dangerously, and he looked down at her in a cold fury. Then he remembered his part.

"True? Of course it's true," he lied. "Even now I can't bear any pressure on my left side; under the heart, you know, right where they hit most. What double-crossing stool pigeon has been telling you that it ain't so?"

In his fury he was forgetting to be "cultured."

She didn't answer the question, but asked another. "It is true that you come from a good family, and that you're only fighting because it's the only way you know to get enough money to help your parents, isn't it?"

He did tricks with a poor memory. He had told so many lies. He took a chance. "Certainly, it's true," he declared solemnly. "Every dime I get goes home to the folks. I hardly keep enough to buy decent clothes and to live on."

She appeared satisfied. "You don't have any other girls but me, do you? You aren't in love with any other girl, are you?"

The glare in his eyes was positively dangerous, as he looked at her. "Listen kid," he demanded. "Spit it out. What stool has been working on you? What dirty double crossin' rat has been spillin' his guts about me? I'll take that lyin' buzzard and jerk his tongue out from the roof of his mouth."

He saw that she was shrinking away from him.

"Don't be frightened, Molly," he begged, fighting to control his rage. "You know how it is. It makes me angry to have some one telling lies about me to the only girl I ever cared for. All of us big men—all of us champions—have to stand for that, though. Guys that don't like us whisper nasty lies behind our backs, and we only hear them when friends tell us about the wise-cracks that are going around. I've listened to plenty. They're all lies. I can prove it. I can prove it by Spike O'Toole, that I don't have any other girl. You'll believe Spike?"

"As quickly as I would anybody else around here," she said ambiguously. "I just wanted to know."

"Well, I told you," he said, with a look out of the corner of his eye to observe how she was taking it. "I'm a champion of the world. I'm in the same class with movie stars and people like that. The public likes to make up stories about me . . . I can't stop them, but I thought you loved me enough not to believe everything you hear?"

She smiled. "Oh, let it pass. What do you think of the fight now?"

"Well," he told her with a crestfallen look, glad to drop the subject, "it won't be much of a fight. I can't work out at all because I can't stand the pain in my side. I can only hope that Martin isn't in top shape, and that he won't find out about the busted ribs."

She smiled again, wanly this time. "Oh, he won't be in shape," she promised him. "He looks worn out right now."

He could hardly suppress a grin of glee at the news. "I heard that you were doing a good job," he said, patting her on the shoulder. "After the fight is over and I'm feeling better, I'll try to find a way to repay you for all you've done for me."

She took up her fur and started for the door. "I hope so," she half-whispered. "I hope so." She passed through

the hall, wearily, almost dragging her feet.

Madden watched her go, a puzzled look upon his face. He shook his head several times. Then he grinned. "Believe me," he muttered to himself, "I'll find a way to muzzle that bozo when the fireworks is all over."

He entered Spike's office.

CHAPTER IX

The Eavesdropper

MOLLY, at the foot of the steps, halted and glanced quickly up the street. A blonde girl, with too much rouge, was hurrying along, evidently about to turn in at Spike's doorway. With a wildly beating heart, Molly turned and fled back up the steps. She dashed down the dark hall on tip toes and slipped into the "private conference" room. There was a small closet in the wall opposite the place where Sailor Madden usually sat. She darted into the closet just as footsteps entered the room.

She heard a feminine voice giving orders, evidently to the same young gangster she had asked to go for Sailor Madden. After a moment a heavier footstep sounded, and the Sailor's voice broke the stillness.

"Hello, Stella, old kid," it said heartily, "what's on your mind, if anything, this morning?"

"You heard the news?" asked Stella, just loud enough to be heard.

"What news?" asked the Sailor.

"Frankie the Gyp was taken for a ride last night, they fished him out of a gutter this morning—full of holes."

There was a low whistle from the Sailor.

"Ah, don't come that holier-than-thou-stuff on me, Sailor," sneered Stella. "You'd like to make me think that you didn't know a thing about it—but I recognize the fine hand of Spike O'Toole."

"Sh!" whispered the Sailor in a panic. "Not so loud."

"That's a pretty deep game, ain't it?" demanded Stella. "Murder! What's that got to do with fighting? Just because you swipe him when he isn't looking and he gets sore and goes to Cassidy and tips the mitt—do you have to have him bumped? Where do you stand in this, you big boob, if they wise up to the guy that paid off?"

"I don't know nothing about it," defended Madden nervously. "I only heard it ten minutes ago."

"Well, it don't bother me none," announced Stella. "That's not what I came here to talk about."

She sniffed at the air for a second like a hound on a hot scent. "Who was here—what new jane?"

Madden didn't answer at the moment.

"Come on," she insisted, "spit out the dirt. It ain't as if I didn't know that you'd make a play for a cock-eyed Chink if you took a fancy to her. Who's the new rival?"

"It wasn't nobody—only that nut Molly that we've got keepin' Martin out of the hay. She was here to report progress, that's all."

Molly in her closet could hear Stella snort. "That little frill, eh? Ain't you seein' too much of her lately? Not that I'm jealous, you understand? I'm not. But you belong to me—even if the world isn't supposed to know it. I'm just warnin' you that if you get away, I know what'll bring you back. Don't forget."

"Ah, don't talk that way, Stell," coaxed the Sailor. "This dame don't mean nothin' to me. I'm usin' her as a sap to hook this guy Martin. That's all. When I finish with him I'm through with her—get me? We'll go off on a trip to California or someplace and live on what we can pick up in the sticks. You know I don't get funny with nobody but you—not get funny and mean it. What d'yo think I married you for if I didn't mean it?"

Stella seemed appeased. "Well, I

don't mind how far you go in order to keep the title, but believe me, Big Boy, don't mix pleasure with business—that's all. How do you feel?"

"Great," breathed the Sailor in evident relief. "Great I work all morning from sun up—nobody around. I'm socking the bags crazy and I put away Jerry the Wop, Andy Bloomer and Johnny Belton—all in a round each. I busted Johnny's jaw. He wanted to wear a head guard, but I ain't no sap. Them things might bust me a knuckle or somethin'. If they want pay from me they can stand up and take their beatin's."

"**H**OW about this Martin?" asked Stella anxiously.

"Oh, that guy? Say Kid, when I get through with him there won't be any Martin. I'm goin' to hammer that bird until he's just mush inside. I'm goin' to work on his body because he's soft and can be hurt. I'm not goin' to knock him out. I'm goin' to keep poundin' on that body with everything I've got—just to knock him loose from the idea of any more fightin'. He'll never have a second shot at the lightweight title—the big sap!"

"Funny how a girl can bust a good man up, ain't it?" mused Stella. "Now if everything was even, this Buster could have taken you in his stride. But after that Molly, or whatever her name is, finishes with him he can't lick a postage stamp. What a sucker!"

"He'll be a sucker after I nail him a few in the ribs and under the heart with this right," boasted the Sailor, a ferocious something in his voice. "I'll teach him to challenge for MY title. I'll kill the little 'umpchay'. I've got him when he's soft and I'm in shape. When I get finished, well—he'll have whiskers before he can walk around again."

"Well, I'm off," announced Stella, "but remember. Don't get gay with that Molly skirt. You'll be sorry." Her voice was cold with threat.

The Sailor laughed, a nasty laugh. "Boloney, kid, that dame don't mean a thing to me—no more than Frankie the Gyp. She'll get the gate as soon as she's through playing the little game Spike and me cooked up for her."

Stella slouched along the hallway, one hand on an enticing hip, red lips smiling a satisfied smile. Sailor Madden, breathing a sigh of relief went back into Spike O'Toole's "office."

The closet door opened and Molly O'Connor tottered out. The air had been nearly suffocating in the narrow confines of the wall closet. Her face was streaming with perspiration. She felt weak—giddy. Her head was whirling. But she had heard Sailor Madden's voice—everything the two of them had said. She knew exactly where she stood and what a fool she had been. She felt sick, white inside, when she thought of what she had led Buster Martin into, and what a rotter Madden was. She felt sick as she thought of Martin's beautiful, young white body, soft from lack of training, wilting under the savage pounding of Madden's brutal fists. A man going into the ring with the sole thought of forever crippling a clean-living boy who was his master, except for the dirty work of Molly O'Connor. All of her girlhood shrieked a protest. She was weeping silently. She crept on hands and knees past the doorway of Spike's office and down into the street.

CHAPTER X

Molly Calls on Pop

BUSTER MARTIN did not see his Molly for the next three days. Neither did he hear from her. He haunted the telephone and the hotel lobby, but no call came from her—no word. Her silence did not help. He could not sleep at night. He paced his room or fell into fitful dozes from which he awoke with a start, harried by fren-

zied dreams of the girl who had come to occupy the major portion of all his moments.

He was as nervous as a cat. Drawn to a fine line, haggard, weary, with the fight one day away—one day and one night, it seemed that he was more fit for a sanitarium for nervous cases than a prize ring, and the smack of thudding gloved fists against his naked body.

Cassidy, stricken, with new lines running about his eyes and the corners of his mouth, said nothing. There was nothing he could say. Only a miracle would win Buster Martin this fight. Only a miracle could keep him on his feet after the first round. Miracles were things of the past, and, anyway, they didn't belong in the prize ring. Clean training, judgment, a stiff punch, the ability to duck and counter, wind, legs, lungs—but no miracles.

Buster still insisted upon working out, even though Cassidy would have preferred that he rest. No need to burn up the little remaining stamina. But Buster whirled around the gym, cutting viciously at the light bag and socking into the heavy sand bag as if trying to vent his disappointment on something concrete. The pity of it was that after one or two socks he was breathing like a porpoise, and his legs trembled as if shaken with theague.

He did not mention Molly. He never talked about anything. Moan Cassidy knew that the boy was hurt. He knew that he had been double-crossed. Yet he dared not mention the fact. It would be the last straw—the cutting away of the last prop that held Buster to a vestige of sanity. He could only hope that Buster would survive the Madden fight without serious injury and that he could rebuild from the wreck; build up a new Buster with more vision and more gray-matter.

Then, on the night before the fight, a timid knock came on his door. He took his slippers off the dresser, set down his corn-cob pipe carefully and belov-
 lowed a gruff "Come in." Pop Cassidy

was not in a mood to talk with any one.

He struggled to his feet a moment later and endeavored to hide his embarrassment and to appear natural. He knew the identity of his visitor. He had heard her description so many times from Buster that it was impossible for him to mistake her. His hand was trembling. His brain was hardly clear. He was face to face with the girl who had so heartlessly ruined his "boy" and who had tumbled the dreams of a lifetime down about his shoulders.

"I'm Molly O'Connor," announced the girl in a dead voice. "I've come to talk with you, if you'll talk to me. I had to. I had to talk with some one. It hurts me—here." She pressed her hand over her heart.

Cassidy gave her the chair and perched on the edge of the bed. He was not impressed as yet. He knew that girls could be good actresses. Frankie the Gyp had said that Molly was Sailor Madden's girl. Maybe she was acting—maybe not. He waited for her to speak.

"I haven't been near Buster in the past four days," she confessed in the same flat voice. "I guess you know that. I guess you know what I did to him. I ruined him."

Moan Cassidy nodded and picked up his corn cob pipe. Seemed he could always think better with that pipe burning.

"What can I do to help, now, this late?" she cried. "You don't know what I've gone through. You don't know what I've suffered. I've been a little fool, 'a sap,' as Sailor Madden would say. He told me that he'd be terribly hurt if Buster was to hit him on the right side. I fell for the story. I agreed to help him by keeping Buster out of condition. I did it. And now I feel that Madden intends injuring Buster for life; to hurt him so badly that he'll never be able to fight again. And I'm the person who did it—not any blow that Madden may strike."

"I knew it all the time," informed Cas-

sidy. "I was tipped off. I knew that Buster was riding to a fall, but I thought that he couldn't be wrong all the way. I thought maybe you'd recognize what a good, clean, honest boy he is, and kind of lay off of him."

"You knew and you didn't tell him?" she cried.

Pop Cassidy nodded. "No, I didn't tell him. He has a right to be happy, if he can be happy. If he loved you as much as he said he did—well, it would take a pretty bad girl not to like Buster. I was sure that you weren't bad, else he couldn't love you as much as he does. He's broken hearted because you haven't had anything to do with him during the past four days. Moonin' around the gym like a dying calf—trying to work. He can't work at all; he's thinkin' of you all the time. I can't do anything about it, either."

Her cheeks were white. "Does he think that much of me?" she asked softly.

Cassidy snorted. "Lady, at this minute that boy would throw away his boxing gloves forever if you were to say the word. He'd go back to sellin' newspapers or them bonds you been tellin' him about, if he thought it would get a nod from you. He's licked. I've seen it before."

SHE was weeping. "Oh, Mr. Cassidy, tell me something I can do to wipe out this terrible thing? Isn't there something?"

Cassidy shook his head sadly. "No, miss," he declared. "There ain't nothing that can be done, I reckon. Buster will have to take his medicine. Only thing you can do—and I ask you to do this because I love the boy like my own son—is to keep him straight when this is all over. Don't just feel sorry for him and leave him go after he goes through this hell. If you love him, say so, and help me make a man out of him, and a champion."

"I won't have you foolin' him no longer, Miss. I know you're sorry.

Nobody by the name of Molly O'Connor would be crooked and like it. If you love him, close your eyes the night he meets Sailor Madden. Try to forget that a game kid is going in against a bird that would hit him with a brick if he thought he could get away with it. Forget about him staggerin' around the ring and tryin' to hit back. Go out and help him to get back on his feet—up to where he belongs. Girl, do you love my Buster?"

She looked straight into his eyes. "Yes, I do," she whispered. Her cheeks were crimson, but her eyes were flaming with a new glory. "I didn't know it until the other evening when I sat watching him, but I do. I thought I was just sorry for him, but now I know that I miss him. There's a great empty spot in my heart when he isn't near me. I'm hungry for him now—and I love him. I'll pay him back with my whole life for this mistake I've made, if he'll only give me the chance."

There was a wetness in old Moan Cassidy's eyes. He patted her kindly upon the shoulder. "Don't feel too bad, Molly," he comforted, although his own heart was weighted with grief. "We all make mistakes. I have. And the boy'll need you more now than ever before. Stick to him, girl, he's worth it."

She was weeping softly. Her eyes were fixed on the opposite wall. She squared her shoulders as if arriving at a decision. "Listen to me," she begged of Cassidy. "Maybe I can help. Maybe there is something that can be done. It would be hard, but it would help, and maybe it might even win him the championship. It would mean the end between Buster and I. But I'll make the sacrifice. Maybe I can pay him back."

Cassidy was staring at her. "What is it, girl? What are you talking about?" he demanded in a tense voice.

"Well," she smiled through her tears, "if Buster could know that he had been double-crossed, as you call it, and that Sailor Madden had used me to do the

double-crossing, wouldn't he think that I had never been playing square with him? Wouldn't he hate me? Wouldn't he do his best to get even with Madden for breaking his heart and his strength. Wouldn't he go into that ring, forgetting that he was tired, forgetting everything excepting that he had been cheated and hurt? Wouldn't he do his best to beat that Madden fellow as quickly and as terribly as possible?"

Cassidy was studying her face. "Any fellow with any guts would do that," he told her.

"Well, Pop, listen. The night of the fight let me call up Madden. I'll tell him that I'll be waiting for him in the dressing-room of Buster Martin and that he's to stop in there and take me with him to the ringside as he goes along the corridor. I'll tell him that that will be the last straw to batter down Buster's nerves. I'll tell him that if Buster sees him walking off with the girl he believes is his, that it will finish him. I'll tell Madden that he can tell Buster how I double-crossed him; that it will make the boy feel worse. Madden will do it. He'd jump at a chance to gloat over Buster; to take me out of the dressing-room in front of Buster's eyes; to break his spirit completely. He'd like to crush him that way as well as with his fists. Don't you think it will work?" She regarded Cassidy anxiously.

There was a new light of hope in Cassidy's eyes. He stared at her as if seeing her for the first time. Then he jumped to his feet and smote his hands together with a mighty crash.

"If I know my Buster, and Sailor Madden will fall for that story, we have a chance—a chance in a million—but a chance! If Buster has the strength to stand up and swing one punch at that crook's jaw we have a chance. I hate crooks. He won the title that way—a frameup like he rap with you. Molly girl, if you're game to go through with this, maybe we have a chance. I'm not

promising anything. I'm just willing to lay a bet on Buster's fighting heart, a heart that goes on fighting after his nerves and muscles have quit. I'll take the chance. Can you do it?"

She smiled confidently, trying to cover her quivering lips. "Yes, I can do it," she promised. "I can do anything to pay for the wrong I did Buster. I'll do it. I'll bring Sailor Madden to Buster's dressing-room fifteen minutes before they step into the ring. I'll do it or die."

When she had gone Cassidy stood staring up at the electric light set in the ceiling. Next door he could hear Buster tramping up and down, haunting the telephone, still hoping for some word from "his Molly."

CHAPTER XI

16 to 5 on Martin

DOWN in caverns under the Arena, Buster Martin was in his dressing-room. His hands were taped, his trunks were on, his shoes were laced securely. The gloves had been fitted on before the eyes of a representative of the Boxing Commission and a personal representative of the Champion. Buster Martin was ready for the ring. But Buster was sound asleep upon the rub-down table. Cassidy stood over him, his watch in his hand, keeping an absolute stillness in the room. Over in one corner the water-bucket and bottles, along with the smelling salts and the terrible, searing, collodion that was used on deep cuts to stop the bleeding, were waiting to be carried to Buster's corner of the ring, when the youngster mounted the stairs to face his ordeal of battle.

In the dressing-room there was no sound but the deep, even breathing of the sleeping Buster.

In Sailor Madden's dressing-room was a different scene. The scowling Sailor was dancing around on his toes,

looking trained to the minute and making vicious lunges at imaginary Buster Martins. Shadow-boxing, flexing his muscles, waiting for the minute when the call boy would summon him to the ring.

Spike O'Toole was chuckling to a group of his particular cronies. "Oh, Boy!" he was saying. "Won't there be a yowl tomorrow when the news leaks out? Listen! The odds are 13 to 5 on Martin. The office is in that the Sailor hasn't trained a lick for this bout and that he's ready to blow the title—can't make the weight. They think he's trained on beer and bananas, get me? I've been covering as much of the Martin dough as I can grab without spillin' the mitt. Been takin' it since last week, goin' in hock to raise more dough when my own ran out. This is the biggest shot I've ever pulled, and take it from me, it's a lulu! Why them 'wise boys' out in front are just beggin' for the chance to get money down on Martin at name-your-own price. I wish I had a million to bet! This scrap is strictly in the bag. The Sailor will finish that lush in about the second round. Write that down in the book. Look at him, gents, he's in the pink and rarin' to go."

Sailor Madden was thinking of other things. He was thinking of that little "Frail," Molly. Molly had called him up an hour ago and had told him to stop in Martin's dressing-room on his way to the ring to see the result of her handiwork. She had asked in such a seductive voice that Madden had promised.

The Sailor was easy to influence—when it came to gloating over a rival. He wanted to see Buster Martin, pale and drawn and white, before he met him in the ring. He wanted to say a few things, and then he wanted to take Molly out of there with him. Not that he cared anything about Molly, but just to get Martin's goat. He was impatient for the word—for the call to the slaughter.

BACK in Martin's dressing-room the door opened and a white-faced Molly crept into the room. She looked questioningly at the table on which Buster was sleeping soundly.

"First time he's been asleep in two days," whispered Cassidy hoarsely. "He'll wake up with a grouch against the world, and that little bit of sleep will do him more good than a shot of hop. I still have hopes. How about the Sailor?"

"I called him up about an hour ago. He promised he'd stop by and say a few words to Buster on the way to the ring."

Cassidy nodded his head in satisfaction. "Well, I hope it works the way I want it to. Remember, you must act the part, though. You got to sit in Madden's corner, and every time Buster looks at you, you have to be yelling for Madden to smash him."

She nodded wearily. "I understand," she murmured. "I won't fail. After tonight it won't make any difference—that is for me. I'll never see Buster again. He never will want to see me. He'll hate me, despise me. I can't blame him. I deserve it. But it will be hard, to have to know that he is thinking those things."

Upstairs the semi-final was moving fast and furiously. The crowd was having its appetite for the final bout whetted by a good old-fashioned slug-fest and was crying encouragement to the two fighters slugging in the center of the ring.

It was over! One of the boys snaked a right to the jaw and stood staring stupidly at the crumpled form of the man at his feet. The referee had to wave him away twice, before he would go to a far corner and let the count proceed. The electric indicator showed that it was the eighth round of a ten-round fight. The referee's arm rose and fell on the fatal count of ten. Seconds leaped into the ring and half supported the loser to his corner. The winner shook hands with himself in front of the crowd.

A sudden stillness fell over the immense arena, the lull before the storm. Then a rising sea of voices—the murmur of twenty thousand mouths talking at one time.

In one corner of the ringside seats some of the "wise boys" were getting money down on the coming fight, anxious to bet on Martin at any odds. Spike O'Toole had trained his workers well. They listened with assumed reluctance and accepted bets in the same spirit. The "word" had been passed that Sailor Madden was about to "blow" his title and that at the end of fifteen rounds a new champion would have his hand raised.

A wheezing band tried to make itself heard above the clamor of conversation. Lights were turned on all over the hall. For the moment the bright Klieg lights over the ring were turned off. Fireflies appeared by the thousand—little flames darting up here and there as cigarettes were lighted in anticipation of the big battle.

In the betting corner the odds were now 16 to 5 against Madden, and Spike O'Toole was gloating. He'd be worth a million in the morning.

In Martin's dressing-room a tired, white-faced boy was still sleeping. A cowering, white-faced girl was slumped down in a straight-backed chair, and a red-faced old man was waiting with anxious eyes and pounding heart—an old man who wore a roll-necked sweater on which appeared the words "Buster Martin."

CHAPTER XII

The Clang of the Bell

IN the Sailor's dressing-room the Sailor started toward the door, escorted by Spike O'Toole and a young army of handlers. True, the "handlers" would all creep into positions along the ring side after the Sailor climbed through the ropes. It was part of the

graft, for only three men would be permitted in his corner, but at the moment they were "handlers" and the police guard let them through. It was one of the ways Spike O'Toole and Sailor Martin rewarded the faithful.

Sailor Madden swaggered importantly down the corridor. At the door to Buster Martin's dressing-room he paused and waved for all to go on excepting Spike O'Toole. He winked largely at the surprised O'Toole and hammered on the door. O'Toole stared at him. This was a new trick.

"I'm goin' to rub it in a little," announced the Sailor with a nasty grin. There was a nasty tone in his voice also, a grating tone of triumph. "Wait till you see the fireworks."

Moan Cassidy stuck his head out of the door. Sailor Madden pushed his hand in Cassidy's face and forced his way into the room. The noise disturbed the sleeping Martin. He roused himself and propped his head up on one arm, staring owlishly at the unshaven face of Madden. Madden strutted into the center of the dressing-room and looked the place over with his sneering face.

"Nice little layout," he commented. He started as if he had not noticed Molly before, sitting in her chair in one corner. He waved at her and showed his teeth in a grin.

"Hello, Babe," he called genially. "Ready to go?"

She nodded her head and rose to her feet.

Buster Martin looked on. His brain was clearing. He saw Molly for the first time.

"She's been waiting here a half an hour," informed Cassidy briefly. He was studying Buster's eyes.

"What's the idea of the loud conversation?" demanded Buster of Madden.

"What conversation?" asked Madden innocently. "Ain't a guy got the right to talk to his best girl?"

Buster glanced toward Molly. She was walking over to the Sailor.

"His what?" shrieked Buster.

"You heard me, guy," said Madden nastily. "I have half a mind to bust you one—just to pay myself for lettin' her be with you for a couple of nights. She'll be glad to get back with human beings again. Won't you, Babe?"

"Molly!" Buster's voice held an agonized note. His eyes were blinking. A wet blanket had come down and smothered his heart. "Molly—you don't mean—Molly! Say it ain't the truth! Say you ain't his girl—you—"

The girl's eyes flashed. Her bosom heaved. She was making her big scene. Cassidy watched her eagerly.

"Aw, cut the baby stuff," she said in a rough voice, and with a laugh almost like the nasty laugh of Sailor Madden. "Cut the baby stuff. I'm tired of hearing it. I've stood for it for four weeks now and I'd like a new line. 'Molly' this and Molly' that. You starin' at me like a moon faced calf—and me handin' you the old salve! What makes you think I like the cut of your mug, bozo? What makes you think I could take a tumble for you when there's men around?"

She moved closer to the Sailor who was grinning over her shoulder at the shaken Martin.

"Why don't you get this Cassidy guy to mother you some more?" she went on. "You think there's any dough in it for me, stringin' with you? You big sap, I'm a live guy—not a dead one. I know where my dough is comin' from before I start takin' a hand in the game.

Her pale lips curled in a sneer. "You with your 'Molly—it ain't true!' Of course it's true. Anybody but a dumb-bell would have tumbled to the racket long ago! I gave you a good time and kept you out of bed and away from trainin', so my boy friend here, Sailor Madden, could give you the beating of your young life. And, believe me kid, I hope he makes it a good one for the pain in the neck you've been to me during this last month. Olive oil, kid, I'll see you in the funny papers."

She laughed once more, the hard, metallic laugh of Sailor Madden, and minced out of the room without a glance back. At the door she looked Cassidy up and down. "There's your little boy, all back again safe and sound. Think about him being the champion, after you carry him out of the ring, will you? You big champanzee!"

The bulk of Sailor Madden hurled back the assault of Moan Cassidy. Buster Martin was standing with clenched fists and blazing eyes. There were two red spots on his face—one over each cheek bone. He was staring at Madden, his jaws working as he ground his teeth in helpless fury.

"So it's a plant, eh?" he spat at Madden through set teeth. "You dirty, yellow; cowardly dog—gettin' a woman to defend you in the ring."

He lost control of his twitching muscles and leaped forward before Spike or Cassidy could interfere. His fist, shooting out in a right swing, bashed against Madden's jaw, and Madden reeled back against the wall. He came back fighting—to face a raging animal in the form of Buster Martin.

MARTIN was clawing at Moan Cassidy in an attempt to get at Madden. Spike O'Toole was hauling the Sailor away.

"Come on, you idiot," he was bellowing. "You don't get paid for fighting down here. You get paid for fighting up in the ring—if you want to fight—fight it out upstairs."

The door slammed and they were gone—leaving Buster Martin with sagging shoulders and a lead weight where his heart had been.

He raged about the room after a second, pounding at the walls with his gloved fists, kicking at chairs and tables, glowering at everyone in the room with burning eyes.

Cassidy ventured to speak. "Buster Boy, they're waiting upstairs for you. They're announcing from the ring now.

We have to go. Buster Boy, if you want action, take it out of his hide. And remember, the girl will be sittin' there in his corner, watching him cut you to ribbons. They mean to do it, Boy. They mean to hammer you down for fifteen rounds so that you never will be in condition to fight again. Make it short, Buster. Go after him Boy! Get him in the first round if you can."

Martin was almost calm outwardly. Inwardly he was raging. "Listen, Pop," he said fiercely. "I threw you down, see? I'm a rotten dog. You told me what was comin', and I laughed at you. I've busted up your whole life and I've made a bum out of you after you've done everything for me. I stood here and listened to them crooks call you names—and you the best guy in the world. But Pop—I ain't dead yet. I'm going up to lick him or get killed. I'm goin' to lick him or get killed tryin'. Let's go—you guys! Let's go—before I go crazy!"

He threw open the door and half ran up the stairs and into the brilliant glare of the lights. The crowd was waiting patiently for him. As soon as his head and shoulders appeared above the sitting crowd as he walked to the ring, a tremendous ovation greeted him. He noticed nothing. His face was white and drawn. His hands were twitching. The hectic red spots were still over each cheek bone.

He was climbing through the ring ropes. He couldn't see anything because of the glare in his eyes. He didn't see that the entire crowd was on it's feet, cheering him as the new champion. The word had already gone around that the Sailor and he had staged an impromptu battle in Martin's dressing room. The word was around that this was to be a fight for blood—a fight over a girl—and to the finish.

Dimly he felt Pop Cassidy pushing him toward the center of the ring. Dimly he listened to the referee and heard nothing. He felt the lights go

out all over the building, leaving the ring in its stark-naked whiteness, with two fighters in the center of the glare.

A whistle blew. He knew that he had hold of the top ropes in his corners and was flexing his muscles as he always did. He saw Molly's face for one second—dimly outlined in the tricky light below him. And he saw she was laughing at him! The flame burned with a new intensity. He was aching to feel Sailor Madden's body against his gloved fists. A terrible noise sounded in his ears. He jumped and whirled around as if on a spring. It was the gong—the signal for the beginning of the first round!

CHAPTER XIII

Buster Martin vs. Sailor Madden

MADDEN had leaped out of his corner like a raging beast. Buster met him in the center of the ring. They stood toe to toe for a full minute, arms working with the speed of lightning bolts. Buster was playing for the face. Madden was pounding at Buster's stomach. Madden knew that it would be a "downstairs" battle. A round's pounding in the belly would just about finish a fighter in the condition of Buster Martin.

Buster seemed not to feel the shower of blows. He was intent upon crashing his gloved fists into Madden's face. He had forgotten science—forgotten how to tie his man up to prevent body punishment. He was merely a berserk savage, a street brawler, living only for the pleasure it gave him to feel the flesh of Madden's face under his fists.

He stepped back. He was panting. Madden's last punch had hurt him. His stomach felt sick. He realized now his lack of condition. He was shaken all over. He heard Spike O'Toole yelling to Madden:

"That shot got him, Sailor—that shot spilled his guts. Go in and rip a few

more to the same place! He can't take it downstairs."

In Martin's corner, Pop Cassidy was chewing on his checked cap—chewing it to tatters. He was suffering each time one of the Sailor's pile-driving hooks thudded into the soft stomach of his boy. He was praying. Tears were streaming down his cheeks. He tried to yell encouragement and only a hoarse croak resulted. Still Buster did hear that old cry:

"Shoot 'at left, Buster—shoot 'at left."

Martin gave ground and studied the Sailor. His eyes were red with hate. Madden was sneering at him. Martin's left glove shot out like a whip-lash and the spat of leather on flesh smashed the sneer from Madden's lips. Madden snarled. There was blood trickling from the corner of his mouth. He rushed, and again Martin gave ground, shooting punches from underneath, up at the Sailor's covered head. He felt them going in—*one—two—three!* The Sailor straightened up and Martin drove a right cross to the temple that shook Madden to his toes.

The Sailor was screaming at him, mouthing vile language. Again the red tide surged into Martin's eyes. He went in to fight it out, toe to toe. A jolting short right took him under the heart. His mouthed jarred open and another terrific left to the same spot caused him to gasp. The world went black suddenly. A right hook landed on his jaw. He felt himself slipping—going down. He felt the soft surface of the canvas, was dimly aware that the shrieking maniacs out in the darkness were people—men and women. He knew that he had been knocked down and that the referee was counting. He knew that over in the far corner, Madden was standing with his arms thrown over the ropes and a nasty smirk on his battered face.

He turned his buzzing head and, his eyes rested on the form of Pop Cassidy, miles away, chewing on his cap—

tears in his eyes. His head cleared a little. He saw the referee's arm going up and down. He was saying "eight," and the voice sounded a mile off. He had to go on. He'd thrown Pop down—treated him like a dog.

Below him a frantic radio announcer was telling the world:

"Martin is down in his corner, right over our heads! His eyes are glazed and there is a look of pain on his face. Those terrific smashes over the heart literally drove him into the canvas. It will be a bad night for the boys who bet against the Champion at odds of 16 to 5. It looks as if Martin is not going to survive the round. . ."

He was up! He threw himself to his feet as the referee's arm was ascending for the tenth count. Sailor Madden was all over him in an instant. Martin's reeling brain told him that he must cover and get away. He couldn't. His legs were trembling. His arms felt heavy. He saw the punch coming and couldn't duck it. It thudded home on his jaw. Again he crashed to the canvas, and the fatal ten was being chanted again, and the radio announcer was saying:

"It surprised us all when Martin got to his feet. He was still very groggy and badly hurt. He's down again with a right to the jaw. He'll stay down this time or I'm no judge of fighters. He's terribly hurt. There is blood streaming from his mouth and his legs are like rubber. The Sailor's punches must be more terrible than we imagine, for Martin's body is quivering from the impact . . . By Glory! *He's up!*"

THE thrill-crazed announcer was right! Martin was staggering to his feet. For an instant—for an instant only—his fighting heart was telling him that he must stand up. He tried to charge Madden, but Madden was backing away, sneering at him. Madden landed two short lefts to the body and an overhand right to the top of Buster's head. The blows felt like the landing

of a pile driver. And they were only taps—measuring punches.

He tried to box, but his arms were too heavy. He heard a shrill voice—a girl's voice. It sounded over the din of twenty thousand fight mad fans:

"Kill him, Sailor. Kill the big bum!"

Martin knew that voice. It was Molly's. All of the rage of five minutes ago surged through him. He felt himself strong again. His head cleared. He felt that he was out-boxing the Sailor—automatically. (Pop Cassidy's training).

He flicked out his left and saw the blood spatter from the Sailor's flat nose. He stepped back, fainted with his left, and crossed a heavy right to the Sailor's jaw. It went home like a lightning bolt. It shook the Sailor from heels to head. He heard Spike's rough voice:

"Keep away from that right, you dummy!" Spike was bellowing. "That guy can hit as long as he is alive!"

Martin was grinning—a wolf grin. "Hit?" He'd show 'em he could hit! He waded in close and ripped his right hand to the Sailor's heart. Again the Sailor wilted a trifle and gave ground. And Martin, the terrible rage burning him up, followed after him—shooting short rights and lefts to the jaw and head of the snarling man before him. He could see nothing but the head of the Sailor and the bloody gleam on two of his gold teeth. Buster reveled in the sight; he was counting—making him feel the weight of his fists.

He lashed forward and drove an uppercut to the jaw. At the same moment, Madden side-stepped and, from a crouch, drove a body punch at Martin. It went home with terrible force—and it was low. Martin groaned aloud in his agony and started to double up. As he sank to the floor, the Sailor shot two rights to the jaw.

When he went down Martin knew that he was done. He'd felt that pain before. It was the muscle and heart paralysing blow—the dirty punch, a punch the referee couldn't see. A thou-

sand voices shrieked "Foul!" But the referee shook his head and began the count. And Martin sank lower on the floor.

In the corner, Pop Cassidy stood, tears streaming down his face, his lips muttering strange curses. There was a towel in his hand. He was thinking that he had to save his Buster from further punishment. He had to save him from terrible injury. He blamed himself. Should have called the fight off. In his grief he forgot that the rules will not permit a fighter's manager to end the fight by throwing in the sponge. The referee must end the fight—or stop it.

In Madden's corner a white-faced girl, a stricken light in her eyes, watched the gray face of the man she loved. The referee's arm was going up for the ninth time. The house was a bedlam, and Martin was still inert upon the floor of the ring—near to his own corner.

A hoarse, fog-horn sound broke through the din. It was the frenziedly ringing bell. Martin was saved for another three minutes of torture!

Madden turned to his corner. His face was slippery with blood, and two great welts showed on his flesh where the gloves of Buster Martin had left their trade-mark.

"'At guy can sure hit," he gasped to Spike O'Toole. "I'll get him next round."

"You stay away from that right of his—as long as he's on his feet!" snarled O'Toole.

Madden grinned.

With the sound of the bell, Cassidy had leaped into the ring and by main strength dragged the almost unconscious Buster to his corner. He knew it to be a hopeless gesture. He knew that Buster would never answer the bell for the second round. Cassidy had seen them go down like that before. He was working on the boy mechanically—from long practice. Buster lifted his head and looked up with dull eyes.

"What round is it?" he demanded of Pop Cassidy. "What round is it?"

"The end of the first," answered Cassidy truthfully, "and you're out on your feet."

CHAPTER XIV

The Boomerang Returns

A TREMOR shook Martin. "I'm out when I'm out," he growled. "I'll paste that big gorilla yet. I had him goin' and he got yellow and fouled me when the ref' couldn't see the shot. Listen: If you've got any idea of throwin' in the sponge for me—just because I'm on the floor—you forget it. So help me, if you heave in that sponge, I'm off you for life. Promise me, Pop—no sponge! I'll take it if I have to get it, but let me go down fightin'—please!

Cassidy looked down at him. There was a light in his eyes that only a father could correctly interpret. "I promise, kid," he said huskily. He glanced up. "That Molly girl is over there in the Sailor's corner havin' a regular circus," he reported.

Martin's body went tense and rigid. "Oh yeah!" he said through his split lips. "Yeah! Well, I'll send her little boy friend home next round o. k. My gosh, Pop, but I'm tired! I can hardly stand up."

The buzzer buzzed. Ten seconds to go!

"That left, Buster," begged Cassidy. "That left to tilt up his head. He's a mark for it. Then let him have the right." He pushed him off the stool toward the center of the ring.

The radio announcer was talking again to his unseen audience:

"Cassidy has been saying things to his man during the rest. Believe it or not, but except for the battered look you would never know that Buster Martin was on the floor three times during that last round and had to be carried

to his corner after the bell. The fire is back in his eyes and he's glaring at the Sailor as if he intended to eat him up. This Buster Martin is one sweet boy for anyone's money. He's shown more sheer guts here tonight than we've seen in the Arena in a blue moon. He's leaping off his stool. He's jumping across the ring. It's his old trick, folks! He's trapped the Sailor coming out of his corner."

With the gong Martin had leaped out as the Sailor rose slowly to his feet. He trapped him in the Sailor's own corner, close to the ropes. He was bobbing and ducking in front of Madden, and his hands were flashing in and out, tying up the Sailor without touching him. There was a grim look on Buster's face. He was thinking of what Pop had said: "That Molly girl is over there in the Sailor's corner having a circus." Yeah?

Spat! Without him knowing it, his right flashed out and jarred the Sailor's head back. He sank his left up to the glove wrist in Madden's middle and, stepping back, crashed another right to the jaw. The Sailor closed and held. In the clinches Madden heeled him under the chin with the back of his glove and the laces cut a deep gash in Buster's upper lip. He could hear the shrill voice of Molly. She was screaming at the top of her voice:

"Kill the big boob, Sailor. Sock him one for me—"

The sound gave new strength to his weary arms. He lashed out with a straight right, and the Sailor slipped to one knee. The referee waved Martin away and the house was filled with so many gibbering lunatics. He stepped back, panting and eager. He felt his legs trembling and his arms were powerless. The Sailor was up and coming in.

As he lunged in, Martin jabbed him to the sore nose with three rapid lefts and laughed aloud as he saw the blood spurt anew. The Sailor was again mouthing expletives. He was slamming away at Martin's body, each blow hurt-

ing and each blow taking some of the little stamina left in the battered body of Buster Martin. He knew that he was at the end of his rope. The thought drove him mad. In another round he would not have enough strength left to drive home a finishing punch, even if Madden gave him the opening.

He stepped in desperately and swung. Madden crashed through his guard with a pounding left to the jaw. Again the world rocked and swayed, and a shrill laugh came to him—Molly's laugh. He bobbed his head and threw a right hook at the Sailor's body. He heard Madden grunt. He lashed out with an overhand left and knew that it had found the Sailor's jaw. Then the Sailor reached him with another of those pile-driving rights to the heart.

In condition and hard as nails, Buster would have laughed off such a punch. Tonight they landed with a crushing force. His knees sagged and his hands dropped to his sides. Quick as a flash Madden leaped in, sensing the moment. His left and right thudded against Buster's jaw—even while Buster was crumbling from the body blow. The world spun and the blinding lights were sickening. Like a ship at sea, rocking in the storm, he could hear Cassidy's voice pleading with him:

"Get up, Buster! Get up! Get up, or I'll throw in the sponge."

Martin stirred his pain racked body at "Four." It was a quiver of punch drunk muscles and nerves to the ring siders. To Buster it was a titan effort to stand erect. His legs refused to work. His brain was dead. He was sobbing. His lungs were like furnaces, burning him cruelly with each indrawn breath. He knew that he was licked—for the first time in his life. Out! Beaten! The referee was saying "Seven!"

He was on his side in Madden's corner. Dimly he saw the snarling face of Spike O'Toole grinning at him. And then he saw Molly O'Connor, and her

eyes were glowing and her fists doubled.

"Get up, you mama's boy!" She was screaming full in his face—not ten feet distant. "Get up, you bum sport. Get up and take your medicine from a better man. Stop dogging it, you quitter! Oh you yellow dog!"

He was on his feet without looking around. He didn't even know where the Sailor was standing. He couldn't see. The lights were still reeling. He felt the strength of ten giants. His heart was aflame. "Bum sport, eh?—yellow dog?" He groped about with his two hands. A thudding blow landed behind his ear and he whirled. Punches had lost the power to hurt him. A crashing left landed on his jaw and he shook it off, waded in. He had found Madden. His gloves were touching him.

His head was clearing a little. He could hear, hear the shouts and growls and cries from the house; hear the bedlam of noise as Madden broke ground under his attack and retreated across the ring. Madden had a puzzled look on his face. He couldn't understand how this boy could keep getting up. Spike O'Toole was chewing his cigar and swallowing the raw leaf. Cassidy was shrieking, his face purple:

"Shoot 'at left, Buster! Shoot 'at left! The left, Boy—the left!"

CHAPTER XV

Molly Wins a Decision

FAINTLY Buster heard Pop's voice. What? The left? Oh yes—the left—the old trick Pop had taught him in the beginning. Prop 'em up with a left jab and drop 'em with the right. He was fighting like an automaton. But he was fighting with fury, driving the Sailor across the ring, beating at his face and body with a never-ending storm of short rights and lefts. In the center of the ring he stopped short and gave the Sailor time to open up. Then he stepped in and measured him. His left flicked

out, a short snappy left jab, just as it always flicked out. And before it landed on its target the right was on its way, following it up.

The left tilted the Sailor's head up so that his jaw was exposed for the fraction of a second, and then the crashing right drove home—the good old right hand that knew when hay was to be made. The hard bone of the Sailor's jaw under his glove sent a wave of exultation over Martin. He closed in—but he stumbled over something on the floor. He was still fighting, slashing out with his hands, but the Sailor wasn't there. And the knock-down timekeeper was counting, "Two." The referee was pushing Buster to his corner so he could go on with the count.

As it was, Madden got a longer count than he was entitled to due to Martin's numbed brain. But he didn't stir, and a stunned Spike O'Toole pulled him bodily to his corner when the fight was over—when the referee had counted the final, "*Ten—and out!*"

A raging mob descended upon the ring to carry Martin to the dressing room. On the way in he passed out completely. The police had to carry him the rest of the way and place him on the rub-down table, so Pop Cassidy, "Moan" Cassidy in all truth on this occasion, could go to work on him.

Outside the frenzied mob pounded on the door and demanded entrance to the idol's dressing room, but Pop ignored the clamor. He was ministering with the tender hands of a woman to the battered body of "his Boy."

IT was not until the next morning that Buster was really able to listen to anything. It was not until he awoke from a pain-racked sleep in which he continued the fight of the night before, that he knew that he was "Buster Martin, Lightweight Champion of the World"; a Champion the newspapers heralded as "the greatest of them all, a boy that hasn't sense enough to know when he's knocked out—and goes on

fighting with his heart." He read the papers, all of them, as any boy would do the morning after he happened to become the lightweight champion of the world.

"I heard you yell, 'use 'at left, Buster,' and I did it just like you showed me a million times," he told Cassidy. "And then I found myself wonderin' why I couldn't hit him any more. He wasn't there."

Pop Cassidy grinned happily. "He was on the floor, and I was the Manager of a World's Champion."

"Pop, I'm awful glad for your sake," said the happy kid. "I'm more glad than I am for myself. It's your chance to laugh at the guys that laughed at you for so many years."

Cassidy was serious and silent for a long moment. He patted Buster on the back. "Listen, Boy, there's another friend of yours out here that would like to shake your hand and wish you luck. Don't be too hard. And everything that she did yesterday and last night I knew about in advance and told her to do it—to help you lick Madden."

"Who is it?" demanded Buster suspiciously.

"Never mind who it is," answered

Cassidy. "Just remember what I'm tellin' you. I knew about the whole thing, and I planned it all with her help to save you from yourself. It was the only chance you had to win. I had Molly O'Connor trap Sailor Madden into steppin' into your dressin' room before the fight to give you the razzle-dazzle. I wanted you to think you had been double-crossed. It was a hard job for Molly—but she handled it like a thoroughbred. After all, she won the fight for you; not you or me. I want you to see her—and whatever you do or say to her—I'm for her, all the way! She's a girl in a million."

Cassidy stepped out of the room. His eyes were wet. Too much happiness in one day!

In the next room, where Molly was waiting, he lifted up her face and kissed her on the forehead. "You can go in, Molly girl," he told her. "I guess it will be O.K."

His eyes flashed for a minute and he grinned his old grin. "And you tell that bird that even if he is the Champion of the World, if he don't kiss you the first minute you're in there, I'll come in and lick him myself."

And Molly went in.

THE END

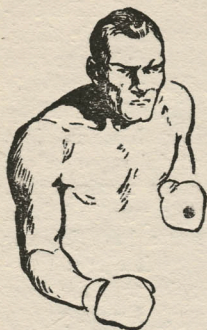
FRIENDSHIP THROUGH DEFEAT

BEFORE Tom Sharkey's first fight with Jeffries, he was absolutely confident that he would become heavyweight champion of the world. The tremendously powerful young sailor fairly bubbled over with strength and vitality and cocksureness.

For weeks after the decision was given against him he was actually heartbroken. He moped around, brooding. He hated Jeffries with a consuming bitterness. When he signed to meet the big boilermaker for the second time that bout could have been billed in all honesty as a "grudge" fight.

It was as hard fought as the first. Sharkey came out of it with three broken ribs, but he came out with the "grudge" missing. He was a fighting man first, last and all the time, and he appreciated a fighter more than anything else in the world.

Tom found Jim Jeffries a great fighting man, a man who took the worst he had to give, and came back for more, and his hatred was swallowed up in admiration. He found it impossible to dislike a man who fought as well as Big Jim did, and they became fast friends.



CLANG!

HANDLERS disappear in the void of surrounding darkness — water-pails are whipped from resined floors—a flood of light beats down on the stripped bodies of two gladiators!

To that setting the hearts of men have ever thrilled.

For stark drama it has never been equalled.

In a roped ring two men, armed only with Nature's gifts of courage, muscle and nerve, poise for action—for the blood-tingling charge that heralds a battle for supremacy!

It has been the soul-food of a race of men who have carried civilization to the world's last outpost—the breed that has borne the white man's burden without whimper or retreat, who has built cities, spanned bridges and crimsoned a thousand battlefields with the last measure of courageous devotion.

FIGHT STORIES will be the story magazine of that sport and for those men. Its pages will be bright with the courage of he-men in a he-man's game. Here you will find a rallying place for men of your kidney. Here the best sport writers of your day will spin their yarns of romance and action and adventure of the prize ring. Youth and experience will blend to give you in **FIGHT STORIES** a CLEAN, PACKED-WITH-ACTION, ENTERTAINING magazine!

You're the referee!

THE EDITOR

The Durable Dane



By JACK KOFOED

Battling Nelson—a fighter who made the fans break up their chairs! His attack was his defense; he never took a backward step in the ring! Begin the amazing life-story of this fighting flame here—Part I.

THE sun shone hotly from the blue sky on a wooden arena in Colma, where two nearly naked men were fighting.

One was deep-chested and handsome. The lines of his body were well rounded. He was beautiful as an athlete is beautiful, clear-eyed, graceful. The other looked smaller. His face was weazened, his neck thin. The wiry bristles of his almost colorless hair stuck out at all angles.

They were the actors in one of the most dramatic battles the history of the ring has ever recorded.

The handsome man was Jimmy Britt; the drawn and scrubby one Battling Nelson. Nelson moved forward, always forward. He had no defense to

speak of. Britt hit him at will. Nelson continued to move forward. No matter how hard or how often Britt punched he bored in just the same. Jimmy kept backing away, smashing him cruel blows, and always he kept advancing.

Once inside Britt's arms, Nelson went to work. Punch, punch, punch, right and left, to stomach and kidney, and short, hard uppercuts to the jaw. In the clinches Nelson did all the fighting, while Britt strove to protect himself. Jimmy wanted to box at long range. The Battler would have none of it. He started to fight his way inside the moment the referee forced them apart.

Britt landed six blows to Nelson's one. They were hard blows, for the

pride of the Pacific Coast had a left hand like a foil and a right with the hint of dynamite in it.

At times Nelson's expressionless face was a crimson jelly under the thud of Britt's sodden gloves; there were times when even his Greek body seemed to be stung through and through by the merciless flogging. But he never stopped going forward. The roughest, toughest lightweight champion that ever lived was working at his trade. He took no account of the rounds. There was no need of accounting, for it was a fight to a finish.

Through all of it Britt paid no heed to his seconds. Wildly they urged him to caution in the earlier rounds, but Jimmy sought to stop his opponent by main strength. He boxed, but it was not the cautious, defensive boxing he had shown in other fights. He was waging his own war. Win or lose, the credit would be his.

In the sixth Nelson punched Britt groggy. The gong saved him. Another minute and he would have been done.

The rest did wonders for him. He recuperated amazingly. Nelson needed no recuperation. He had neither tired nor wilted under the constant punching. He was as strong and almost as fresh as when he started.

In the succeeding rounds Britt could do nothing with Nelson. He hit him a thousand blows. In the matter of points he was far ahead, but points meant nothing. Jimmy was not hurting the Battler, not slowing him down in the least, and that meant he was losing—grimly and gamely, but losing just the same.

So the fight went. The crowd was all for him. It cheered every move he made. Even the newspaper men in the press row were praying for him, for Jimmy Britt was the idol of the Coast, and Nelson was almost an unknown. He was soon to be known throughout the world, however.

In the fourteenth Britt went groggy again. He forgot to box. He forgot

everything but the necessity of slaying the tight-lipped man who was continually crowding up against him, of closing the terrible blue eyes that flamed into his. He fought like a madman. He fought himself out in a hopeless rally.

In the fifteenth Britt resumed his boxing. He tried to stall, to rest, but the inhuman fighting machine before him would not let him rest. Jimmy would throw all his weight back of a punch. It would land squarely on the Dane's chin, but the head, coming forward in advance of the body, met the blow rigidly. It never snapped back. Nothing Britt could do seemed capable of snapping it back.

So, through the next three rounds. His friends gave up hope. His father, standing in that crowded arena, like a mourner at a funeral, had long since resigned himself to the inevitable.

In the eighteenth came the high climax of that bitter fight. Nelson, following the one plan he knew, waded into the showering blows—the blows that had weakened and softened with the passing of the rounds. The body! The body! That was the target. That was always the place to hit.

A couple of lefts to the stomach brought Britt's head forward. As it came in Nelson showered clubby rights and lefts to the jaw. Another left to the body, a right to the jaw—the body again—

Jimmy sank to the floor, and rolled over. His tongue protruded. He grasped the ropes, and tried to rise, but there was no more strength left in his arms and legs. Nelson, a smile on his battered face, looked down at him.

He did not hear the gloating roar from the fifteen thousand in the Colma arena. They hailed him—Battling Nelson. Cushions from the hard seats rained through the air. The ring filled with jubilant men, who swept him up on their shoulders. Nelson hardly seemed to notice it.

He had a strange sort of concentra-

tion. Though not much more than a boy in years—he was twenty-five—he had been fighting his way toward this moment for ten of them. Ten years is a long time, when they are filled with hard knocks. Nelson had always faced hard knocks in the same manner that he had faced the flying fists of Jimmy Britt.

It was the biggest moment of his life, bigger even than that happy day he finished the Old Master, Joe Gans. The Battler had a high contempt for Britt, the boxer rather than the fighter. It brought him the keenest personal joy to win.

FOR fighting was Nelson's trade, and there was never another just like him. The greatest lightweight the ring ever saw was this little man, with his straw-colored hair, and the strangest blue eyes in all the world. He was slim and not very rugged in appearance, with the biceps of a dry goods clerk who had taken up physical culture.

Yet Battling Nelson was the roughest, toughest old wolf of them all. He wasn't pretty to watch. For all his slimness he was awkward as a great Dane puppy. He wasn't clever or particularly fast.

He tore in, whaling away with both hands. Smashes to the head and body. Here, there, everywhere. Nelson had no defense. He pushed in against the punches. Hooked and swung so fast and often that only a small proportion of his blows were necessary to wear the other fellow down.

His left arm had been injured, so he couldn't bend the elbow for blocking. So he would keep turning his head, to stop the blows with his neck and ears. It turned those ears into grotesque deformities, but while he was in the ring he didn't mind that.

The Battler was rough. He always came into action with a two- or three-day growth of whiskers on his jowls—a trick that Jack Dempsey emulated years later. In the clinches he would

scrape those bristly whiskers against his opponent's neck and chest, time after time, in every clinch. After a bit, blood would seep through the scratched skin. His dry, wiry hair would get in the other fellow's eyes. And all the time he would be hammering away with both hands.

Rough. Tough. Never stopping. No one could hurt him, no matter how they cut and slashed his face and body into shreds. And his eyes!

Jimmy Britt said of them—and Jimmy should know, having fought Nelson four times—"They were uncanny, expressionless. They looked through you instead of at you. They were so expressionless that they might have been the eyes of a dead man. Another thing: They never blinked. When you stab a left into a fellow's nose or cross a right to his chin he can't help blinking. Nelson never did. No matter how fast the punches were coming his eyes were wide open and staring. It began to get you after a while. You began to believe that the guy wasn't human. Say, for days after a fight with Nelson I couldn't see anything but his eyes."

It's a lot to say of any man that he is the best that ever came along at his particular game. There was not a lightweight champion in the whole pack who didn't know more about boxing than Battling Nelson. There probably wasn't one who could not make a fool of him in six rounds, outpoint him in ten, have none the worse of it in fifteen.

But, if you tossed any of them into the ring with the Durable Dane in a fight to a finish, one man would be carried out and one would walk—and the walker would be Battling Nelson.

Kid Lavigne was just as game as Nelson, a harder hitter and faster on his feet. He was a rugged soul, too. Joe Walcott fairly murdered him in the early rounds of their historic fight at Maspeth. Lavigne's left ear was hanging by a shred. He was scarcely recognizable, but he fought a stern, uphill

battle and beat the Barbadoes Demon. That indicated plenty of ability to take punishment, but the Saginaw Kid didn't fight nearly as much as Nelson, nor did he last as long.

Frank Erne would have given him a good fight, but the Battler would have worn him down. Joe Gans was not far from his best when he traveled those forty-two hot rounds in the Nevada desert, yet he was on the floor at the finish—knocked out if a man ever was, even though the referee did give him the decision on a foul.

Wolgast was of the same type as Nelson and Lavigne, but he crumbled fast once the break came. Great ringman though Benny Leonard was, it isn't likely that he could have licked the Battler where harder hitters failed, and certainly he was not cut out for the finish fights that were once popular.

As for Goodrich, Kansas and Mandell, we can dismiss them as we have the others. They were not built to travel the "derby route."

Nelson was as honest as the day. There was never the faintest hint of suspicion against him in the years he waged wars in rings from New York to 'Frisco. Before the first fight with Gans at Goldfield a gambler offered him a large sum to quit. If he would "lay down" he would be independent for life.

Nelson rose up in the wildest wrath and kicked that gambler down the steps. He had no education in the accepted sense of the term, but possessed sound native intelligence. He owned a mining company, ran a town, and wrote a book in addition to winning the lightweight championship of the world, a record that many a more pretentious man might envy.

Yes, Battling Nelson was a diamond in the rough—the roughest on record.

This two-fisted slugger was, and is—you get in the habit of past tensing a fighter when he has been out of the racket very long—a generous fellow. When the San Francisco earthquake came along he sent a check for \$1,000

to the relief fund, which was a lot more than some professional philanthropists did. He once traveled clear across the continent to box in a benefit for the newsboys of New York.

No one ever won a fistic championship without passing through a lot of bitter travail, hard work and disappointment. Nelson came from nowhere to the pinnacle of athletic fame. Twenty years ago he was known as the richest fighter on record. Though his quarter of a million would not be so highly rated now, it represented a greater achievement to get it together than it was for Gene Tunney to earn his million in these days of high finance.

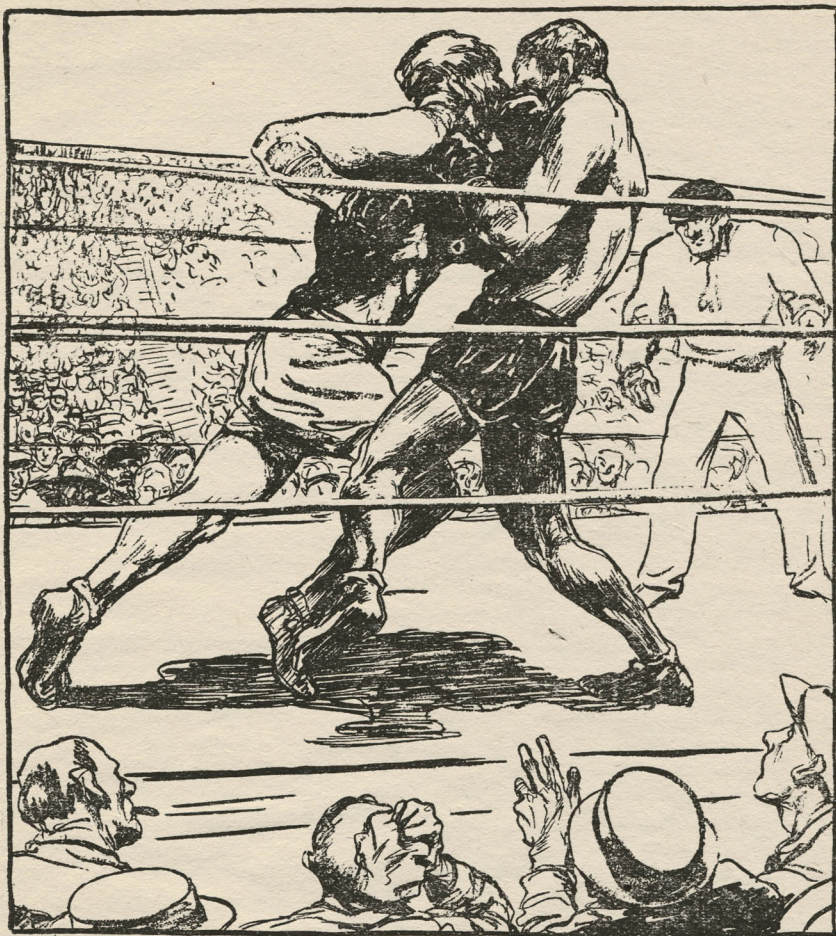
It isn't my job to paint Bat Nelson as an angel. He was anything but that. He didn't drink or smoke, but no man who has gone on the road as a kid, fought his way along as a meat-cutter, waiter, prize-fighter and what-not can be a little Lord Fauntleroy. But he was game and honest, and never whimpered. If he was an egoist he was also a doer.

And he was the greatest fighting lightweight champion we ever had.

It seems to me that there can be no dispute on this point. He fought the longest championship fights in modern history. He beat the greatest men of his time—Gans, McGovern, Britt, Corbett, Herrera, Canole, Hanlon. He took more punishment than any other champion who ever lived, and yet his unbelievable ruggedness carried him through twenty years of competition.

He was one of the most picturesque of all champions; a man who never backed up, who never believed any chap of his weight could whip him. Jack London called him "the abysmal brute." By this he meant that Battling Nelson was soaked with that basic thing that is the very center of life—movement. No matter what comes, the abysmal brute will *move*.

No one who saw Nelson in his last great effort against Wolgast can doubt that London was right. Blinded, beaten to a pulp, hopeless, almost helpless,



Nelson, following the one plan he knew, waded into the showering blows—the blows that had weakened with the passing of the rounds.

he continued to move against his foe.

The Durable Dane!

The man who coined that nickname knew what he was talking about.

There's a line of Kipling's that runs through my mind—a line describing Bendigo, a champion of England back in the bare-knuckle days:

*Bendy's short for Bendigo, you
should see him peel,*

*Half of him was whalebone and
half of him was steel.*

Steel and whalebone. That was

Battling Nelson. Rough and tough.
Ruthless and burning with ambition.

The greatest fighting lightweight
champion we've ever had!

CHAPTER II

One Dollar to the Winner

THAT Oscar Matthew Battling Nelson was born in Copenhagen, Denmark, on June 5, 1882, may or may not

have had something to do with starting him on a fighting career. That his family took him to Illinois when he was only a year old and eventually settled in Hegewisch certainly had much to do with it.

Hegewisch was a fighting town. Meat packing and ice-cutting were the principal industries, and that sort of work makes for strong muscles. When you get a lot of husky youngsters together there is bound to be fighting.

Bat quit the Henry Clay public school when he was thirteen to drive the horses used for hauling ice. He was paid ninety cents a week, which looked like a small fortune to him. His employer, John Daline, recognizing the kid's energy and trustworthiness, increased his wage until he was getting one dollar a day by the time he quit to enter the employ of the G. H. Hammond Company. For this employer Nelson became successively driver, cutter, timekeeper and assistant foreman.

The Scandinavians are a conscientious, hard-working breed. Bat never looked for any the best of it, and the hard work in the outdoors helped mould him into a much stronger youngster than his slim build indicated.

It was in September, 1896 that Wallace's circus made a one-day stand at Hammond, which is just around the corner from Hegewisch, in a manner of speaking. Practically every boy in Hegewisch walked to Hammond to see that show. Because of the hot weather the meat-cutters—of which brigade young Nelson was one—were working only three days a week. So Bat hied himself over with the gang, marched in the street parade with a banner, and afterward carried water for the elephants. For this each youngster was rewarded with passes to the show.

Wallace's circus was no dazzling affair, or wouldn't have been to metropolitan eyes. The costumes were shabby and the elephants wore a moth-eaten look, but to Battling Nelson's eager gaze it was a carnival of grandeur. Yet

an even bigger attraction than the circus itself was a supposedly world renowned pugilist, who was traveling with the show.

No one knew who this fellow was, but the circus billed him as "Wallace's Unknown." He was a tough-looking chap, compactly built and as hard as Kid Broad. I guess he was the first real prize-fighter Nelson had ever seen. At any rate, the boy was thrilled to his bones at the thought of watching him in action. Though only fourteen years old, Bat was the cock o' the walk in his home town, and already thoughts of a ring career were flickering and buzzing around in his head.

In these days they talk a lot about Gene Tunney's supreme confidence. The present heavyweight champion of the world is sure of himself, but he was never as complete an egoist as Battling Nelson, even when that young man was at the immature age of fourteen:

Quite casually he offered to fight the great unknown for the dollar given any one who lasted three rounds. Imagine the supreme gall of the youngster. So far as Nelson knew, this fellow might have been a world's champion, amusing himself by a tour incognito. His experience was limited and he didn't know that world's champions are the last people in the world to do such a thing. His ignorance made the exploit doubly daring.

Wearing a frayed red sweater and rubber-soled shoes, little Bat walked out into the sawdust arena to face the "killer." The tent was packed, and to the accompaniment of roaring lions, a band that struggled through "Down Went McGinty," and the yelps of the crowd, the greatest lightweight of them all made his fighting start.

Of course, the Unknown was not afraid of this youngster. He rushed, grimacing fiercely, intent on getting the job over and done with. Nelson met that rush squarely, his left hand held out in the approved manner. Back went the Unknown's head, his nose

streaming blood. Nelson was on top of him instantly, with a cracking right under the heart that had the professional gasping and floundering. He was game, though, and came back, but Bat again jabbed with his left, and countered with a right to the stomach. Down went the Unknown, completely out.

Old Man Wallace paid over the promised dollar, but there was little profit in that. While Bat was making his first step toward the championship of the world one of the circus hands stole his coat, which contained his week's salary of \$5.40 and a Waterbury watch.

THE circus owner wanted Bat to play the role of the "Great Unknown" for the balance of the tour. He even offered fifty dollars a week and expenses—an unparalleled offer for a fourteen-year-old in the fading days of the nineteenth century—but old Nelson wouldn't listen to it. His boy was too young for such foolishness. He must stay at home.

Well, that was all right with Bat. He was having a good time in Hegewisch and the call of the road had not yet taken hold of him.

His victory over Wallace's prize-fighter started a great interest in boxing around his neighborhood. The White House Club, an athletic organization, was started, with Nelson as the prize boxer.

The population of the town was about equally divided between Danes and Swedes. There never has been much love lost between these peoples, and the latter rallied around a rough young fellow named Ole Olson to counteract the ballyhoo the Danes were making over Nelson.

So a match was made for a purse of three dollars, and one Sunday afternoon the entire male population of Hegewisch turned out to see the fight. Olson had height, weight and reach on his rival, which about balanced the reputation Nelson had made by knocking out the

unknown. Pay envelopes were rifled for betting money, and the excitement was so great that men were taking potshots at each other all over town.

Olson knew no more about the science of boxing than Nelson did. He tore in, and Bat met him flat-footed. For two rounds Ole swarmed all over the kid. They battered away at each other like a couple of wild men. But in the third Nelson beat the Swede down with a flurry of short arm punches to the body.

That precipitated a riot. The spectators, nervously excited about the fight and keyed to a higher pitch by the short and desperate struggle, began a battle royal among themselves. Nelson went into the forefront of that, and led the Danes to victory over the Swedes.

Rough and tough. Tireless. A boy who really loved to fight!

There was too much fight talk around the Nelson household. Those hard-working and conscientious folk had no time for the ring. They saw no glory or money or advancement of any sort in it for their son. They thought he would get hurt.

Bat kept on talking, though. His two victories had brought him only four dollars, but money wasn't everything. By this time he was working as a blacksmith's helper in one of the Hegewisch shops, and the stir of adventure was whipping up his blood. You can't explain that sort of thing to your mother—not so she'll understand, anyway.

One day a flying iron fragment from a broken machine struck Bat in the face, laying it open. He was taken more dead than alive to the Mercy Hospital, where he lay unconscious for forty-eight hours. He came out a couple of weeks later, through with that sort of work. He wanted to fight.

When Mrs. Nelson protested he said, "Aw, ma! Look at the risks I ran in the shop. Boxing can't be as dangerous as that."

Somehow or other the argument didn't convince her, and a few days

after his fifteenth birthday Batling Nelson ran away from home.

He beat his way by slow stages to Huron, South Dakota. Most of the romance had gone out of the road for him by that time. There was no fighting to do in that part of the country, except the street corner kind that always crops up when hot-blooded youth gets together.

So Bat went to work as a helper in a butcher shop at fifteen dollars a month. That was his occupation until Christmas, when, his demand for five dollars a month more being refused, he tossed up the job and went to work as a cowboy on a nearby ranch.

The war with Spain came down like a thunderclap on the country. Everyone was in a fervor of patriotic excitement. A volunteer company was formed in Huron. They weren't finicky about a person's age, so Bat Nelson slipped in, and became a soldier overnight. The warriors traveled down to Sioux Falls, where, for some reason or other, the captain was rejected, and his men, who had agreed to follow him to the finish, returned home with him.

That visit to Sioux Falls gave Nelson an idea. There was a boxing club there, and Bat had by no means decided to give up the game. He finished up the winter months as a waiter in the Vanderbilt Hotel in Miller, but when spring began to tint the world with green he went to Sioux Falls.

At that time a shifty, raw-boned, long-armed fellow named Freddy Green was the particular pet and idol of the fans. He was called "the champion of the Dakotas." Nelson had never heard of him until he wandered into the Falls. It wouldn't have made any difference if he had. The idea never entered his shaggy head that he need be afraid of any one. His blue eyes would not have wavered had he been tossed in with Kid Lavigne, then lightweight champion of the world.

The manager of the club was glad to match Bat with Freddy Green, since

there were not so many fighters around who wanted to risk themselves with that young man.

"All right, kid," he said, "I'll take a chance with you. If you make good I'll let you fight Soldier Williams next day at our annual picnic."

No more ragged red sweaters and baggy trousers as a fighting costume for Battling Nelson. He bought himself regulation ring shoes and a pair of green trunks.

Sixteen! In that short span of time a boxer, cowboy, soldier, casual worker—Yes, Nelson took life by the throat in his tenderest years.

Now, against the champion of the Dakotas, he was to make his debut in a real ring, in real fighting togs—quite sure that he had taken the first step toward the goal that beckoned him on since he stood watching Wallace's Unknown writhe and squirm in the sawdust of the "big top."

CHAPTER III

The Lure of the Game

GREEN was a boxer. He danced around the awkward youngster, poking him with a left jab, then slipping away. It was all new stuff to Nelson. The Unknown and Olson had rushed at him as eagerly as he went at them. This was a different sort of game.

Bat kept chasing, and Freddy kept sprinting and outboxing him. In the fourth round the blood spurted from Nelson's nose under the continuous thumping. It made him wild with rage, for it was the first time such an indignity had been visited upon him. But only in the clinches could he do any effective work. The rest of the time he was missing too frequently.

Then Nelson proved that he had ring instinct as well as courage. He was beginning to get a little weary. So he laid back, and Green, under the impression that the kid was all in, hast-

ened to the slaughter. He stopped boxing and started to trade punches. That was where he made his mistake.

The Dane met him with a volley of body blows that struck Freddy with panic and forced him to hang on. The bell saved him further punishment.

The seventh round saw the finish. Green came out a pretty weak and tired lad. He tried to back-pedal, but Nelson was at him like a catamount, whanging away with both hands.

A left hook to the jaw finally turned the trick, and the champion of the Dakotas went down for the long count.

The manager collected \$7.50 by passing the hat among the spectators, and asked Bat if he was willing to fight Soldier Williams at the picnic next day. He offered to raise the ante to ten dollars.

In these days careful athletic commissions will not permit boxers to go into the ring without several days rest, and many a fighter thinks one bout a month pretty strenuous campaigning. Not this rough young fellow from Hegewisch. Though stiff and a little tired from the hard scrap of the night before, Nelson rose early, and hied himself to the picnic grounds. His victory over Green was a tonic that lifted him to the heights.

Williams knew no more about boxing than Nelson did. He came out of his corner, both hands swinging. The Battler met him with a grin of pure joy. That sort of stuff was right down his alley. He doted on it.

But Williams was strong as a bull and much the more experienced man. Up to the sixth round he had a bit the better of it. He was weakening, though. The pace was faster than he was used to. On the other hand, Nelson had no tire in him and kept coming faster and faster.

In the seventh Bat landed a sharp right to the stomach, then stepped back to see if the Soldier would follow him. Instead, the puffing warrior retreated. "Ah, ha," said Nelson to himself.

"You're a quitter, are you?" He came rushing back once, with a whirl of hooks, crosses and uppercuts to face and body. Williams wilted under it, tried to run, and was saved by the bell as Green had been the night before.

The respite was only temporary. The eighth round was not a minute old before the referee counted him out, and Battling Nelson had scored his fourth straight knockout.

ABOUT that time the kid began to get a bit homesick. He was only sixteen, after all, and he wanted to see his folks and chum around with the boys. So he rode the freights back to Hegewisch, where he was given the time honored welcome of the prodigal son.

Even the earth-worn Nels Nelson must have realized that his son was a youngster with the sort of determination that brooked no stopping. Bat wanted to be a fighter. Neither his father's anger nor his mother's tears could stop him. If they thought he was following a dreary track to the rainbow's end, the boy had a different idea. So verbal opposition was dropped and Nelson made a fistic reappearance before the home folks.

He boxed a six-round draw with Eddie Herman in Hegewisch, and the draw decision was nothing in the way of a break for him. Eddie, a smart boxer, made a fool of Bat for the first three rounds. After that the Dane battered him from pillar to post, and at the finish Herman was a gory sight. Had the bout been scheduled for ten rounds Nelson would undoubtedly have scored another knockout.

So far he had given no thought to the big cities. Confident as he was of his own ability, he knew that outside his own bailiwick and up in Dakota, he was not a drawing card. But now he turned those blue eyes of his on Chicago.

Hegewisch is one of the many small towns that snuggle around the south-

ern outposts of that city. It isn't so much of a trip into the Loop, and at the moment Nelson had no desire for long and tiresome trips.

Eddie Penny had been cleaning up most of the second-rate lightweights in Chicago. He didn't feel any call to be afraid of the tow-headed kid from Hegewisch, and when a match was offered he willingly agreed. They met on the South Side and Bat's victory was quite as decisive as the first one over Wallace's Unknown.

Nelson walked right into Penny, battered him with both hands and finished him off in less than a round. In the following month he stopped Bull Winters in even a shorter time, and topped off his Chicago debut by knocking out a fellow named John Smith in the second.

These three victories netted him exactly fifteen dollars, the method of paying a fighter at that time being to pass the hat. Since all of Bat's victims were favorites of the crowd, the folks assembled were not in a mood to give him much reward.

Nelson wasn't discouraged. Nothing could discourage him. Though the rewards of the moment were meagre, indeed, he knew that ringmen did earn large sums of money. If other men had done that, he could, too, the boy reasoned. He felt that destiny had pointed him out.

But for more than a year no fights came his way. He stayed home and worked, trained at the old White House Club, and took one gorgeous hunting trip in the Northwest. The outdoor life and hard physical work and consistent training were building him up. He was only eighteen and had plenty of time ahead of him.

THE year of 1900 marked the end of Nelson's sporadic ring efforts. He began to fight regularly. He started on the first step of the ladder.

He agreed to fight a negro named Feathers Vernon at Dalton, Illinois.

Six rounds for ten dollars. It wasn't much of a fight, for Feathers ran and ducked and clinched throughout. Bat was given the decision. Just as the president of the club was about to hand him the ten dollars a fight started. The money was knocked out of his hand. Nelson managed to retrieve a dollar and a half, but the bill was so badly torn that he was not able to pass it.

Though his financial reward for that bout was only fifty cents, it was not entirely a wasted day. In the free-for-all Nelson went to work and whipped half a dozen men for the sheer pleasure of it.

Then, glory of glories, the manager of the Star Theater in Chicago offered him fifteen dollars for a windup match with Charley Dougherty! It was like a gift of the gods. Nelson accepted with avidity, and knocked Dougherty out in a round.

They brought him back for a bout with Joe Hedmark.

The fight with Hedmark was the first bit of tragedy to come into Nelson's career. Afterward he said that Joe was a combination of Terry McGovern and Dal Hawkins. An exaggeration, certainly, but he must have seemed something like that to the inexperienced country boy.

At any rate Hedmark was strong, fast, and a good puncher. He was taller, stronger, and had been in the game much longer. Nelson fought harder than he had done in any of his other battles, but was doomed to defeat from the start.

As usual, Bat came out swinging, and Hedmark let go a right uppercut with every ounce of his strength behind it. Down went Battling Nelson for the first time in his life. It was a greater indignity than the blood Freddy Green had drawn from his nose. He came up, clawing like a wildcat, mad clean through.

Nelson kept going forward all the time, but he couldn't reach his target, and Joe pelted away with both hands at

his face and ribs. They finished the last round fighting like madmen in the center of the ring, but there was no dissenting voice when the referee raised Hedmark's hand. He had won with plenty to spare, and even Battling Nelson admitted it.

In the matter of knockdowns it probably set a record. Hedmark dropped the Dane seventeen times in six rounds, and in turn was floored on five occasions. Twenty-two visits to the canvas in a six-round bout ought to be a record, if it isn't one.

Nelson was paid fifteen dollars—or about eighty-eight cents a knockdown. You can hardly buy that sort of thing today at any price.

Just a week later Bat went on with Harry Griffin in the same ring and dropped his opponent thirteen times without being able to put him away. When you consider there were thirty-five knockdowns in twelve rounds of fighting it's easy to understand why Nelson was becoming popular with the Chicago crowds.

His remaining fights in 1900 were successful enough from an artistic but not a financial standpoint. Young Bay, one of the best lightweights in the Middle West; Clarence Class, Ed Burley, Danny McMahon, Black Griffo and Jack Martin caused him no particular trouble. Pete Boyle, when on the verge of being stopped, was awarded the fight on a foul by Referee George Siler.

The day he lost to Boyle, Nelson, for the only time in his life, fought two battles in one day. As soon as he had been disqualified, he changed into his street clothes, hopped a trolley car, and went to the Hibernian Club, where he fought four rounds with McMahon.

For these fights Nelson was paid ten dollars. That wasn't cake and coffee money even in those days.

The Battler was beginning to find out one thing. He wasn't cut out for the six-round game. He needed distance in which his superb vitality would give him a chance to come from behind. The

clever men could outbox him over the short route. Even the frailer ones would not tire much in six rounds.

Fifteen rounds. Twenty. Finish fights. That was the dream lurking in his tousled head even then, but in his section of the country six rounds was the standard. Had it been the standard everywhere Battling Nelson would never have risen to fame. He would have been just another strong, rough mediocrity. They couldn't possibly know that in a finish fight he was the greatest lightweight of them all.

CHAPTER IV

The Fight at Rheinlander

NOBODY knew that, of course. The promoters knew it least of all, apparently, for up to this time the largest sum he had been paid for a fight was thirty-five dollars. Then, quite unexpectedly, Nelson went up into the three-figure class.

He fought a tough young Irishman named Mickey Riley in Milwaukee for a guarantee of thirty-five dollars. Mickey was pretty smart and kept out of reach for the six rounds. The referee gave him the decision, and it was a most unpopular one. Following the storm of hoots and boos came a rain of silver and small bills. The Battler netted \$98.31, which was approximately the value of the United States treasury, in his eyes.

Lurking in his simple heart was the desire to be a Beau Brummel. After the fight he togged himself out in a seven-dollar suit, a derby and a new pair of shoes, and trod the boulevards to give the natives a treat.

You must understand that even so rugged a soul as Battling Nelson could not possibly have lived on his ring earnings at that time, even with such occasional windfalls. He was working for the Hawley Down Draft Furnace Company on the North Side of Chicago,

swinging a sledge for eight hours a day. That was all the training he got. Gymnasiums and road work and balanced diets were beyond his range. On the afternoon of fight night he would get off early for a bath and haircut, and was ready to go any distance. When he traveled to Milwaukee he took the whole day off.

His brother Johnny and Charley Peterson used to come up from Hegewisch to second him, so there was no money wasted on handlers. There couldn't be, for Bat made it a rule to send half his purses to his mother.

After the victories there was little margin for celebration, either, except for a meal at Flynn Brothers' restaurant on State Street. The Flynnns were big-hearted Irishmen, and they liked the tow-headed kid from Hegewisch. If he had money he could pay. If he didn't they "wrote it on the ice."

Early in May, 1901, Nelson went to Omro, a little Wisconsin town, to fight Harry Fails. It was only a six-round no-decision affair, but it was so bitterly contested that the fans demanded an encore.

That was satisfactory to all parties save the sheriff of the county. The sheriff, himself, was not particularly opposed to a little setto, but he had been given orders to stop it. If he didn't, off would come his official head. He also informed the fighters that if they went through with the bout he would personally see that they served a little time in the penitentiary.

That scared both the boys. They were eager to fight, but didn't want to get in trouble over it. The fellows promoting the affair decided that they could all go over to Rheinlander, just across the county line, and then the sheriff could not interfere.

All the horsedrawn vehicles in Omro were hired, and they started out. In the excitement no provision was made to transport the fighters. All the rigs were full. Nobody offered them a seat. Some of the bigger-hearted bumpkins

said they could ride on the laps of the passengers if they had a mind to. Both Harry and Bat decided to walk. They thought it would be good training.

Suddenly it began to snow, hard. It came down so thick and fast that they could hardly see fifty feet ahead of them. An icy wind was whipping down from the North, and there was four or five miles to go.

Bat had never seen snow in May before. He had no overcoat, and the seven-dollar suit was no great protection against the elements. By the time the boys reached the barn where they were to fight they were so stiff with the cold that they could hardly move. The barn itself was a pretty chilly place, no spot for a man in nothing but trunks and shoes to stand around.

Every one of the spectators had a bet down, and the gangling fellow who owned the place was appointed referee. The crowd howled through the ten rounds. Bat and Harry were stirred by the excitement, but more by their rivalry and the need to keep warm. They fought like a couple of bob-cats. At the finish they were both strong and fit.

The referee raised both their right hands, exclaiming, "Even up, boys—hang fiddle if she wasn't!"

No purse had been arranged for. Fighters in those days weren't very good business men, you know. But the Wisconsin fans were sports, and realized that they had been treated to a great scrap. They began to toss money into the ring, and the erstwhile enemies, turning from blows to finance, began scrambling over the floor to pick it up. There were a lot of cracks, and some of the coins rolled into them.

The money had been too hard-earned to let it escape so easily. They borrowed a hammer and pinch-bar, and pried up the boards, so that not a penny would be missed. When it was all piled up and divided they each had \$150. It was the biggest purse so far, and one that Nelson was not to better for nearly

two years. That's how slow progress was for the greatest lightweight of them all.

BAT did practically no fighting again until the fall of that year, when he started campaigning in Milwaukee again, first with the Italian, Joe Percente, then with that cagy veteran, Eddie Santry. Santry, incidentally, later became Bat's sparring partner, when the Durable Dane rose high enough in fistic ranks to have such luxuries.

The fight was held at the Pyramid Athletic Club, and Nelson battered the veteran around from start to finish. He took every round, and in the sixth knocked Eddie down. As a matter of fact Santry was on the floor when the last bell sounded, and the referee had to help him to his feet before lifting his right glove in the sign of victory.

Astounded, Bat rushed over and grasped the official by the arm. "What's the idea?" he yelled. "I won, didn't I?" "Why, Nelson," the referee said, "Santry told me that everything was fixed up; that he was to get the decision whatever happened."

That was the Durable Dane's first meeting with anything shady in the ring. All his fights were on the level. No suggestions one way or another had been made to him. He later found that there are plenty of pitfalls dug for un-

wary feet, that there are sharks in every line of business. But it was a staggering jolt to him then.

Nelson finished off the year's campaigning by knocking out a middleweight named Mike Walsh, and losing a point decision to Charley Berry. The last fight came just before Christmas.

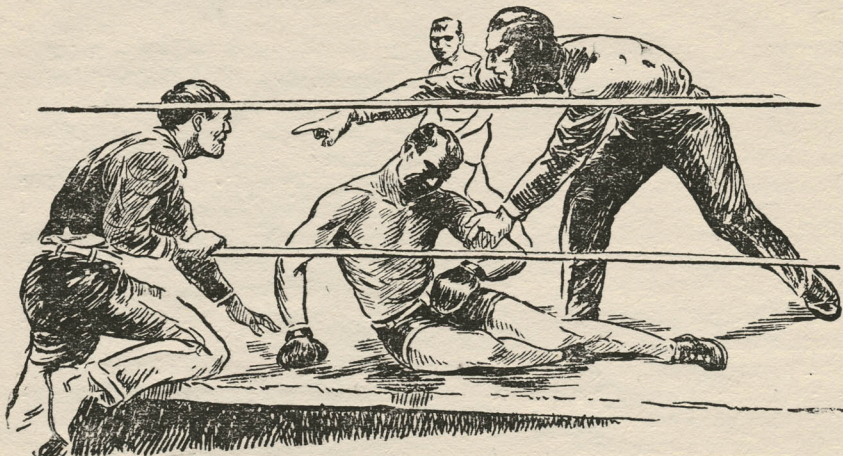
The holiday spirit stirred him. Bat was always sentimental about Christmas. Even when he became champion of the world he never failed to get home for the holidays or to hang up his stocking so that his old mother could fill it with presents.

Well, here he was back home. There were six years of sporadic fighting behind him. He was twenty years old, and getting a little battered. He had no money to speak of, the fifty dollars he carried in his pocket representing the sum total of his wealth. He had no trade. He seemed to be getting nowhere. In his heart Bat felt as sure of success as ever, but so far there was no outward signs of it.

On Christmas morning Dad Nelson called his boy into the little parlor, and said, "Now, listen, Bat, I want that you should stop dis fighting. Mother und me ve talk it over. You had your chance und make nothin' of it. Now, before you leaf home again you must promise. No more fightin'!"

That Christmas Day conversation almost deprived the ring of its greatest lightweight champion. The next installment tells how an argument between two men he didn't even know kept Battling Nelson at his trade. It tells, too, of his one-second knockout over Billy Rosser; of the one man Nelson never could beat; of the rawest deal he ever got; of his discovery of the left-half scissors-hook, and his debut on the "big time" against Canole, Hanlon, Herrera, Corbett and Jimmy Britt.

BATTLIN' BEPPO



By T. W. FORD

Fighting was his middle name, but there was one thing wrong with Battling Beppo. He couldn't get mad. Then, one night, with the cards stacked against him—!

Complete Fight Novelet

DEMPSEY was a pork-and-beaner and Gene Tunney should have been between a pair of sandwich boards. Believe it or not. At least, that was accordin' to a certain prize palooka I handled a few years back. He went under the moniker of Beppo an' he had the chief attributes of a heavyweight—the weight an' the dumbness. But, mister, it was a different kind of dumbness. A big, deep, dense kind. He was dumb enough to think he was a world-beater—an' too dumb to see why he wasn't. Say, mister, put me up against any ordinary brand of that product, an' you can give odds on me. But this guy's kind, it had me beat from the opening gong.

It was this way. Me, I'm Harry Higgins, manager. You all heard of me. Sure. Some wise folks call me "Lighthead Harry" but I never see no connection. My hair's always been black an' I never thought of dyein' it.

Yeah, maybe they're jealous. Well, as I was sayin', right about this time I'm handlin' a stable of leather-pushers at Clancy's Gym—no near champs or anything, but jus' good, hard-workin' boys what was meal-tickets at more'n one Harlem fight club.

Well, one mornin' a couple of the pugs was takin' exercise on each other's mugs, when I glims a big, tow-headed bozo takin' in the show from the side door. Now I wasn't at the point where I could rake in any of that easy graft by chargin' admission for the show my boys put on in trainin'. So I pays no more attention to the gent.

I had lunch with Jakie McCoy that day. I remember, because he wanted me to throw a fight to his boy up at the Half Moon A. C. that week. I wouldn't. He wasn't offerin' enough. Anyway, when I gets back from chow, the tow-head was still doin' duty. I walks up to him, feelin' pretty

good with the cigar I grafted from Jakie.

"Lookin' for a job, kid?" I asks.

He shifts his carcass around gentle an' looks me over like I'm the janitor. "No," he comes back short. "No, thanks. I'm a fighter."

Right away I spots him as one of them big, blue-eyed, corn-fed babies from somewhere in Indiana or water-tanks west. "Oh," I says, openin' my eyes wide an' innocent. "A fighter. Well—well! A fighter." I takes a draw on Jakie's cigar. "Want to step a few rounds?"

"Yes," says he an' settles back against the wall again to watch those sons of Maul swap punches. "But not with them undertaker's dummies."

I looks him over with my professional eye. One of them hard-cut, juttin' heads like a gunboat cleavin' the waves. Nice pair of shoulders, sort of stooped like they'd followed a plough. He tapers right down to the hips, even in them baggy clothes he was wearin'. An', though he was leanin' against the wall, he seems to stand light an' poised easy on his dogs. Well, he had the ear-marks.

I was all set to open up an' get some of the dope from him when I hears a yell from across the gym an' looks up. Shocker Coffee, one of the comin' heavies I had, had jus' kissed the canvas. Not out or anything, jus' down hard. The Shocker had fought a tough go with the Savannah Tar Baby couple of nights ago an' he was still some shook up. He waves to Iron Jaw McCabe—he was sparrin' with him—he's had enough an' climbs through the ropes for the showers.

I throws a word the Shocker's way as he passes an' turns back to find this tow-head gent laughin'. He points at the Shocker's back, an' I notices the size of his mitts. Big an' square.

"Them kind of babies ought to be peddlin' shoelaces," he cracks, laughin' some more.

Jus' then Iron Jaw comes up. He

overhears the remark an' looks this baby up an' down. Iron Jaw was as square as they come and the Shocker's buddy. Every Saturday night he lays twenty cold on the Shocker an' never squawks a groan when he shells out. Well, he looks at this guy an' speaks up.

"That's right, buddy, an' you'll never sell none here."

"What's that?" the tow-head yells, flushin' in the neck.

Iron Jaw squares around, shovin' out his under lip which not more'n twenty ham-an'-eggers has thickened for him. Iron Jaw always lasts the full route, so you can figure that lip is pretty good. "Say, don't they speak English where you hang your hat?" he inquires.

"Mebbe," the tow-head comes back. An' I notice he ain't leanin' against the wall no more.

"Well," an' Iron Jaw walks up close to him, "I said get out!"

The tow-head don't get excited none. Instead, he jus' looks over the Iron Jaw like he was something marked "\$1.98—Cheap" in one of them second-hand clothes dens on Eighth Avenue. Then he turns to me, smiling. It was easy to see he ain't mad, or even sore.

"Punch drunk, eh. Sends a lot of 'em nuts."

Ordinarily, Iron Jaw's jus' like any other fighting man. He don't pick scraps. When he fights, he wants to get paid for it. But that one caught him low. It was less than a month since he buys some oil stock. An' it turns out that what was behind that stock was good for drinking maybe, but not much for lubricating. Right then some of the boys had begun to remark as how Iron Jaw had been stoppin' a pile of punches with his head. Iron Jaw has heard some of them cracks. So this one don't help none at all.

It was like walkin' into a bull's boudoir in red underwear. It's Iron Jaw's turn to get hot now. An' he does. He stalks back to the ring, proud an' snarlin' low through that hole where some

teeth were missin'. He climbs through the ropes, sheds his robe, an' turns to the tow-head.

"You want to step this way, mister," he bawls out, "an' I'll drink a few of them punches of yours."

The kid grins at me an' says: "Worse than I thought."

Iron Jaw gets that one, too, right on the button. He comes back for more with the only wise-crack I ever heard him pull.

"Most hicks are green," he sings out at this guy. "You're different. You look yella to me."

Well, that's enough to start a pretty good war any place. The tow-head grins some more at me, an' then begins strippin' off his coat. "Ain't had a work-out today an' I might jus' as well," he explains.

One of the boys digs him up a pair of trunks an' it ain't long before he's in the ring with Iron Jaw. Now get me right. Iron Jaw may be old. An' he's seen better days. But there's more sore hands come from tryin' to crack his jaw than from the rock pile at Sing Sing. Also, despite the fact that he sops up punishment like a thirsty sponge, he carries a right-hand punch that reminds the boys of Cain handlin' Abel the works, when it lands.

WELL, they're in there. This tow-head bozo ain't worried none, an' he don't seem mad. Somebody cracks the gong one, an' they're at it. Iron Jaw comes wadin' in like a truck horse with fallen arches, that round-house right cocked for the fall of Rome. The tow-head—an' I didn't make no mistake about his build; it's pretty—starts prancin' around, shootin' light lefts at Iron Jaw's head. Might jus' as well waste time ticklin' a battleship under a port hole. Iron Jaw unleashes the right swing a couple of times. But the kid steps away from it like it was bad news. Jus' once he fools Iron Jaw an' rolls under it, comin' up to poke one in the bread basket that'd help no

man's indigestion. That was the first round.

Iron Jaw goes into the second madder'n ever. An' the tow-head ain't sore atall. Jus' prances around grinnin' an' pokin' a neat left into Iron Jaw's eye. I'm gettin' a good line on the kid. I sees he's flashy, with plenty of speed an' good footwork. He back-pedals like a champ an' he counters plenty. But they're all light. What that bozo needs is a punch. Every once in a while he steps in an' shoots one hard. But he's firin' from long distance an' when his glove lands, it's at the end of his reach. No sting in them kind.

They clinch an' I sees the tow-head's mouth movin'. I don't know jus' what he says, but it was mean. For Iron Jaw backs off mad. Like the time the ump gave him a raw decision up in Yonkers an' they called out the dicks. . . . He plows in, primed for manslaughter, an' nails the kid in a corner.

Right then's where I learn this kid can take it. Iron Jaw hits him with everything in the book, takin' turns at his head an' his tummy. But instead of pullin' his chin into his shoulder an' coverin' up hard, the tow-head tries to box. He picks some of them off in the air an' blocks a few more. But Iron Jaw's landin' hard an' plenty an' there ain't no room to back pedal. Easy to see the kid hasn't done much fightin'.

I was thinkin' of stoppin' the slaughter before the kid goes down when I notices it's Iron Jaw who's breathin' hard an' wobblin'. He's hit the kid so many times he's groggy from throwin' punches. He breaks ground to the middle of the ring an' the tow-head comes out. Does he tear in an' put the K. O. on the founderin' Iron Jaw? Does he rush him around an' hand him the works before he gets set again?—Oh, no. This baby's a boxer an' out to show the world he is. The big dumb-bell stands there sparrin' with a occasional light left to the head. Then I glims that sick grin on his face again—an' he makes me mad. Conceit's

written all over him. This mangy, correspondence-school shadow boxer!

I was standin' near the light switch an' right then I gives Iron Jaw the high sign. He was so groggy I had to flash it four times before he catches it. He finally does an' nods. Right away he begins backin' up again. I see him cock the old right like a coffin nail an' I presses the button.

When the lights goes on again, the boys was throwing water into the tow-head's mug an' stickin' the smellin' salts under his bugle. Iron Jaw had connected perfect with that right swing in the dark. The kid's eyes finally rolls back an' opens, light blue an' innocent.

"Somebody turned off the lights," he croaks.

"Oh, no," I comes right back. "That was the punch. Turned off *your* lights, maybe. Ha—ha, that's a good one boys," I laughs.

Well, mister, that hick's so dumb, he falls for it. Jus' sits there an' rubs his jaw. Iron Jaw's worked all the soreness outa his system an' steps over to me.

"That baby ain't bad," he says.

Comin' from Iron Jaw, that's a lot. Any baby he puts down is rotten, in his opinion. I steps up to Mister Tow-Head an' tells the boys to quit drownin' him.

"Where you fought before, Kid?" I asks him.

Right then he puffs out his chest an' straightens up. "Oh, I done a lot of fightin'," he says important. "I fought Knockout Hogan in Kankakee. Knocked him out. Got a decision with Young Johnson at Rice's Corners. Took Louie Solomon at Rochester in the pre-lim. Got a draw with Jack Milligan at Hammondston. Over at Cortlandt, I licked Dynamite Lynch. Also Joe Corres, an' Sailor Cook an'—"

I cuts him off. Right away, I had this bird's number. He was a small-town pug what had tipped over a few nobodies in places you never heard of.

He thought he was good an' classy. Any sluggin' bean-eater with a few tricks could take him. But he didn't know it. Yet, he had a lot of speed, seems like he was naturally shifty, an' had a pretty set-up.

"Say," I says, "my name's Higgins. You heard of me, probably. I handled Porky Nelson, who was almost welter champ back in '15. If it hadn't been for the war—Now I know this game, backwards an' forwards. You ain't good—but you ain't bad. Maybe—with a little luck—I could make a fighter outa you. What do y' say?"

"Well," he says serious, "I been tryin' to see Mr. Rickard for the last few days. I'd kinda like to talk to him—"

"Oh, Tex," I cuts in. "Yeah, well I guess I can get you to see him any time. Me an' Tex," an' I crosses my fingers.

I got him in the office an' begin to make out the contract. "Fifty-fifty," I says, "an' what's the name?"

"Albon Wittleton Beppo," he says proud-like.

"The deuce it is," I fires back. "Battlin' Beppo," I writes.

Well, he looks over the papers a bit, holdin' them right-side up, provin' he could read. "All right," he says slow, "but there ain't no mention made of a championship bout. You know—with Tunney—or Dempsey or some one."

"Yeah, I know," I says.

CHAPTER II

Ten and Out

I'LL tell you right now, I wasn't doin' I no weepin' or gnashin' of teeth for signing Battlin' Beppo into my stable. No sir, mister. He had a pair of them flat, straight legs like Dempsey's. An' when the Manassa Mauler was at the top, he sure had a pretty pair of pins. Then there was them wide, slopin' shoulders with power behind 'em, an'

the kid's natural ability. Well, I was feelin' good for the next two weeks an' even dreamin' about how good I'd photograph standin' next to the challenger for the title.

You see, it didn't take me more'n a day to find out the kid had no use for booze. Seems his old man had hit it pretty hard or something. . . As for the dames, his only regret was he never had a chance to get the original Eve—by the throat. One look at them clean, straight eyes an' that open face would show you he wasn't lyin'.

For almost a month, I works on him, showin' him how to put some pepper in that jab, how to stand in an' hammer them punches so they connects with steam. I takes him down off his toes a bit. He was up so far, dancin' around on them, he never could get set for a swat. For three days steady, I ties his left to his side an' makes him hit with that right duke. He's beginnin' to get the trick now.

Footwork I couldn't show him nothin' about. He could sidestep 'em an' back pedal an' dance pretty. His feet were fast an' always set to get away. An' he could pick off punches in the air like a no-hit champ. In a week he knew how to tie up a guy in the clinches. Yeah, he learned fast an' seemed to like it.

Iron Jaw was workin' with him every day, regular. They'd gotten over their grudge now an' pals around like brothers. Iron Jaw works him hard, shows him how to gouge a man's eye, how to warm up the kidneys in a clinch, how to stick an elbow in a fella's arm, an' a pile of other helpful tricks. An' it was Iron Jaw who put me wise to him.

"Say," Iron Jaw says to me one day as he was workin' in his false teeth, "this guy won't hook no more. He says Dempsey hooked an' look where it got him."

"Yeah," I ponders. "What's he wanta do?"

"Jab an' straight punch," Iron Jaw

explains. "Says that beats a hook seven days a week."

I corners Beppo a little later an' asks him about it. "Now listen here," I tells him in a fatherly way, "you never see no gents kissin' the rosin from jabs or offa straight punches. They're all right in their way. Dempsey hooked an' what was the matter with him?"

"Oh, he was pretty good," the kid admits, serious. "Pretty good."

"Yeah," I leads him on.

"But he was jus' one of the blind hitters. No science. No skill. Now some day I'll get up against a guy like that an' I'll tie him up an' run him dizzy with sheer boxin' superiority."

"Yeah," I encourages.

"Sure," he runs on, "jus' slip inside them hooks or pick 'em off on the arms. Easy. Now when I meet one of them champs—"

JUST one month after I signed the kid up, he was listed for a four-round prelim at the Atlas Sporting Club. I was plannin' to send him up against Fireman Jack Jones, a slow pork-and-beaner not much better than a set-up, when Jakie McCoy collars me one night. Jakie had a kid on his string, jus' a slow palooka, so he says. So we paired 'em up.

The kid was awful nervous in the locker room but when the announcer knocked him down to the crowd, he warms up fast an' gets enthusiastic. They gave him a good hand an' that seems to put steam in him. I'll admit he looked pretty under them pale purple lights with his short black trunks an' that body cut like a clean wedge.

Battlin' Beppo against Babe Luke! I take a shot at this Luke guy of Jakie's an' smell a rat. If that so-called green palooka ain't seen the inside of a hundred rings, I don't know the difference between a one-two to the body an' a bottle of liniment. Besides, Jakie's lookin' too pleased over in his corner.

Well, I don't worry much. My boy looks good, is good, an' acts good. I

shoot a few last words in his ear before they give 'em the gong. "Box him the first two. Then step in an' catch him comin'. Don't hurry an' keep your chin in. Take your time, if you go down."

"Sure," he comes back. "I'll jus' play with him."

Well, as I was sayin', Battlin' Beppo looks great in the ring. That is, while he was there. They meet in the center an' jus' feel around for a minute. This Luke guy's a hard-lookin' sinner an' he carries his right cocked low. His left's slow—too slow to be true. That's how I figure.

Still, I ain't sweatin' none. My boy's prancin' around easy, an' stickin' that jab in plenty, with every once an' a while a hook. His big white shoulders gleam an' he's carryin' his blond head confident. There's an openin' an' he digs a straight left to the tummy. The old trick, though. He don't get close enough. There wasn't enough on that one to shake a rabbit.

But this Luke baby drops his guard an' wraps his mitts around his groin, below the belt. His head drops an' he groans something that sounds like "foul." Right then's where Battlin' Beppo lives up to his rep—or maybe lays the foundation stone for it.

He drops his hands an' sticks out his head, dumblike. He half turns to me, not knowing what to do. Any one could see that Luke gent wasn't hurt none, any one but Mister Battlin' Beppo. He turns back jus' in time.

Yeah, jus' in time to stop a round-house right that started from the floor. A left comes off the shoelaces after it an' the massacre is complete. Battlin' Beppo hits the floor in a very peaceful position. An' Jakie McCoy trots around to collect that *friendly* little "ten" we lays on the bout.

Down in the locker room, I tells Beppo all about it, from beginnin' to finish. He don't do nothin'; he wasn't even mad.

"Well," he says when I finish the story, "hard luck, but that wasn't a im-

portant fight, anyway. An' a champ would never pull that stuff."

"Let 'em pull another like that on you," I snaps back, mad, "an' you'll never get far enough to find what a champ does do."

IF risin' above discouragement makes a great scrapper, this Beppo gent would 'a been John L. Sullivan, Jack Johnson an' Mister Dempsey rolled in one. What I didn't tell that kid durin' the next week about how bum he was, wasn't worth mentionin'. I went on the warpath bad. I had Iron Jaw workin' on him an' what he didn't finish in the mornin' session, he completes in the afternoon go. He showed every dirty trick of the game to the kid by pullin' it on him. An' he unlimbered the heavy artillery right more times than he ever had in his life. Then I give the kid a two-day layoff an' match him with Gashouse Gans.

This Gashouse gent is the steppin' stone for every pug in town. He ain't got nothin' but a glass jaw an' some flashy-lookin' stunts like bouncin' off the ropes. Well, Battlin' Beppo takes him, by decision, an' the fans were yellin' for rain checks after it was over. Every round but the sixth the kid had him on the edge of a knockout an' hangin' on for life. But he don't put over the K. O. In the sixth Gashouse is so surprised at still bein' there, he steps in an' swings an' almost hangs one on the kid.

If I wasn't so soft-hearted, I'd 'a dropped this Beppo gent right then an' there, without ever givin' him his carfare downtown. Still, if looks meant anything, he had the makings of a good fighter. I got him in a corner an' asks what was the matter.

"Well, Higgins, it was this way," he says. "I could 'a dropped him—easy. But I wanted to show the boys I could go the route."

Mister, can you beat that one? Anyway, gettin' desperate, I signs him on with one Joe Flynn, a tough, wild-

swingin' bird who always carries the fight. I figures maybe a tough match will rouse Beppo into doin' something. An' I gets the kid primed for action an' tells him to step it from the first bell.

He does, Fine. Even surprises me. He's steppin' in pretty an' shootin' them punches across snappy. Iron Jaw's taught him a fast cross an' he gets it over twice in the first. The second's the same way. He bores right in, feintin' an' openin' an' sockin'. He's lettin' Flynn hit wild an' steppin' around him. He goes out smilin' for the third an' bowin' to the crowd an' starts boxin'. I leap up an' yell for him to get out an' fight. He does.

Then Flynn closes his eyes an' shoots one. It catches the kid on the button an' I can see his knees sag. Still, I wasn't scared. He could clinch an' hang on till he's out of it. Does he? No! That brainless, one-track-minded palooka keeps on walkin' in an' hittin'.

The rest don't need to be told. Flynn sees he's groggy an' his punches weak. He leaves himself wide open, uncoils a haymaker from his heel. Well, after the ref finishes countin' up to ten, an' I'm holdin' the smellin' salts under this kid's nose an' thinkin' what a waste of time it is, he opens his eyes an' starts to explain.

"—an' you told me to carry it to him," he ends up.

"Yeah, an' I ought to tell you to jump off Brooklyn Bridge. Listen. What do you think a guy like Tunney would do in there? Cover up, you half-wit, cover up! Plenty."

"Oh, Tunney," he yawns, gettin' into his bathrobe. "Well, now, Higgins, he ain't so good. He—"

to leave go of anything. Anyway, I kept Battlin' Beppo on. An' in the gym, he looked like a champ. Speed, punch, an' confidence. Yeah, confidence. He always had an alibi. He was too dumb to know it.

One day he comes up to me readin' the account of last night's bout at the Garden. "Look here, Higgins," he chirps up. "Them two babies last night pulls down one quarter of the gate receipts apiece. An' it was a hundred-thousand-dollar house. Twenty-five thousand smackers! Gee!"

"Yeah," I counters, "an' what does that mean to you?"

"Oh," he says, "some day I'll be pullin' a good house down there."

Well, I puts him against Lefty Logardo up at the Weston A. C., headin' the bill. He takes the decision with a knockout starin' him in the face. I throws tough old Gene Parker in the ring with him over in Newark. Battlin' Beppo turns in a first round that'd done credit to the Manassa Mauler-himself. In the second, he catches Gene in his own corner an' shoots three hard lefts to the head with a right cross. He steps back against the ropes to shoot the K. O. an' Parker hunches over an' beckons to him with his glove.

"Come out an' fight," he squawks, an' has the kid fooled for the rest of the fight.

Beppo meets Georgia Lush an' Tom Dominick an' One-Round Hooker in short order. An' it's the same story, gents. He's got these boys licked an' he never come out with better than a decision. Some bonehead play every time. I was ready to throw up my hands.

If the kid wasn't such a likeable fella, I don't think I'd a kept him on. Easy goin' an' good-natured, you couldn't help warmin' up to him. He tried hard, too. Wasn't a man in my string that took his work as seriously. An' he never breaks trainin'. But it got so, that every time I sees that tow head under the lights, an' the crowd yellin'

CHAPTER III

Easy Mark!

I DON'T know whether I got a soft spot some place in my head or maybe I'm jus' plain stubborn an' hate

I prepares for the worst. That boy was bad news from the first gong—for me.

Right about when I was gettin' totally discouraged, Jimmy Doheny comes down from Chi to eliminate the only other real challenger for the heavy title in the field. I handled Jimmy when he fought in the welter division, an' he always comes over to Clancy's to see me when he's in town. Well, he drops in an' I ask him to cock an eye on this Battlin' Beppo. The kid's workin' out with the Shocker.

Doheny watches him for about five minutes, an' don't say nothin'. Then he turns around to me, serious. "Harry," he tells me, "If I'm ever champ, I'll make no bones about it. I dodge that baby. He's got the goods from the heels up. Where you been hidin' him."

"I ain't," I avers. Then I tells him the sad tale.

"Well, Lighththead," he breaks in, "there's only so many dumb ones he can pull. He looks like a sure money nag to me."

Mister, that puts some hope back in my system. I keep on workin' with the kid an' prayin'. Then a piece of luck drops like a bombshell into the camp. Big Les Brown, Pacific Coast heavy, is in town an' lookin' for action before he takes on the latest South American hope. None of the boys wants to step it with him because this Brown mauler's got a rep for damagin' a gent. I runs right down to his manager an' dickers till I get a bout for Battlin' Beppo.

After what Jimmy Doheny tells me, I know I'm right. The kid's got the goods, if he can only bring 'em out. For two weeks I works on gettin' Beppo fightin' mad. I cook up a couple of rough stories about what this Les Brown thinks of the kid. But it don't do no good. He jus' smiles that slow grin.

THE night of the fight comes.

I got the kid all primed up on what this fight means. Maybe a shot

among the real heavies. Maybe a chance at the title. Anything to make him fight. Jus' before we start for the ring, I have a note sent in supposed to be from Les Brown. That note ain't very sweet. Beppo reads it, an' looks up sort of puzzled. I called him about everything in the book in a few lines in that note.

"Maybe," he chuckles, "this fella's tryin' to scare me." But he wasn't even sore.

I was lookin' for the worst, after that. But the kid opens my eyes for four of the fastest, toughest rounds I ever hope to see. Big Les Brown was out to get it over with as quick as possible. He was big an' fast an' crafty. He shot over a couple of swings in the first minute with "finish" written all over 'em. Did they bother Beppo? Not one bit. He's *fightin'*.

Mister, I almost lost my tonsils them first four rounds. The kid had everything an' he was usin' it. Even the newspaper men were hurrahin' an' scribblin' off copy fast. He was step-pin' it like a champ. The kid carried the battle right through the first. I figured he was all shot, but it was Brown what was gaspin' after it was over.

The second canto was Battlin' Beppo's easy. He chopped Brown back an' forth, an' laced his body till it was pink. If he'd only got fightin' mad in there, he could have finished it right then an' there. But all the time, while he was fightin' good, he seems to lack that little spark. You know—the thing that sent Ruby Fitz in with that double shift, the thing Jim Jeffries used to pull outa the bag to drop his man, the thing Dempsey used to uncork in the famous fourth.

The third was great. Beppo had the boy from the Coast lookin' like a big sandbag an' breakin' ground till he was dizzy. The kid shot in a barrage of jabs and hooks that would 'a run a champ ragged. Then, Les Brown takes a grip an' slides under a hook, a short, hard jolt to Beppo's midriff. He forgets all about the hook from then on,

Even at that, he's crossin' Brown with pretty rights an' stickin' that snaky left in his eye. Brown's viewin' the world from one side an' his torso looks like it's been painted red.

Before the fourth, I tells the kid to uncork the hooks again. He looks around at me, shakin' his head.

"Naw, Higgins, you're all wrong. They're no good. Jus' because that palooka Dempsey had some luck with 'em. That pork-an'-beaner—" An' the gong rings.

I didn't get over that crack until the Kid wades in an' rattles two rights over Brown's heart. The house is screamin' for a knockout as they tie up in a clinch. They clinch again—an' again. I'm howlin' to the Kid to stand free an' hit. They lock again an' the Kid don't seem in any great hurry to break.

Well, the story comes out after it's over. It was this way, so Beppo tells me. In them clinches, Brown hands him a sweet sob story. His little wife is down at the ringside. He don't want her to see him knocked out. Jus' hold off till this round is over. Then he'll have her sent out. Do I need to tell you that big hick fell for it?

The way he began pullin' his punches was a crime. He don't rush Brown hard now an' he has him twice on the ropes an' let's him away. I'm tearin' my hair an' wonderin' what's wrong. Ten seconds to go. I see Brown's glove come up an' wave to some one down at the ringside.

His wife, the Kid figured. He stole jus' a glance. Brown was set. He took jus' one shot, with that dynamite left. Curtains! Battlin' Beppo never saw Mister Brown's wife, an' Les was grin-nin' in the center of the ring with his hand up when the kid wakes.

"Yeah, he fooled me," the Kid admits after the battle, with that slow grin. "But Tunney won't."

"No," I groans.

"No," he assents. "That ham I mixed it with tonight ain't any good.

He pulled a nifty. Now them guys at the top ain't much better—"

CHAPTER IV

The Frame-up

THEY say a rollin' stone gathers no moss. But I always figured that the gent that wrote that nifty must 'a' lived in a country where grass didn't grow on a hillside. Anyway, along about that time, the pickings were gettin' pretty thin in the big burg. All the boys in my stable had strutted their stuff in every fight club around an' they couldn't draw no more laughs from the fans.

Iron Jaw was gettin' so he jus' stood an' swung. The Shocker was hittin' the cabarets hard an' I figures maybe a change of scene will help him. As for Battlin' Beppo, the fight boys had his number. They didn't want to see him any more, if they had to pay. So I let the other has-beens out an' hit the road with these three.

First stop was Philly an' we was swingin' west from there. The Kid steps ten with Pete Dono an' gets a draw after havin' the fight tied up in the fifth. From then on, he elects to slug with this baby hippo outweighin' him forty pounds. It didn't do him no good. In Buffalo he meets the local favorite an' tries to jab his way to victory against a guy who specialized in imitatin' a shadow. On the train out of Buffalo, he explains this.

"Sure, Higgins," he broke out in the smoker. "I can't help wantin' to jab. I got a good one. Pretty an' fast, ain't she? Jus' like a champion. Yeah, when it comes to the jab, it's me an' Tunney."

"Yeah," I submits, lightin' a cigar.

"He'd be good, if he was a little faster," the Kid admits.

In a backwoods town called Carlton in the sticks of Illinois. I tries a new one. I figures if I could get the Kid blind mad, he'd be too crazy to make

any bonehead plays. For the last six months, I been tryin' to get him seein' red, an' it ain't worked. He's too good-natured. But at Carlton, I digs up some of the local applejack.

I knew the Kid would raise a howl about drinkin', so I feed jus' enough to him before the bout, callin' it "iron tonic." It hits him plenty, an' he's even rollin' a bad eye at me when we starts for the ring.

It works fine. He lays the other boy out with a one-two an' looks around for more worlds to conquer. His glazed eyes light on the ref an' he uncorks a hook with "morgue" tagged all over it. The ref forgets to duck an' we leaves that burg with our coat-tails stiff in the wind.

From then on it's a losin' game. I work everything I can think of or ever heard of on the Kid. Nothin' takes. He's good-natured an' he's dumb. An' that's enough. In Chi, I tell him to make a runnin' fight of it with Slug Herberts, a South Side pug. The Kid backpedals for eight innings, shootin' a straight right an' hookin' heavy with his left. He's got the guy dizzy an' fought out in the seventh. A couple of stiff kidney punches sets the stage for the fade-out in the eighth an' Battlin' Beppo still breaks ground. I give up.

In Detroit, I don't sign him on with anybody. He sits on the sidelines an' tells me how the war should have been run when it's over.

"Now if Iron Jaw had let that baby carry the fight in the seventh he'd 'a' had something left for the last," he confides in me, innocent-like. "The champs all do that."

"Sure," I says. "Iron Jaw's won more scraps than you lost," I adds.

"Oh, yes. But you'll have to admit that bozo's never go'n' to make a champion," he comes back, blue eyes serious.

"Lotta guys I know ain't," I guess.

"That's right," he nods. "Now this Slug Herberts I took on in Chi. That fella was lousy. You could hit him with anything. He was wide open an'—"

"Well," I breaks in, "why didn't you hit him? He got the decision."

He shrugs his big shoulders. "Why should I take a chance against that punk pug? I got everything to lose an' nothin' to gain."

That had me stopped. We blew into St. Louis an' met a load of hard-luck. Rain an' a bad house. Iron Jaw slips under the ropes an' breaks a leg. The Shocker meets up with a couple of molls he knew in New York an' goes out on one party he never comes back from. There I was, Harry Higgins, the slick-est fight manager in the game, with a no-good, hit-an'-miss pug on my hands.

Well, I signs Battlin' Beppo on for a fifteen-round slug-fest with some blacksmith down in a burg people forgot. We blew in an' the fight blew up. The local peanut promoters got cold feet. Me an' the Battler climbed onto a train an' got run off two stations up the line because we had no more fare. I'm gettin' a little stiff in the limbs an' ain't got no desire to ride the rails. I takes a look at the Kid an' he's grinnin'.

"Why?" I asks.

"Some day," he chuckles, "I'll get a big kick outa rememberin' this—when I'm at the top of the pile."

Right then an' there I could have socked that bimbo. When I comes to check back, it seems like all my hard luck began when I signed on the Kid. An' he hasn't helped any. Well, we dogs it down the main street of this joint an' pull's in at the local hotel. Our baggage gets us in, but the dinin' room is separate an' run on a cash basis. Looks like we don't eat an' I'm plannin' work-in' the Battler out as a farm hand over my last cigaret.

RIGHT then is where ol' Lady Luck takes a tumble an' unbends. I'm tryin' to prolong the last drag as much as I can when a smooth, quiet voice right above me breaks in:

"Got a match, Lighthead?"

I looks up an' it's Spud Jordan. Spud an' me never has been what's known as

close friends, not since he ran that phony on me over in Newark. But he looked like Santa Claus in person now. I jumps up an' gives him the glad hand.

"What you doin' in this dump, Lighthhead?" he inquires without excitement. I tell him. "Got a fighter with you, eh?" he drawls. "That ain't bad news. Battlin' Beppo. That big boloney you had at the Atlas Club? Well, he *looked* good."

Spud eases himself into a chair an' tilts his panama back on his head. When Spud does that, there's something in the air. I waits.

"I got a hunch, Lighthhead," he begins. "You know I'm handlin' Tiger Palmer now, don't you? A good boy, the Tiger, a good boy. Some day, Lighthhead," he draws on, "you might sign up with a boy like the Tiger, if you keep your eyes closed long enough."

He chuckles a while over his humor, which I don't appreciate very much. If Spud hadn't 'a' picked up one of my has-beens an' made a welter threat outa him with a streak of luck, he'd still be snipin' bills for the Atlas Club today. Well, he goes on, gettin' confident now as he moves closer.

"Here's the dope, Lighthhead. The Tiger's up a tree. So'm I. It's this way."

Just at that moment, the Battler ambles up. "Makin' a bout, Higgins?" he grins. "Put the bee on 'em for cash in advance. An' the champ ain't too good." With that sweet one, he ambles on. That bird really figured he'd be champ some day.

Spud laughs that one off an' goes on. "The Tiger's been chasin' Reilly, the Coast champ, all over the country for a bout. We got a promoter in Chi who's ready to back the brawl. But the champ won't sign. The Tiger's taken them all out around Frisco. But he's got to keep fightin' to keep the public hot. Now, Lighthhead, follow close. If I can get one good fight with the earmarks of a murder for the Tiger—which he wins, of course—we'll have the champ cornered. Here's the play."

He brings out a pair of cigars an' we lights up.

"The Battler ain't no good—but he's flashy. I saw him one night when he looked like a second edition of Jim Corbett, himself. O. K. Now . . . We swing him in with the Tiger for a bout right in this dump. Give out the news that it's a grudge fight an' then lay low about the pedigree of your man. The mystery stuff. The newsboys out here don't know the Battler from King Tut. We'll bake up a pedigree for him that'll make John L. look like a flop. . . . Fifteen rounds to a finish—by knockout. The Tiger. . . . Get that? . . . They'll fall hard for it. The Tiger forces the champ's hand an' you're in a thousand apiece. Like it?"

Like it? Did I? I never even dickered. I grabs Spud's mit an' lets by-gones be by-gones—after gettin' five hundred in advance. Then I rounds up the Battler an' steers him into the dinin' room. As we stow away the chow, I begins to give him the dope.

"I got you a fight," I opens up.

"Good, Harry. Good." He grins that slow easy grin that reminds me how hopeless he is. "One of these small town palookas, eh?" I starts in to tell him the rest, but he's got more to say. "Don't worry, I trust you. You know," he gets confidential as his stomach fills, "you done right by me, Harry. Don't think I don't know it. An' when I begin to crash the big money, Harry, you're goin' to be right with me."

To tell the truth, that don't give me any vision of riches. "Now, big boy," I begin again, about this scrap, "I feel I'm goin' to have a hard time gettin' him to sign for a fixed go, but I aim to convince him. The guy you're meetin' is—"

"That's all right, Harry," he assures me. "Anything you say. I was readin' the other day about Jack Dempsey an' the faith he usta have in Kearns. Me, I'm the same way about you," an' he pulls that big grin again that makes me

feel like a criminal. Sometimes it makes me wonder how I could dislike a fella like him, because he's one of the squarest blokes I ever met. An' easy to get along with. If he only wasn't a leather pusher.

"Well, now," I begins again as we reach the pie, "this fella Ti—"

"An' there's one thing more, Harry," he breaks in again. "I ain't been doin' so good all the time." That "all the time" was a hot one. "But it's been a lot of hard luck. Things can't always be breakin' against me. Some day I'll be in the top row." That guy's faith in himself made my eyes water, sometimes. "An' there's another thing. When I'm signin' for one of the big boys—don't forget our share of the movie rights. . . ."

Well, mister, I almost caves in on that one. This lowdown palooka worryin' about the movie rights of a big bout. Sort of like that Noah gent figurin' on gettin' the trans-Atlantic trade. I order another helpin' of that pie, an' jump off again.

"Battler, this comin' bout's a funny one. You're mixin' it with—"

"Another thing, Harry," he jabs, takin' the toothpick outa his mouth, "anything you say goes with me. But when we sign for the champ—or one of them big bouts—make 'em come across. I notice as how the champ usually takes the big end. Well, I figure it takes two to make a scrap." His big, honest eyes fix me. Two. An' these gents like Tunney an' Dempsey got to have some one to fight to make the coin. So when we hitch in, call 'em for a fifty-fifty break."

Comin' from any one else, I'd 'a' laughed right out loud an' saved my sleeve. But this ham kid was so dumb, he meant it. Yes, sir. Then, that tips me off an' I closes up like a trap. Fifty-fifty, eh? Supposin' he knows he's fightin' the Tiger. Fifty-fifty, eh? I thinks fast. A cigar helps.

"What do you know about the boy we're takin' on here, Harry?" he asks. I think faster. "Oh, jus' a hick pug."

I comes back snappy. "Name of Micky Morris an' not much."

He sighs. "Some day, of course, we'll be signin' with a gent like this here Tiger Palmer an' hit the big game," he says slowly.

"Micky Morris this shot, kid."

CHAPTER V

Under Cover

GENTS, I don't claim I'll ever die of a attack of brainstorm. But I sure pulls some fast thinkin' in that dinin'-room. An I follows it up with a pretty piece of back-pedaling. Next day at sunrise, I jerks Battlin' Beppo outa town an' rents a shack in the hills for his trainin' quarters. Then I drew a comfortable breath.

It's this way. There's the kid jus' pullin' that fifty-fifty gag. Suppose he should learn we're takin' on the Tiger. Right away, he'll be demandin' fifty-fifty an' a clause in the contract callin' for the winner to face the Coast champ. We're lucky to get this scrap, an' luckier still to draw a thousand apiece. But I never could 'a' convinced that big innocent dumb-bell of that. So I decides he'll never know who we're takin' on.

I goes into town to dig up a cook an' to cock an eye at the mornin' papers. Spud sure had worked fast. The local sheet has it big. *Tiger Palmer signs for Grudge Bout. Tiger to Meet Old Man-killing Rival. Tollerville Gets Battle Banned Elsewhere.* Mister, that Spud boy sure spread it thick. The Chi an' St. Louis papers has it covered on their sport sheets. *Tiger In Feud Bout. Coast Challenger to Meet Mystery Rival.* Sounded great. Spud was clever.

Well, I hotfooted it back to camp, thankin' my stars the Battler ain't read a sport sheet since some Manhattan editor panned him as the "big fizz and flop man from the wide West." It got him sore; then he figured these babies were dumb; so he never bothers no more

about them. I gets back jus' in time to save the beans. Three newspaper men from the local sheets were waitin' for an interview.

The Battler's jus' gettin' dressed after his road-work an' ready to give 'em a spiel. I saves him the trouble. Yes, it's true, I tells 'em, the Battler meets the Tiger. The Battler's record. Well, I'd rather not say. We felt we were lucky catchin' Spud Jordan an' his man an' we didn't want to scare 'em out of the fight. Yes, it's true they banned the fight in several states. No, they couldn't see the Battler work out. Not for several days, anyway.

I gets rid of them gents an' dashes off to wire Porky Howard who was walkin' the streets in Chi when we went through. He's a old-time ham-an'-egg pug on his heels. But he can make the Battler step an' keep up the appearances of a real trainin' camp. Porky arrives on the afternoon train an', over a meal, I give him the lowdown. I've staked Porky more'n once an' he sticks by me. Then he puts the Kid through a few rounds.

Things were sorta quiet for the next few days. Spud comes over an' O. K.'s the layout. The Battler takes his trainin' as serious as ever an' shapes up good in the eyes of the local sport writin' gentry who watch him from a distance. This mystery stuff about the Battler's past has got them an' the *Post* comes out with a yarn hintin' the Kid's put some guy to sleep for keeps down South an' jus' slipped out of a prison term. That suits me fine; Spud, too.

Spud's a smooth talker an' he lines up some backin' from the local big guns for the fight. They got a race track grandstand an' the town throws up temporary seats around the green free in return for the publicity. Things are goin' smooth, with the Kid believin' he's fightin' some hick called Micky Morris.

I burn all the papers when I'm through with 'em. Porky never opens his chops. Then two newspaper gents drop in from Chi. The next day they

play the bout off as some sort of secret grudge feud that's tryin' to dodge the authorities. Couple of days later another drops in an' I spot him as Jacobs, the expert dopest of the bunch. He goes home an' tells how he thinks he recognizes the Battler as a gent he saw in a bout at the Weepah goldfields last year. He then presents us with a record that sounds like wholesale murder.

Everything seems to be breakin' right. I don't tell Spud I ain't put the Kid wise. That guy plays 'em awful safe an' might get hard about it. He ain't aimin' to take no chances on his man. But I don't dare let the Kid in on the game. An' I figure it's safe anyway. The Battler's sure to drop the fight some place. He ain't never failed yet. I'll send him in with orders to back-pedal an' box like a fool. That guy, nor no other, can buck the fates, an' previous records prove they got his name on the wrong side of the book.

The Kid's talkin' all the time now about the big fights. It gets under my skin sometimes. He's so serious. One day he springs this one:

"Porky tells me the champ ain't had a fight this year. An' he's puttin' on weight. Believe me, Harry, you'll never catch me doin' that." Or, "You notice, Harry, I ain't on my toes so much now. None of the big boys does that in trainin'." Somehow, that makes me mad.

WELL, things runs along so good I can't believe I'm alive. Spud lines up a referee from among the Tiger's handlers. That's good insurance against a break. The mayor's tickled silly when Spud offers to let him be official announcer. The local Board of Commerce puts up the ring an' rigs a good lightin' plant over it. Everythin's smooth.

That is, it is until the day I slip over to the Tiger's camp for an hour. Spud wants to fix the details. Porky promises to herd off the newsmen! they're pretty thick around there now. While I'm talkin' with Spud, I happen to look over the Tiger. He ain't been takin' his

trainin' seriously, anyway, an' he looks shabby, an' slow an' sort of careless. I notices he misses a punch occasional an' his boys are handlin' him light. I don't say nothin' to Spud but, when I get home, I watch the Kid closer'n ever.

Mister, I'll admit the Kid always looked good in the gym. But this outdoor stuff seems to have done something to him. He admits he came from a burg like this, anyway. Maybe it's that home feelin'. Anyway, he's plain mean an' vicious, steppin' around with the fast-movin' Porky. That little boy can hit some himself an' I almost keels over when I see the Kid drop his guard an' let Porky tear in wild.

I think this over. The Battler always looked good. But he looks better now. An' when he moves sometimes, he reminds you of the way a scared fish darts in the water. Fast an' easy. Also—I see a snarl breakin' out every once an' awhile. That ain't good. If he gets fightin' mad—where'll I be? He might do anything.

I always thought that, anyway. Maybe that's why I held on to him so long. The way those clean-cut, straight limbs snap about puts a chill in my heart. Also, the Kid's gettin' bigger. He seems to have spread some an' put on weight in the barrel. Not fat, either. No, that kind of beef that ripples like coils of burnished copper—mean an' wicked.

I don't sleep well on it, either. But the next day, relief sails into port. The news crowd, standin' back of a rope I rigged up about twenty yards from the ring, is jabberin' an' lookin'. Then one of 'em catches my eye an' I spots him as Charley Forbes, the old heavy who used to knock 'em galley-west at Sharkey's Club. I go down an' give him the glad hand, stung with a bright idea.

He's coverin' it for some sport sheet in Detroit. I asks him how he'd like to have a real story about how the Battler felt to him. He don't get me at first. I explains: I mean for him to climb in an' mix it with the Kid. Now Charley ain't never quite got that fever for the

feel of a punch outa his system. Some of 'em never do; that's why they keep comin' back till they lock 'em up in a padded cell. An' he's one of them guys that always keeps in training. Also, he's written "detour" on more up-an'-comers than any other leather-pusher in the game.

He falls for the idea. It don't take no time to slip him into a pair of trunks an' introduce him to the Kid. We run off the rest of the news gang an' they go at it.

Three rounds an' fast. Charley's steppin' to knock him, if he can. The Kid looks good, awful good. Then Charley paws him in the eye—shoots a couple of rabbit punches in the clinches—cracks him with a backhand shot. He even snarls at the Kid. The Battler steps fast, but he don't get mad; jus' keeps a-grinnin' an' movin'. Three times he has an openin'. Charley leaves 'em a-purpose. But something seems to tie the Kid up an' he can't drop him.

Charley tells me the lowdown while he's gettin' back into his clothes. He's good, but he lacks the knockout wallop. Don't seem to have the fire. No, he'd never trouble a real champ.

That makes me feel good. After Charley leaves, I ponder it some. Strange. Maybe it's the excitement or the tenseness of a real bout that ties him up, makes him do the wrong thing, holds him from flashin' over when the time's right.

Well, I been workin' on that problem over a year now, an' I know it's useless. I aim to give the kid the gate after this bout, anyway. Why worry?

CHAPTER VI

Fightin' Wild

GENTS, I don't need to tell you about the crowd there that Saturday night. It even surprised Spud. More'n five thousand with a special train from Chi. All the folks from miles

around had rode in. They were set for a big fight—ready to see their first fight. At the last minute, they rigs up a thousand more benches. An' even then, when the local palookas had messed through the prelims, they were standin' all over an' even parkin' their cars an' buggies back of the seats.

Everything was set. In the tent we'd rigged up at the end of the park, the Battler was nervous. An' he never was that way before. I asks him what's the matter.

Them big blue eyes set on me an' I notice they're kinda pale tonight. His hands quivers at his sides, an' he can't lay still. When he speaks, he's husky an' hoarse.

"Gee, Harry," he blurts out, "this is different. This seems like a real big fight. An' I got to make good tonight. Them's my kind of people out there. They—"

Somebody sticks their head in the tent flap an' yells: "Good luck against the Tiger, Kid!"

The Kid looks quick at me. He's sort of strained around the jaws.

"Tiger—ha—ha—ha!" I laughs. "That's a good one. They got a new name for Mickey, eh?" That was close!

Well, the time comes to go down. It was hot an' the Battler's hide glistens like oil when he climbs into the ring. Standin' there under the lights, he gets a big hand from the crowd. His tow-head waves an' bobs an' suddenly the enthusiasm seems to run away with him.

Mitts above his head, shakin' hands with 'em, he yells out: "Tiger Palmer next. Then the champ!" It brought another cheer an' a laugh, The Kid didn't know the joke.

But it brought a groan from me. Honest, that Kid was so serious an' dumb standin' there, the poor pug, with that crazy dream of bein' a champ. Mister, do worms ever get to be alligators? Answer me that.

The Tiger comes in then, hard-faced an' arrogant. You know. He steps over to the Kid an' shakes hands like he was

bad to touch. Then he goes around bobbin' to the crowd. The mayor does his stuff. An' when he points to the Tiger's corner, mister, I began talkin' fast in the Kid's ear, so he wouldn't get the name.

"—an' in this corner, Battlin' Beppo, the terror of the Pacific Coast. One hundred an' ninety-four pounds."

"Go careful, Kid. This guy ain't no set-up. He's three kinds of wildcat in close. Back-pedal plenty an' stay away from him. Don't risk a shot. Keep backin' an' sparrin'. Don't forget you're a boxer."

"All right, Harry." Honest, man, that made me feel bad. That Kid was so trustin'!

Bang! The gong!

There they go! The Battler slips out easy an' starts snakin' that left right off. The Tiger begins stalkin' him, feints him open, an' slides his glove high on his head. It sounded like a crownin' wallop an' the crowd went mad. But the Tiger was playin' his game. Twice more he connects in the midriff, but light, all of 'em pulled. The Kid chops his face.

Mister, the Battler was beautiful that round, like a big, oiled piston. Sleek an' slippery. Movin' fast an' easy. He was all bronze from the sun an', under them yellow lights, I begins to notice the shoulder muscles. When he moves, they flow like soft steel slippin' under a veil. He crosses a hard right to the Tiger's ear as he comes in. The Tiger grunts an' frowns. That was a heavy shot.

The round's over. The Kid comes back, light an' fine. I was almost wishin' he was fightin' a real fight that night. I'd 'a' sent him in hard. He grins up at me an' says the other guy's good but hittin' light. I have to turn my face away. Them blue eyes of his. . . .

THERE goes the buzzer. Ten seconds more. Hold him off. Back water. Spar, Kid. That's what I told him. Then he went in, believin' me an' playin' the Tiger pretty. Round they go, workin' like a pair of swordsmen.

That's it. Swords. The Tiger leaps an' throws a couple of punches, figurin' he's safe because it's fixed, anyway. He's open! Wide!

The Battler slides under, bendin', straightenin'. An' when he comes up, he cuts loose with a pretty double hook into the Tiger's ribs. Then he breaks ground again, smilin' at the Tiger. He's some sore; they were heavy, too. He tries to work in to tell the Kid to lay off. The Kid, takin' my advice, won't let him get close.

The Tiger keeps comin', the Battler backin'. He don't lead hard, an' hardly counters, an' the Tiger gets rash. He plunges once—an' misses. He plunges again. An' the Kid ain't there. The Tiger hits the ropes. The Kid's waitin' for him. Three times to the heart. Hard an' straight. Nasty! Makes you think of a snake whippin' in.

The Tiger covers up quick an' stalls. The Battler seems to be flat-footed an' waitin'. Sudden-like, that left whips out. A cut's opened over the Tiger's eye. The round's over.

The Kid comes in, confident. Feelin' great, he tells me. Wants to tear in an' eat the Tiger up. Careful, I warns. Stay away. Keep him comin'. Gee, I'm nervous. Spud's givin' me the sign from his corner, thumbs down to make the Kid lay off. I'm tryin' to think of something to tell him when the gong clangs.

The Tiger's still got the red welt over his heart as he walks out. An' the Kid fools him again. Instead of comin' cautious an' waitin' for the Tiger to lead, he slips one into the Tiger's face. The Tiger grunts an' covers. Another, an' another. I screams at the Battler an' he backs off. The Tiger tries to corner him but it's like cornerin' smoke. No chance. The Kid's footwork is perfect.

Every minute I was regrettin' the deal I'd gone through. The boy was pretty tonight. Still, he'd always looked good. Around the ring they go. The Tiger un-hooks one from the floor an' throws it a mile wide. It looks great to the crowd an' he knows the Kid won't cut him

down. But the Kid does. Three chop-pin' hooks to the sore eye. A smash straight on the button. The crowd's wild, crazy, yellin'!

The Tiger drops into a clinch. He holds the Kid an' I can see he's talkin' in his ear. I see the Kid's tow head, gleamin' in the light, snap back. His mug's twisted in anger an' he breaks, throwin' the Tiger halfway across the ring.

Gents, from then on she's a fight. The prize palooka of the second-third rate fight clubs against the outstandin' fighter of the Pacific Coast. An' mister, what a battle! I never see the Kid that way before. He steps in an' he's plenty close when he lets go with a pair of drives to shake a gunboat. They hit an' sink when they connect. He steps back, leadin' the maddened Tiger to step in. An' when he does. . . .

Bam! You could hear splittin' flesh then. Flesh an' bone. The Tiger went down in a heap. He rolled an' writhed an' the Kid was against the ropes—ready to swoop out. The ref, the guy from the Tiger's camp, takes about five seconds gettin' over to the man before he starts the count.

"One—two—three—get up, Tiger!—four-r-r—hurry, Tige!—f-f-five—come out of it, Tiger!—six—s-s-seven—are you gettin' up, Tige?—come on, Tige!—e-e-e-ight!—come on, Tige. . . ."

Spud saved the day. Sneakin' around the corner of the ring, he jerks the bell string, with twenty seconds to go. They drag the Tiger to his corner. The crowd's tearin' the place apart. I can't hardly make myself heard in the Kid's ear an' I don't know what to say. Gee, how I want to send him in to win! I mumble something about back-pedin' but I can see he ain't listenin'.

I take a quick look at him an' his eyes are like little splinters of ice—like cold, blue steel. His lips is two white lines across his teeth. His fine, clean-cut head is still an' tense. I read the signs. Crazy mad. I can't figure it. Back-pedal, Kid. . . .

Spud Jordan, purple-faced, rips me away. "Double crossin', eh? Dirty work! You lousy—"

I cuts him short an' begins explainin'. The rest period is already ten seconds over time. They're bracin' Tiger fast in his corner. I tell Spud the truth. There ain't nothin' else to do. Porky leaps down an' backs me up. Spud sees it's true, because he knows the Kid never fought like that. He shakes me around an' bawls me out for a dumb-bell.

"Do something for him. Keep him under. You *gotta!*" he yells, shakin' a fist in my face.

I'm desperate. I slosh enough of water over the Kid to drown him, chillin' them muscles. It don't seem right, but I can't double-cross Spud. It's a accident, the Battler fightin' like this. He's against a near champ an' he's showin' him up, lickin' him.

AT last the gong goes, jus' as the mob gets suspicious. They're out, the Tiger ready now, an' set to fight—real. They clash in the dead center of the ring, a writhin', sweepin' turmoil of bronze arms an' the smack-smack of leather. An' it's the Tiger who reels back. His head's rollin'.

An' the Kid don't play his part. No missteps, no errors now. No, he feints three times like a veteran. Then he whips a trio of hooks to the Tiger's tummy, hard ones that land with a cruel smack. He steps back an' the Tiger lunges to clinch. He misses an' falls. The Battler surprises me again. He's in an' hurls a brace of swats to the Tiger's face. The Tiger hits the canvas an' don't move.

Spud saves the day again, jumpin' into the ring an' bawlin': "Foul! Foul!"

The ref can't do nothin'. No long count'd save the Tiger now. The whole place is in a frenzy. The din's awful. It takes a couple of minutes before the Tiger's manager's out of the ring an' they're bringin' the Tiger around. The ref rules for the fight to continue.

Spud's at my side, shoutin' in my ear I'll never get the rest of that two grand. Suddenly, I don't care. My kid's fightin', fightin' like he never fought before. The Tiger's roused now. His big torso twists an' snakes around as he works in. The Kid waits, an' suddenly breaks ground again.

The Tiger leaps for him an' catches him jus' as the Battler's glidin' off the ropes. They clinch. It's awful! Red-stained gloves thuddin' like dull guns. Two lean, tan bodies writhin' under that canopy of light. A screamin', insane crowd.

They both reel back an' the Kid's face is battered and bleedin'. The Tiger lurches in. The Kid beats him to it. He's comin' in faster, like a knife findin' a hole.

Both his mitts drop. The Tiger swings for his head. The Kid takes it. Is he goin' nuts? The Tiger recoils an' lets fly again. The Kid takes it. The Tiger laughs silent an' draws back for the knockout. Then that mad Kid comes to life.

Those two mitts shoot up like two pistons. They find the Tiger's face. Hard. Something snaps, like bone. The Tiger wilts on his feet. The Kid hits again—and again—and *again!* The Tiger swings into a clinch, cuttin' loose a low one.

Did that Kid cover up an' tie up those arms? Naw. I'm yellin' like a maniac. The Kid's hittin' with him, short, jar-in', man-breakin' jolts like a Dempsey. The Tiger drops back stiff, in agony.

The Battler poises on his toes, measures him with the left. *Smack!* She goes in, that right, five times . . . an' one awful thunderbolt outa the left. The Tiger's down flat. The noise rolls like a poundin' ocean on your ears. The Tiger never quivers.

Spud nails the bell again—with thirty seconds to go. The fans shout murder. The rest period is extended to two minutes. The Tiger's still a limp, stained mess in his chair. The mayor, who was

announcin', leaps in an' puts Battlin' Beppo's right duke in the air. Then there *was* noise!

WELL, gents, out in the tent, I kept smacking the Battler on the back an' askin' him how come. He's grinnin' sheepish again with that slow smile, an' his blue eyes is as dumb as ever. "How come?" I was demandin'.

"Well," he says, slow-like, "the big palooka grabs a-hold of me in the third an' tells me to lay off the heavy stuff—the fight's fixed. Gee, Harry, I can't stand anybody accusin' me of fixin' a

fight—of fightin' crooked." He smiles again. "I got mad."

I jus' stands there lookin', too struck to open my mug. A half-dozen newspaper guys rush in, collarin' the Kid before I could get between 'em.

The Kid don't say nothin'. "Well," they cries, "what do y' think of Tiger Palmer?"

"Him?" an' the Kid sniffs haughty-like when he pulls that slow grin. "He's jus' like Dempsey an' Tunney an' them other palookas. I could take 'em. Now this guy I mixes with tonight—Micky Morris—*there's a real scrapper!*"

THE END

HONEST TOM, THE BLACKSMITH

OUT of a rather colorless series of so-called "eliminations" Tom Heeney has emerged to be decorated with the crown of Logical Contendership. And in spite of the booming razzberries of many boxing fans, it must be said that Heeney's selection was the only just one to make. It's true that Heeney didn't display any knockout punch. It's also true that he isn't blooming with that elusive box-office "It" called "color." But he is willing to fight, and he fights hard—which is more than can be said of some of the other logicals.

Heeney stepped in with all of 'em. His record against Paulino, the Basque 'Axe-Expert, is better than it reads in the records; he earned just decisions against Delaney and Risko and Sharkey by sheer aggressiveness and willingness to mix it. He didn't wipe up the canvas with them—but he won.

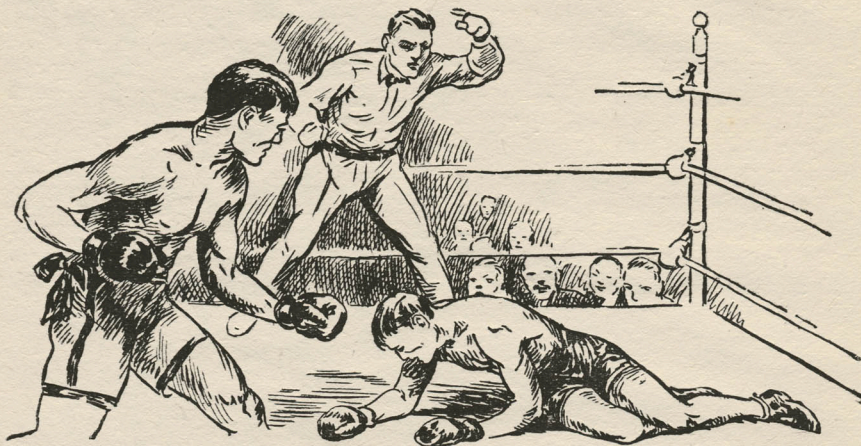
The experts, of course, concede him little chance against Mr. Tunney. They say his aggressive style is built for Gene; that Tunney will slaughter any one who forever comes piling in and swinging free. They also say that he hasn't punch enough to hurt the champion when he connects—if any.

Tunney figures to outbox Heeney—but so did Sharkey. And it would be well to recall that the same people who scoff at Heeney against the champion were equally scoffish when Joseph Eugene Tunney donned the *cesti* for the first time against Dempsey in the rain at Philadelphia.

Tom Heeney is making no boasts. In his quiet way he is going about his training with one idea in mind: "I'll make him—and the folks who see it—know he's been in a fight."

The idea is typical of Heeney. And when Honest Tom sets out to let a fellow know he's been in a scrap he is apt to do it. At least he'll be in there trying.

Referee's Decision



By ARTHUR J. BURKS

He had a Leatherneck's fighting heart and a wallop like dynamite, but beyond the ropes was terror that seared his soul!

THE lightweight championship of the Fleet was at stake. Lieutenant Gillis, Marine Corps, realized this. He hadn't wanted to be the third man in the ring, but he had been detailed, because some wise jazzbo who had known him in the old days had told the Old Man he was good at it.

Scarcely conscious of what he was saying, he spoke to the two brown panthers in the center of the ring. One was Frederico Calles, present holder of the title, a Filipino. The other was Young Dave Burdett, the challenger, whose skin was like that of a baby, hair combed back like that of a drugstore cowboy.

"Hit with one arm free! No holding! Rabbit punch barred! Break when I tell you to."

Neither paid Gillis much heed, apparently, though Gillis wondered if Burdett remembered. It had been five years before—bum job that time. Burdett had gone to the hospital with three broken ribs, because Gillis hadn't stopped

the fight in time. But he didn't seem to remember.

The fighters turned away, going to their corners. Just as they turned Burdett snarled at the officer over his shoulder:

"Hope you're not as entirely rotten as the last time I saw you doing your stuff, Gillis!"

Then the bell started the fight. But Burdett had planted the old seed again. Only Gillis knew how far back beyond that other fight his memory went to confound him, back to long before Marine Corps days, when Gillis had been a warehouse man, two-fisted, square-jawed, the born fighter—and one of the world's most sensitive men. He'd mixed it with a lot of chaps in his time, until that fatal evening when, an amateur after all, he was inveigled into a battle with a professional mauler.

Just a kid, then, a kid who was known by his first name to every man who saw the scrap. They knew him for a comer. He wasn't trained for this fight, hadn't

expected it. Last-minute substitution, he had been, for a scrapper who had suddenly caught cold, some folks said in the feet. Anyway, Gillis had gone in.

And the professional fighter, grinning a grin that glistened with gold, his broad nostrils working like pulses, knocked him out in the first round. But he didn't let Gillis drop. He kept him on his feet, fooled the crowd throughout, and battered and mauled him for five additional rounds. His hands had been too heavy to lift. He couldn't fight back. The pro didn't hurt him. He was too numb. But his ears caught the shouts of the crowd.

"Yellow! Yellow! Stand up and fight him, Gillis! Don't lay down like a whipped cur!"

They never knew, for Gillis never told them, that he had been knocked out in the first, and then had been scientifically carried through five rounds of ungodly drubbing.

And since that day he had never fought in the ring. The blasted crowds did it. Wasn't yellow, either, he told himself. It was the crowds and their yelling, their heartlessness. He'd refused to scrap a champion in Quantico, whither his record had followed him, and because he gave no reason his friends said he was yellow. Even the man he had been asked to fight thought so. He taunted Gillis with fear, and Gillis took him out in the woods, with only a few friends looking on, and gave him a trouncing he would never forget.

"Watch this baby, Gillis! He's hitting low."

That was Burdett, snarling as usual, complaining as usual. Hard egg, Burdett. Always ready to take three to land one, and one was usually enough. But in the Filipino he was up against class. Calles was like a jungle cat, unsmiling, shooting in damaging blows from every angle.

The crowd was at it again.

"Where'd you get that referee? Yank 'em apart! Don't let 'em stall!"

Yank 'em apart he did. How he

dreaded the end of the fight! Referee's decision, and folks who knew said he hadn't given a right decision in ten years of taking third place in the ring. He knew better himself. The Old Man had called him in.

"Burdett is our pride, Gillis," he had said. "Fancy the boys have got up a lot of dough on him."

"I always call 'em the way I see 'em sir," Gillis had said, "whether the decision pleases the crowd, the fighters, or the newspapermen!"

"That, of course, is what is expected of you."

AND now they were at it, Calles the champion, Burdett the challenger. Calles was all over the ring, and all over Burdett. But Burdett was a cagy scrapper. He sank his fist into the stomach of the Filipino, and the Filipino went back on his heels, hands dropping to his stomach. Burdett flew at him, and was knocked flat on his back by a couple which came so fast even Gillis almost missed 'em.

Burdett bounced up without a count, and blood dripped from his lips to dye his chin. He punched the Filipino off balance, shot a right cross to the jaw. Calles dropped, rolled halfway across the ring, staggered to his feet as Gillis followed him, plunged against the ropes, whirled, facing Burdett, who, his face set in a mask of determination, prepared for the finishing blow.

Off the ropes bounced Calles, tearing at Burdett like a wildcat. Across the ring he drove him, into the ropes, rocking his head with rights and lefts, not deigning to protect himself, keeping Burdett so busy Burdett couldn't fight back. He rocked his head from side to side, lowered his own head, and fairly lifted Burdett to his toes with savage uppercuts to the short-ribs. Burdett went through the ropes, doubled up like a jack-knife, hanging by his knees. Calles came back and Burdett was through, inside the ring again, before Gillis could count.

"Make 'em fight! Make 'em fight! Burdett! Burdett!"

This was a Burdett crowd. Burdett was away behind. He'd been outsmarted by the older, more skilful Filipino, but Gillis knew the crowd didn't think so. Burdett had apparently smothered the Filipino in a flurry of blows, time after time; but Gillis had seen that every one of 'em landed on a protecting glove or elbow, or missed entirely by almost nothing. Burdett apparently landed two for one on the Filipino. Yet Calles was ahead on points. Gillis knew it.

But if he gave the decision to Burdett it would be wrong. If he gave it to Calles the crowd would go wild. Always the crowd. The crowd had no mercy. He knew crowds. Every man in it, apparently, knew more about fighting than the referee. And they'd got his name from the printed program.

"Get busy, Gillis! Can't you see Calles is hitting low? Part 'em, you saphead!"

So easy to call names when a fellow couldn't tell who was calling them.

Probably not one of those yelling maniacs out there had ever officiated as third man in a ring, or done battle with the gloves, either. Crowds were merciless. Through the yelling now of those who thought he wasn't doing his stuff came, from down the dim corridors of memory, the voice of another crowd that shouted at *him*:

"Stand up and fight him, Gillis! You're yellow! Yellow!"

And the other crowd hadn't been able to see that he was out, his arms like lead, that he didn't drop simply because the professional maunder wouldn't let him.

And the same kind of crowd yelling now:

"Watch the Filipino, Gillis! He's hitting low! Get on the job, you dumbbell!"

Mad with bloodlust, the crowd was fighting the fight themselves, vicariously, as crowds did; fickle, without mercy,

flicking in the raw those sensitive ones who happened to be in the limelight—that light which, from above the arena, showered a circle of silver light upon the glistening, blood-spattered torsos of Calles and Burdett.

It was the fourth round. Calles and Burdett stood toe to toe in the center of the ring, going at it hammer and tongs. Their arms moved so rapidly one could scarcely see them. Certainly none beyond the newspapermen at ring-side could check up on those blows.

But Gillis—Gillis saw them all, and noted that Calles landed two where Burdett landed one. Burdett made more noise as his gloves slapped home, hit oftener, was more spectacular, but as always his blows were practically harmless, because the gloves, elbows and shoulders of Calles flicked them aside.

Calles heard the shouting of the crowd, and grinned slightly at Gillis.

"Get him, Burdett! Knock the brown boy for a loop! Sock him! Batter him down! He's only a cheese champion!"

Gillis understood the grin of Calles. Calles knew crowds, and Calles knew that Burdett was a whipped fighter. So did Gillis. So did Burdett himself. But the crowd did not know. Burdett's eyes were glassy, his knees trembling. But he had guts, lots of 'em, and he stood toe to toe with Calles, exchanging damaging blows. A crowd-pleaser, that was it, a crowd-pleaser. Yet Burdett was whipped, with two rounds yet to go.

Calles knew it, Burdett knew it, Gillis knew it, and the newspapermen knew it. But the newspapermen had one advantage over a referee. The referee had to decide after the last bell who had won, while the newspapermen could discover the reaction of the crowd to the decision—and write stories that would please the greatest number.

THE sixth and last round. Both men came from their corners, apparently as fresh as when the fight had

started. They touched gloves in the center of the ring, darted apart. Then Calles bored in. He went in like a battering ram. Burdett swung at him. Calles blocked the blow with his glove. He slipped in a small wet place, dropped to his knees, and Burdett was all over him. An accident, nothing more.

But the crowd yelled for Burdett. To the crowd it had been a knockdown, and Burdett was miles ahead.

"Finish him, Burdett! Finish him! You've got him, you've got him!"

Then they were at it again, circling, feinting, but feinting little, as each battler goaded himself to the utmost to make a showing in the last round, to do his best to influence crowd and referee to his standard. Calles was covered with blood, but most of it came from the nose of Burdett, who had hung on time after time, until Gillis had pulled him away and warned him for holding. Calles looked like a beefsteak, but it was Burdett's blood.

The crowd didn't know that.

Their breath coming in agonized gasps, the fighters stood toe to toe at the bell, heads down, all science flung to the winds, striving for that last-minute knockout, battering, battering, slugging. The crowd was on its feet, yelling like mad—

"Clang!"

Without a moment of hesitation, Gillis crossed to Calles and held up his hand. Burdett was right behind the referee.

"Couldn't give a chap a break, Gillis, could you?" he snarled. "Just as rotten as always!"

Burdett strode to Calles, shook his hand, and Gillis heard him snarl.

"You're a dirty fighter, Calles, you—"

Calles only grinned, then flung aside the hand of Burdett.

To the crowd this was an indication of Burdett's wonderful sportsmanship. The crowd went wild. Unobtrusively several privates, wearing sidearms, slipped into the ring. It was an ugly crowd. Gillis had given a rotten deci-

sion. His face was white as he strode to the reporters' bench.

"How do you chaps stand?" he asked.

A veteran of typewriter and prize-fights replied:

"I agree with you all the way through, kid, and I'll write her up that way."

But he didn't. Next morning his paper carried a story which bitterly berated Gillis, called him a blind referee, and gave four rounds to Burdett, with the other two even.

The Old Man sent for Gillis.

"Rotten decision, Gillis," he said coldly. "Were you blind last night? The men lost thousands of dollars on your decision."

"It was the correct one, sir," replied Gillis. "I'd give the same decision again in like circumstances. Rematch those two for ten rounds and Calles will knock Burdett out!"

"If they are rematched, Gillis," replied the Old Man, "we'll have a man in the ring who knows something about the game."

But when the rematch came everybody had forgotten about Gillis' decision, and not one newspaper mentioned it, though Calles, furiously intent upon proving that the newspapers had been wrong before, knocked Burdett out in the sixth round.

But everybody had forgotten, except Gillis, who now knew what he should have known all along. He was yellow, in a way. He feared no man, would fight any one his weight—outside the ring—but he couldn't stand the merciless ranting of a crowd.

THE test came two years later, in Shanghai. Gillis went over with the Fourth Regiment of Marines and went through the hectic early days of the trouble around Shanghai. Everybody, except the close followers of the fight game, had forgotten the past performances of Gillis in the ring. But Gillis didn't forget. He never would. The yells of the crowds rang in his ears always.

Somewhere, some time, somehow, he promised himself, he would conquer his fear of crowds.

The chance came sooner than he expected.

It was after things quieted down in Shanghai, and the authorities were looking around for entertainment for their men and for the foreign population. As usual they settled upon a smoker, this time an international affair, as the best bet. Fighters from all the various units were to participate.

Two men were eagerly sought for as the details of the scheme were being worked out: A man to officiate as third man in the ring, and a match for "Mauler" Benson, light-heavy champion of the Asiatic Fleet.

People in the know came to Gillis. But Gillis shook his head.

"I'll never referee another bout," he told them.

And he stuck to his guns. He'd help out in the corners, he told them, help handle Marine Corps battlers, do all he could to get the gyrene scrappers into shape.

They grabbed him as a drowning man grabs at a straw. They begged him to groom some light-heavy who wouldn't look too much like a dub against Mauler Benson. He agreed to try.

"We'll go have a look at this Benson's workouts, first," he told the committee.

Well, the world is small, after all. Gillis had often heard the statement. But he'd never thought much about it until now.

He took one good look at Mauler Benson. He was older, more experienced. There was more gold in his golden smile. He was rugged, fit, an animal whose forte was the squared circle—a born fighter, cruel, merciless—cruel and merciless as any crowd that ever booed a losing champion or a referee.

Gillis thought it over for a moment, his heart pounding.

"I've got a man for Benson," he said at last.

But he wouldn't tell them who it was. He gave a name, the first one that came into his head, and pretended that he was keeping his fighter under cover, which he was. There was a lot of excitement as the time for the fight drew near. Friends and enemies alike begged for a look at the dark horse who was to face Mauler Benson. But Gillis only grinned and shook his head.

There was a stirring movement through all the crowd when Gillis' man stepped into the ring, preceding Benson, for the last bout of the evening. Then they recognized the man.

"Gillis! Lieutenant Gillis!"

The shout went up, rolling like a tidal wave through all the crowd. The crowd seemed to be for him. It always was for the under dog, up to a certain point. Gillis waited quietly for Benson to appear. He waited patiently, unbothered by the uneasiness which possessed the crowd.

Then the Mauler came down the aisle, and a second tidal wave, larger, more mountainous, swept in a vast crescendo of sound through the tight-packed crowd. Benson crawled through the ropes, strode to Gillis, felt of his taped hands. Then he looked into Gillis' face, grinning, showing his mouthful of gold. His grin faded slowly, a puzzled frown creased his low brow.

"Seen you before somewhere, haven't I, fella?" he asked. "Have we ever stepped through together before?"

"We did, Benson," replied Gillis quietly. "You knocked me out in the first round. You wouldn't let me drop. You fairly slaughtered me for five more rounds! I'm going to pay you up to-night!"

Benson grinned.

"More power to you, kid! Sorry to disappoint you. I'll carry you to the fifth, though."

"It won't last that long, Benson, unless I hold you up, like you did me."

The crowd yelled for action. Benson went to his corner. He was still grin-

ning, but his face was thoughtful, puzzled.

The crowd began its old chant.

"Knock the shave-tail for a goal, Benson! Hit him with everything but the stool!"

The old fear came to Gillis again as he listened to the voice of the mob. He put his gloved hands over his ears. Then, feeling sheepish, he took them down again, strove to shut his ears to the shouts and cat-calls. But his mind went back to the time when he had faced this killer before.

"Stand up and fight him, Gillis! You're laying down, you yellow pup!"

The bell clanged.

BENSON came from his corner like a cyclone. Gillis met him in the center of the ring. The fight that is still talked of in Shanghai had begun. Benson drove both hands to Gillis' stomach, like twin sledge-hammers. Gillis gasped, started to lower his hands to his mid-section, saw Benson's right start the deadly drive at his jaw, crouched, covering, then uncorked both hands in a series, fast and furious, of rights and lefts that carried all the pent-up steam of years of fearing the crowd—fear which he owed to the man before him, the man with the golden smile.

Benson's head rocked back, snapped forward, as a left flicked into his face, as a right smashed to his heart. Benson grinned. He could take it. He'd already taken the best Gillis could send.

He snarled, bored in. He rocked Gillis to his heels with a one-two that Gillis could neither duck nor block. Gillis tried to clinch. Benson smashed his nose, filled the evening with dancing stars, pounded Gillis to his knees with murderous rights and lefts.

Gillis staggered into a clinch. Benson snarled in his ears.

"Still yellow," he said. "Still hanging on rather than fight! I remember you, now. Guess I'll carry you through, after all, and mark you so you'll remember me some more!"

"I'm not a kid now," wheezed Gillis, gasping. "I'm going to break you to-night, Benson. You're dirty. I'm going to break you."

It was Benson's turn to gasp as Gillis fought his way out of the clinch, bent down to a fighting crouch, his stomach shrinking back against his spine, disappearing almost as a target for flying fists, sank his neck into his shoulders and bored in. He made little attempt to cover now, nor did Benson. Both were blood-spattered, fighting furies as the bell signaled the end of the first round.

They circled warily for a few seconds to begin the second.

"Get him, Gillis! Don't let him get you down!"

The crowd again. Thought he was afraid. Maybe he was, but he'd conquer his fear if it was the last thing on earth he did. He charged like a bull, went back to his heels, swaying like a tree, as Benson pounded relentlessly at his heart.

Gillis dropped to one knee for no count, dived in from low down, raised as he closed in, and punished Benson fearfully with half a dozen to the face and head. Benson grinned. A born fighter, loving the ring, was Benson—but dirty, playing the game to his own standards.

He knocked Gillis flat on his back with a haymaker that nothing could block. Gillis rose groggily at the count of seven, staggering in, arms wide, unprotected. Benson stepped inside, battered him about the head and neck.

Gillis chopped at Benson's face, battered, pounded, danced here and there, in and out, fists working like pistons, licking out like serpents' tongues.

Benson drove Gillis to the ropes, drove him through them with a right to his suddenly relaxed stomach. Gillis was back at the count of nine, doggedly slugging with this arch-sluggier of the Asiatic Fleet.

A wall of fists—a circular wall, closing on Gillis! He could see the blows coming. They landed, sapped

his strength. His arms sagged, sank to his side. Benson mauled him unmercifully.

The crowd was in an uproar, bellowing for the kill. Gillis dropped, rolled to his back, rolled to his stomach, to his hands and knees, tried to pull his hands loose from the floor—flopped down! The referee was counting. The count seemed fast.

Gillis was saved by the bell.

He came out for the third, staggering. He came out slowly, hesitantly. The crowd yelled.

"Don't turn yellow, Gillis! Stand up to him! You're doing fine! Jar him loose from his feet, Benson!"

The call of the pack once more, the blood-lusting screams of men who like the sight of blood.

The old fight of long ago came back. Benson, younger then, grinning, beating him to a pulp, making him seem to clinch, holding him up, carrying him through. Yellow!

Benson straightened Gillis with a blow to the chin, a blow that rocked Gillis, made him sway like a limb in the wind, and snapped his head back. His head, miraculously, cleared. The blow whirled him around. He saw his seconds signaling, making mad motions with their hands, saw their lips moving, knew they shouted encouragement. Then he saw the towel in the hands of one.

He whirled, drove Benson against the ropes, close to his seconds.

"If you birds throw in that towel," he snapped at them, "I'll beat the heads off both of you! I'm going to win this scrap!"

The man who held it folded the towel, sat upon it, grinning. Benson snarled in Gillis' ear.

"You *think* you're going to win! Watch me, if you still can see!"

Gillis started bicycling as Benson drove him unmercifully, battering unresisted at his face, head and body. He drove Gillis into a corner. Gillis doubled up, covering his stomach and head with hands and forearms. Benson stepped

back, measuring his man. Gillis uncorked like a jack-knife, came out of his corner like a projectile from a catapult, both arms moving in and out like rapiers.

Benson's grin faded as Gillis came in and would not be denied.

Gillis grinned now, taunting Benson. He slugged Benson in the stomach. In spite of years of training, Benson lowered his guard. Gillis, aiming at the button, knocked out some of Benson's gold teeth, spoiling any grin Benson might have started.

Fourth round. Like the other three, Benson leading a mile on points. Both men arm-weary and punch-drunk.

Fifth round. Toe to toe in the center of the ring, neither asking quarter nor giving it, Gillis and Benson slugged, sobbed with the pain of their own blows, became primitive men as they sought to destroy each other.

"Take it back, Gillis," mumbled Benson. "You're not yellow! But take the count and I'll slip you a hundred. I've got everything up on this fight."

"That fixes it, Mauler Benson," gritted Gillis. "Here goes!"

THERE was no stopping Gillis now. Yellow he might be, crooked never. He forgot the crowd in the one minute left him, as he should always have forgotten the crowd. He drove Benson to the ropes, rocked him, doubled him up, punched him off balance.

The crowd was roaring, but Gillis could hear not one word. He could only see the face of Benson, sick with pain, eyes glassy, but lips set in a snarl. Gillis drew back for the finisher.

A house seemed to fall on Gillis' head. He was down, his head weaving from side to side. The referee was counting. His second had grabbed the towel again.

The referee's hand had started down on the fatal count, when Gillis, so swiftly that the eye could scarcely follow the movement, charged Benson, almost from a prone position. Against

the ropes he drove him again, one-twoed him, mad with fury—and fear of his own fear. Benson's face was beseeching now.

"One hundred dollars, Gillis!"

Gillis drove to the man's heart with everything he had, and Benson went through the ropes. He went through as if hurled from a catapult. He was horizontal as he passed through. He fell in the laps of three of his friends, who lifted him, tossed him back into the ring, where he lay as one dead.

Gillis staggered to a neutral corner.

There was little need to count. *Benson was out!*

The referee stepped to the ropes, grasped them in his right hand.

"Lieutenant Gillis, gentlemen, the new light-heavyweight champion of the Asiatic Fleet!"

He had already lifted the right hand of the winner.

Gillis faced the crowd, looked all around the ring, raised his hand for silence. It made no difference that the British general was at the ringside, no difference that his own colonel, who had probably won a couple of hundred on the fight, was there, nor that his battalion commander was there. He could explain to them later.

Silence fell, and from the mashed lips of Gillis, like a cry of rejoicing, came words whose import only those in the know could comprehend:

"Go—to—hell!"

Then he turned, while the stunned silence held for all of a minute, and helped to lift the limp body of Benson, who still was in dreamland, to the chair his seconds had contemptuously tossed into the ring.

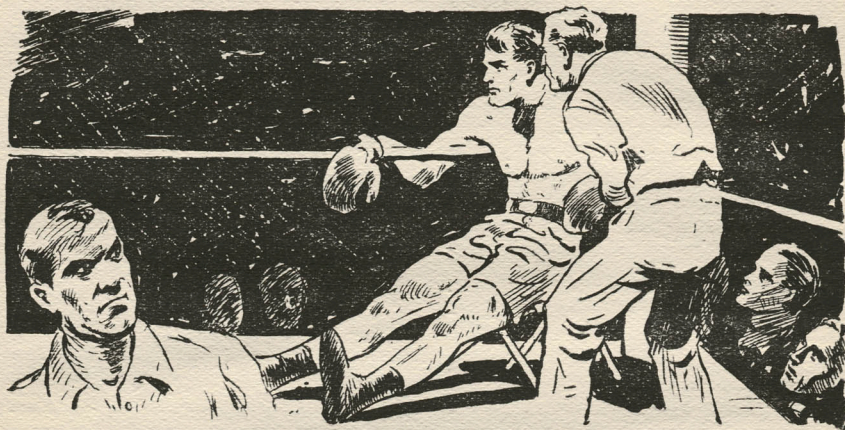
SOME LEADING SLUGGERS

THERE have been many sluggers in the history of Fisticana. Many have been capable of putting away a rival with a single blow. On the basis of total knockouts the following twenty men can be rated as the best hitters the game has ever seen:

	Knockouts		Knockouts
George Chaney	101	Fred Fulton	64
Jimmy Finlay	88	Kid Williams	59
Frank Moody	87	Mike McTigue	56
Peter Maher	80	Ted Lewis	56
Sam Langford	74	Eddie Burnbrook	55
Young Stribling	72	Jack Dillon	55
Bill Brennan	67	Tommy Ryan	55
Benny Leonard	64	Harry Greb	52
Joe Gans	63	Spike Sullivan	52
Jimmy Wilde	63	Georges Carpentier	51

In this rating, of course, many famous sluggers—such as Dempsey and Jeffries for instance—are eliminated due to the fact that they engaged in comparatively few ring contests.

Breed of Champions



By JACK BYRNE

*He was born of a fighting breed—yet his very heritage made him yellow!
A story of the amateur ring—of our champions of tomorrow whose only
prize is glory.*

THE hardest blow Joe Dunn ever felt was struck by his own right hand. It was an uppercut, a short one, with not much punch behind it and its force padded by heavy training gloves. It landed just beneath the ear of Joe Dunn's son.

Joe Dunn grinned, and side-stepped lithely to avoid the swift counter he expected. And then his grin was wiped away and a tiny startled cry was forced from his lips as he leaped in with both gloves open.

For the kid was going down!

He was on one knee when Joe Dunn's hands reached him, held him. "Kid . . ." Joe Dunn whispered. "Kid—I didn't mean—"

And then suddenly his words stopped. Gloved hands tightened on the boy's arm; Joe Dunn, down on his knees now, stared stupidly, unbelievably, into the face of his son. Except for his eyes and the faint tremor of his lips it was as if a great sponge had wiped all expres-

sion from the face of Joe Dunn; made it blank—ghastly.

"Kid—" his lips barely moved. Then, all at once, his body stiffened and he raised himself slowly to his feet, leaving the boy still kneeling there. Wearily Joe Dunn drew the back of his glove across his eyes; almost mechanically he bent down to tug at the glove-strings with his teeth.

"That will be all for today," Joe Dunn muttered.

His head was bowed and his eyes clouded as he bent down under the ropes and moved slowly away. The kid still knelt there silently.

IN the days before the war when Joe Dunn was known as "The Killer," men used to say that he'd take three punches to land one. Many a fighter had dropped Joe Dunn but none had made him back up. In his scrap book at home was a treasured clipping that New York's greatest sporting writer had

signed; it said that the shrapnel at Belleau Wood which had torn into Joe Dunn's leg had robbed the ring of its greatest fighting heart since the days of Ketchel and the Dane.

Perhaps that is why it hurt Joe Dunn so much to see that his son was yellow.

He knew that the blow hadn't been a heavy one; he was surprised to see the kid drop under it. Yet he thought that it might have reached the button, and he knelt beside the boy penitent. He was only seventeen, the kid was, and Joe was afraid he'd put on more steam than he intended. It was then he saw the look in the kid's eyes.

Joe Dunn had seen that look before, had seen it in the faces of whipped men. It wasn't the dull, glassy stare that came when a man was punch-drunk. It wasn't the dogged glare of a man who is weakening and knows it. No, it was something else again—a whimpering sort of look, a thing of sheer fear. Many a time Joe Dunn had sneered at it; many a man he'd taunted for it.

And there it was, shining in the kid's eyes. *Yellow!*

Never once did Joe Dunn look back toward the ring as he moved stiffly toward the little room he called his office. He didn't hear the shouts of the other kids who were punching the heavy bag and shadow-boxing at the other end of the little gym. For Joe Dunn was sort of stunned; couldn't yet believe that *his* kid was yellow.

He sank into a chair and stared blindly straight ahead. It was a long moment before he was aware of the other man in the room. He looked up. . . . Captain Parsons.

"You look hurt, Joe," Parsons said. "What's the matter? The leg again?"

"Worse 'n that, Captain," Joe Dunn answered. "Worse 'n that."

Parsons had commanded Joe Dunn's company in France. It was he who had given Joe his chance as boxing instructor in the service, who had fixed up this job for him at the little club where he could teach the neighborhood kids to

handle the gloves. There wasn't much money in it—just a living—but it had given Joe Dunn something to do when he came back. And he'd sort of enjoyed teaching the lads; enjoyed watching Young Bob, his son . . . until now.

"It's the kid—Bob," he said. "Yellow . . ." Dully, he told Parsons what had happened.

There was a bond of understanding between Joe Dunn and this man who had been his captain. Some men might have laughed or tried to find excuses for the kid, but Parsons knew Joe Dunn, knew how he felt. He nodded.

"Which means—?" he asked.

"Which means," Joe Dunn finished, "that the kid doesn't fight tonight. I'm sendin' Morgan in."

"And *that* means," Parsons said slowly, "that the Shamrocks take four out of seven bouts—"

Joe Dunn shrugged wordlessly.

"—and that Marty Ford, who coaches them, will get a nice job at the City A. C.—a job that Joe Dunn deserves; that he can have if *his* boys win four out of seven."

Joe Dunn's eyes answered him. "He's yellow," Joe said softly; "I saw it."

And that was that. Wade Parsons, late captain A. E. F., rose without another word and walked to the window. For a long time both were silent.

At length Parsons turned to the door. "I think," he spoke softly, "I'll hunt up the kid—huh? Maybe . . ."

"Ask one of the boys to send Morgan in," Joe Dunn said. "Want to have a talk with him."

YOUNG BOB was tying his street shoes when Wade Parsons found him. The boy looked up nervously and his pale face flushed a sudden red. His eyes fell and fingers fumbled with laces that were already tight. Parsons put a hand on his shoulder.

"What's wrong, son?" he asked quietly.

Young Bob didn't look up. He squirmed his shoulder from Parson's

grasp. "I'm all right," he said huskily. "Lemme alone."

But Parsons was sitting beside him now. "Listen here, kid," he was saying, "I can't handle that line. Snap out of it! Act your age! Young Uncle Hector wants to know just what happened—and why."

Young Bob didn't change expression, didn't raise his head; but slowly his lips began to move. "He hit me," the boy said, "and I—I stayed down. I—he—well, I guess he's off of me."

"Why did you stay down?" asked Parsons softly.

"I—" the boy's voice was husky—"I don't know. Maybe . . . maybe I'm yellow."

Wade Parsons laughed then and his big hands went out to grasp the boy's shoulder. Roughly he twisted the kid around until their eyes met.

"That's a lie," he growled, "and both of us know it. Now let's get the up-and-up on this. What's the matter?"

Young Bob swallowed hard. "I don't know, Captain," he said. "Honest, I don't. We were just sparring, see, and he swung a quick one that caught me off balance. And then I saw his face—and I remembered. . . . And I stayed down."

"Remembered?"

The kid nodded. "Yeah. His face was like it used to be when they took me to watch him fight. I—I guess I was just scared. Guess I've always been scared of him. So I stayed down."

Parsons' big hands clenched hard on the kid's shoulders. He understood, for he recalled the scenes of other days then . . . Joe Dunn—Killer Joe—in his corner. . . . His manager holding up Joe's motherless boy to shake hands and wish him luck. . . . The white face of the kid, and his scared eyes suffering as Joe Dunn bored through a rain of blows with that fighting snarl set on his face. A moment of terror. . . .

Why, the kid was only six then—no wonder the memory brought him fear. And Joe Dunn himself was responsible

for it. He had made the boy afraid of his own father!

Yes, Wade Parsons understood. But would Joe Dunn see it?

Parsons slid an arm across young Bob's shoulders, and pulled the boy close. "I get you, kid," he said. "Let's go see Joe."

But the boy held back. "Aw, no, Captain," he pleaded; "I can't. It's like squawkin' or something. I—"

With the palm of his free hand Wade Parsons tilted the boy's nose. "You shut up," he growled in mock anger, "and listen to the doctor. We're going to see that stubborn old man of yours and I'm going to give him Wade Parsons' famous Lecture 33A to rebellious sergeants. If he doesn't cock an attentive ear I'll put him on K. P. for the duration of hostilities."

Bob Dunn managed a wry grin. "O. K., Cap," he said. "I'm game if you are."

They found Joe in his little office talking to two of his boys. One was Morgan, second-string 160-pounder; the other was Snell, Joe's best light-heavy-weight. Bob's father glanced up as they came in and his eyes narrowed. He went on talking:

"It's up to you two," he was saying. "We stand an even chance in the lighter classes, and if you come through we'll win. You, Morgan, have got to try for a K. O. This boy you're meeting is plenty fast and he figures to out-box you; all you can do is keep rushing him—keep takin' it an' try for a haymaker."

He lifted his eyes for just a moment and they flashed toward his son. "I know you can take it, Morgan. Just stick in there an' keep comin'."

Wade Parsons cleared his throat elaborately. "Got a minute, Joe?" he asked.

Joe Dunn didn't raise his head. "I'm busy," he said. Then, to Snell: "I can't tell you a thing, lad. This boy you're meeting is new to me. Never seen him work. But I got the office he's plenty tough, and you'll have to be good. . . .

Now go on and get cleaned up. Sleep an hour or so if you can. Report here to me at seven."

Then Wade Parsons was leaning over his desk. "Listen, Joe," he said. "I want to talk to you. Now wipe that dirty look off your face and get this. I've been talking to the kid, and I know what's—"

"Wait!" Joe Dunn almost snarled it. He was half way from his chair and his face was hard. "Just what are you going to talk about?" he asked throatily.

"Why—" Parsons was startled—"about this afternoon. About the kid—"

Joe Dunn's fist crashed on the table and Joe Dunn's face was an angry mask. "Lissen, Cap," he growled, "you ain't talkin' to me, see? I don't want to hear about it—don't want to think about it. I'll—"

They stared at each other in tense silence while young Bob stood, white-faced, behind them. And the Captain's eyes were first to drop, for he knew how Joe Dunn figured things; he understood.

"All right, Joe," he said quietly, "we'll say no more about it. But I'm telling you now, Joe Dunn, we're going to do something about it."

He turned to Bob. "C'mon, kid. I sort of got a hunch. . . ."

They left Joe Dunn still standing there, his face white and drawn, and in his eyes a brooding anger.

YELLOW light flooding the ring—*pad, pad* of swift feet on canvas—the smack of leather against bare flesh! Two white bodies weaving in and out; dodging, parrying, striking. A hum of voices from the watchers. Here and there a shout. Again the slither of feet and the thud of blows. A mighty roar from the crowd—"He's down!"

The arena was filled. Men and women—mothers and fathers and sweet-hearts—people from every walk in life were jammed close. High up, the Shamrock rooters gathered in a body and filled the place with din each time

their man struck. The friends of Joe Dunn's Third Avenue boys replied to each sally with rattles and whistles and cheers. At the ringside a sprinkling of white shirts stood out against the black of evening clothes. Close to the ring two or three sports writers made lazy notes.

For it was well known that these bouts were a sort of grudge fight between the Shamrocks and the Third Avenue A. C. Also, they knew it was a test between Joe Dunn and Marty Ford who coached the Shamrocks. There was a fat salary attached to the instructor's job at the City A. C., and the directors of that big club had been wavering between Marty and Joe. It was common gossip that they would offer the position to the coach whose boys made the better showing.

The fifth bout was on. Each club had taken two in the lighter classes. Joe Dunn was at the ringside, crouched down, chewing nervously on a splinter. Each time a blow started he shifted his head; each time one landed he seemed to wince in sympathy. . . . Go easy, kid—box him! . . . That's the way. . . . Now—now the right—bring it up. The left. . . . Again—one—two!

Clang! It's over.

They're back in their corners waiting for the decision. Joe Dunn is wiping his fighter's face—telling him he made a nice fight and it looked like he'd get the duke.

Then the bell clangs for silence. The announcer raises his hand, waves the judges' votes.

"Winnah. . . . Lutz!"

The Third Avenue crowd howls. They're clapping at the ringside. The Shamrock fighter comes over to shake hands and grin and say it was a good fight. And now two more are in the ring and the bell is clanging again for silence.

"In this cornah, Fred Davidson of the Shamrock S. C. . . . His opponent—Dan Morgan. . . . Weights: Davidson, one-fifty-nine; Morgan, one-fifty-six, three-quarters."

His opponent—Dan Morgan! The echoes were singing in Joe Dunn's mind as he whispered in Morgan's ear. Dan Morgan—and it should have been Bob Dunn! He shifted nervously while the referee was giving his usual instructions in the center. Back in the corner again he took the boy's robe and whispered to him in a voice that sounded strange.

"Make him mix it. Keep borin' in there and throwin' 'em at him. Don't let him box an' don't let him tie you up. . . .

The ten-second buzzer . . . the gong! Morgan went out of his corner fast and Davidson met him quarter way. They seemed to hesitate as they came together; seemed to be only a whirl of flailing arms. Davidson gave ground and Morgan drove him against the ropes. Morgan's right and left flashed out—seemed to have him pinned there. And then it happened.

Even Joe Dunn didn't see the blow start, but he caught a glimpse of Davidson's right flashing up as the Shamrock boy bounced off the ropes and Morgan came plunging in with both hands swinging. And Joe Dunn shuddered as that right went home. Morgan seemed to stop suddenly as it struck, then to wilt as his opponent's left sank below his heart. He sagged—fell—and even as he went down his right was set to swing again. But Morgan's right would swing no more that night.

They finally brought him around, though, and he was able to muster a grin when Davidson came to his corner. "You won't do that on me again," Morgan said. "I'll get you next time."

Davidson laughed as their gloves met, but somehow Joe Dunn couldn't. He was thinking of Bob; wishing *his* kid could take it like Morgan did. . . . Well, that made it three all. Now it was up to Snell.

The Shamrock crowd was still yelling, still making the Arena echo with their joy at the quick knockout. The

bell was clanging vainly for silence but they wouldn't stop to hear the announcer tell them that the winner was Davidson; time, one minute, seven seconds of the first round.

The Shamrock handlers were leading another man in now, and Joe wondered vaguely why Snell didn't come. He cast a hasty glance toward the aisle that led to the dressing-rooms. The Shamrock man was in the ring; was sitting down while his handlers kneaded his muscles. Tough looking baby, Joe thought to himself; pretty cool and confident for an amateur, and pretty old-looking, too. Nice legs and well-muscled arms. His beard was sprouting out blue-black and his confident smile was gold-toothed. Looked bad for Snell. . . .

Snell? Where was Snell? Joe Dunn growled a hoarse order to one of the seconds and the man scurried toward the dressing-rooms. Joe bit nervously on his splinter as the crowd began to shout impatiently and clap mocking hands. Snell should know better than to be late. . . .

Then some one was clutching his arm. "You Dunn?" the man asked excitedly. "Yeah—hey, what's wrong?"

The stranger was pulling down the aisle toward the exits. "Quick!" he was panting. "Snell—hurt—wants to see you. . . Quick!"

They were running down the aisle while the crowd stared in wonder. Now they were downstairs and the stranger was pointing to the little rubbing-room near the showers.

"In there!" he gasped, and he fell back as Joe Dunn darted in before him.

"Snell!" Joe Dunn shouted, "Snell! Where—" And he suddenly realized that the little room was vacant. He twisted about wildly and leaped for the door just as the *click* sounded that locked it.

Joe Dunn was bewildered—mad. He was shouting wild things as he hurled his shoulder against the locked door. Again and again he dashed against it,

bruising himself without feeling it, and each time the wood hurled him back. He picked up a wooden stool and beat wildly against the panels, shouting as he felt the door crack. Again he struck and a white gash leaped up in the door. Again . . . and again. And now the panel splintered and he tore at the opening with hands that didn't mind jagged wounds. He jerked with all his strength; almost fell backward as a loose slab came free. Then his hand snaked through and he turned the key. He was running back to the ringside, furious with silent rage.

He burst into the Arena like a madman; had made three tremendous steps down the aisle before he was conscious of the roar that filled the place. Wildly he stared around—up toward the yellow glow which marked out the white canvas and the ropes in a square of gleaming white. And Joe Dunn paused suddenly as if a mighty blow had struck him. He gasped.

For in that square of light two figures moved—and one of them was a tall, yellow-haired boy with a very white face. Young Bob! His son whom he'd branded yellow!

THE stranger had no sooner led Joe Dunn below than the cat-calls of the impatient crowd were silenced. From the opposite dressing-rooms Wade Parsons came, and behind him was a tall, white-faced boy with an old robe draped across his shoulders. They hurried to the ring, and Parsons whispered with the referee. The judges talked a moment. Then the gong sang and the announcer was in the center.

"In this cornah, Mike Grosso of the Shamrocks. . . . His opponent—Bob Dunn, who is substituting for Kid Snell. Weights: Grosso, one-seventy-five, one-half; Dunn, one-sixty."

A buzzing whisper spread through the crowd. Fifteen pounds difference—Dunn was fighting out of his class! Just a kid, too, and he looked whipped already as he stood in the center listen-

ing to the referee. Then the buzz grew to a deep hum as the ten-second horn groaned; it grew to a roar as the gong rang.

They slid out to the center cautiously and stalked each other for a moment without attempting a blow. Grosso feinted with a left and Bob Dunn stepped back. Grosso snarled a laugh and gestured him to come in and fight. Another moment of sparring, with both moving closer; then a sudden shout from the crowd as they traded rights to the body.

They were in close now, their arms moving like pistons. Glove thudded against flesh. Grosso, head down, stood toe to toe with the white-faced kid and neither gave a step. Bob sank a long left below Grosso's heart and stiffened his muscles to take the return blow. But suddenly—out of nowhere, it seemed—Grosso's right swept up in a fierce arc that ended with the kid's jaw. And as Bob dropped forward the left crashed into his side.

It was then—just as he sank to the canvas—that Joe Dunn burst upon the ringside like a whirlwind. He was shouting but the sound was lost in the maelstrom of the crowd. He clutched at Wade Parsons, tried to tear his way to the ring, but Parsons hauled him back and screamed at him in return. It may have been something that Joe Dunn saw in Parsons' eyes for a photographic second—or maybe he suddenly *knew*—but all at once they were quiet and their eyes were fixed on the drama that was out there on the white canvas.

Five—the referee's arm picked up the timer's count—six . . . seven—

And the kid was up! He was on his feet and Grosso was coming in with his right drawn back for the kill. But before he could strike, Bob Dunn had smothered him in a flurry of blows—was driving him back to the ropes with left and right, left and right, in a mad barrage against chest and jaw and ribs. Twice—three times Grosso drove his right but the kid didn't seem to feel it.

He was driving him back . . . back . . .

Joe Dunn didn't understand; didn't care about understanding right then. For he had seen the kid get up and take it. He was in the ring automatically, was working frantically on the boy trying to tell him with his eyes that he was sorry. And while he worked Wade Parsons was shouting the kid's story in his ear. Joe Dunn didn't hear it all, but gradually the idea began to dawn.

He said, "Kid—"

And then Parsons was pulling him outside the ropes. The gong!

Bob Dunn was out with a rush. He smothered Grosso's lead and tied him up in the neutral corner. For Bob Dunn had seen in his father's eyes that it was all right again. He knew in his heart the words his father would have spoken back there when the gong rang. He tried with a short uppercut and Grosso's left flicked his face. Close! Have to watch that.

He weaved in again; took two jolting shots to the body as he missed a long one for the jaw. They hurt. He'd have to catch that left before it landed. The left . . . *Uh!*

Seemed funny to Bob Dunn that he was down. That one hadn't hurt much; just knocked the breath out of him. He'd get up without a count. . . . What were they howling for? Couldn't they see he was all right?

There, he was up. . . . Something was beating at his face and his stomach was numb, but he had to keep swinging. He had to show the Old Man that he could take it. Left, right . . . keep 'em going! Keep pilin' in—don't back up!

He didn't hear the bell; was only conscious that those gloves were no longer whipping at him, and that he must cross to his corner. He tried to grin at Parsons and his father, and now they were working on him. Water felt good . . . their hands felt good. . . . Only one round to go!

Who is that guy talking to the Old Man? What's that he's sayin' about Grosso? He's not an amateur, huh?

This newspaper guy has seen him work on the Coast . . . tells the Old Man to stop the fight. . . .

Stop the fight! The words leaped in Bob Dunn's brain and seemed miraculously to clear it. He drew an arm across his eyes, shook his head. His father was waving an arm at the referee to call him over when Bob reached up a gloved hand to knock the arm down. He turned on Wad Parsons and his father and the newspaper guy, half-arose from the stool, his eyes blazing.

"Stop the fight?" he sobbed. "You'll stop the fight? You will like the deuce—I'll stop it!"

The three stared at him.

"Kid—" his father began.

"Gosh!" said the newspaper guy.

And Parsons sort of gulped and grinned and jabbed an elbow into Joe Dunn's ribs. "*He'll stop the fight!*" said Captain Wade Parsons.

The gong rang before they could snatch the stool from Bob Dunn's corner.

The kid wasn't quite conscious of what he was doing in that third and last round. He only knew that there was a man out there who must go down, who must hit the canvas and stay there. He was out of the corner and met Grosso half-way with a right that he lifted from the waist.

Grosso countered swiftly, sidled back, but Bob Dunn kept tearing in on him. He forgot to box, forgot all the tricks his father had drilled in him day after day. Just *punch, punch, punch!* Just punch and take it until something gave. He felt blows but they seemed to come from far off. He knew he was tired and it was becoming more difficult to breathe, but it didn't matter. Get in there and take it!

Now he was down. . . . No, he was up again and his arms were swinging. Sometimes he couldn't see Grosso, sometimes he couldn't even see the light. . . . Funny, but it didn't matter. All he had to do was keep swinging 'em. Keep his gloves going. . . .

Then the haze cleared and they were close together. Grosso was snarling at him—or was he laughing at him? Grosso was hitting him in the face and he was piling glove upon glove against the face of Grosso.

Hit—hit—hit that face! Knock that smile off of there. . . . *Hit!*

And all at once the face disappeared and Bob Dunn had stumbled and was clinging to the ropes. Funny. . . . He couldn't get up.

BOB DUNN was all right, though, when they got him down to the dressing room. They were still roaring upstairs; the sting of collodion was on his lips and the burn of smelling-salts in his nostrils. He was all right, though.

His father and Wade Parsons and the newspaper guy were there. They told him how he'd knocked Grosso cold with only twenty seconds to go—and they said a lot of other things that made Bob Dunn's face red and made him say, "Aw-ww!" But he didn't really feel good until Kid Snell came in with the rest of the gang.

Joe spotted Kid Snell right off. "And

what in the blue blazes happened to you?" he wanted to know. "Where were you in all the excitement?"

Kid Snell looked a little scared. "I was here all the time," he said.

"Here?"

"Yeah," said Kid Snell, pointing to one of the lockers; "in there. . . . I was just gettin' ready to go up, see, when these two bozos—" he gestured toward Parsons and Bob Dunn—"come down an' said Bob was to fight my fight.

"I said, 'Sure you are!—like so much applesauce', an' when Bob reaches over to get my robe I swung on him. So we got into it—an' somethin' must of happened—an' when I come to I was done up in towels an' stuck over there like the wet wash."

Joe Dunn tried hard to smother his grin. He shook his head reprovingly at Bob and Wade Parsons.

But Wade Parsons wasn't trying to smother *his* grin.

"I warned you, sergeant," he chuckled, "that Bob and I would *do* something about it—and it looks to me like we did!"

WHEN DEMPSEY TOOK THE COUNT

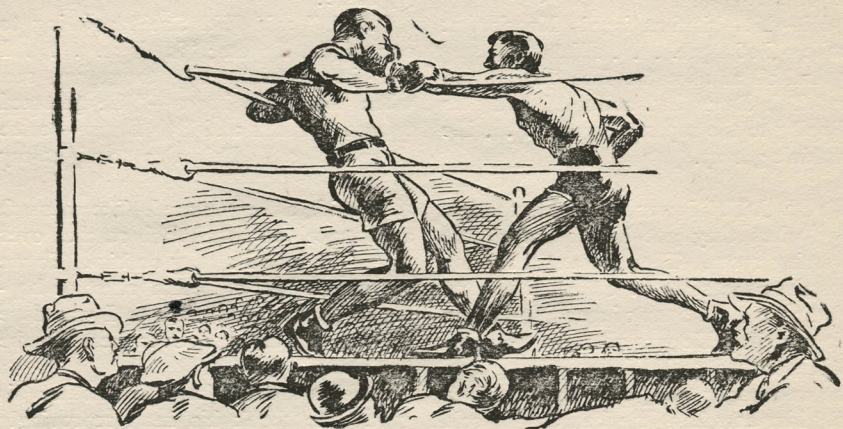
One legitimate knockout was scored against Jack Dempsey, though it is not in the record books. When Jack was training for the Bill Brennan bout he engaged Jamaica Kid as a sparring partner. The Kid was big and strong and could hit hard.

They were mixing it up in the gymnasium when Jamaica let go a wild right-hander that started from his heels. It landed flush on the button and Dempsey went down and out. He was unconscious for ten minutes and Jack Kearns was scared to death.

When Dempsey was working out for Sharkey he had Tilly Kid Herman, a veteran middleweight, in his entourage. Tilly made the same sort of a *faux pas*, but his punch only rocked Dempsey to his heels. It wasn't strong enough to keel him over. Herman was promptly discharged by Leo Flynn, who was handling the camp.

This may or may not be a warning to sparring partners. You are never supposed to hit the boss too hard. There is another angle to it, however, and that is that a man in training must protect himself as completely as possible against injuries which might lead to a postponement of his match, or even endanger his career. He must, in brief, get all the work-out possible without running too much of a risk. That is one of the many worries of fight managers.

Famous Fights I Have Seen



Ketchel and Papke By OLD-TIMER

Ketchel was a fighter for you—a grim man with the tiger instinct; the savage, slashing mauler with fury in his heart! Drama packed his life, as tragedy ended it—and the ring has never seen his counterpart.

ONE of the most vivid pictures the ring will ever show was painted one October day in Colma, California, when Stanley Ketchel stood looking down at the writhing ebony body of Jack Johnson.

There was the greatest heavyweight in the world, a wonderful boxer, a clean, sharp hitter, a physical giant whose more than six feet of perfectly muscled bulk weighed two hundred and ten pounds, struck down by a boy who weighed fifty pounds less and was four inches smaller!

The fighting game has many black spots against it—meanness, treachery and greed, but it has its big moments, too.

And, to my mind, it will never have a bigger one than came that afternoon when Stanley Ketchel's smashing blows

dropped Jack Johnson to the canvas.

The Michigan Assassin fought sixty-two battles before a bullet ended his career, at the peak of its glory. Fifty of them he won by knockouts.

Twice he was stopped. Once when untrained and in wretched condition, by a man whom he defeated on three other occasions. And once by the huge negro, who outweighed him by fifty pounds—the man who became heavyweight champion of the world.

There are several types of fighting men.

The one is the business man; the clever, speedy boxer, who goes through his entire career with an eye only on financial reward. He is usually a dapper fellow like Benny Leonard, or Leach Cross, who, when he retires, has a fortune. The game is a business to

him, with little of romance or adventure in it.

Then there is the rugged shock-absorber, like Battling Nelson or Ad Wolgast or Joe Grim—steel-ribbed, hard-chinned young men, willing to take a dozen punches to land one. They aren't craftsmen, or inspiring to watch; simply bulldogs with unquenchable tenacity and unbelievable vitality.

And then there is the killer!

He is the man with the tiger instinct; the savage, slashing fighter, with the lust of fury in his heart. There is no fear lurking in it. He comes to kill or be killed. And he has the power to slay, the knockout punch that is deadly even when he is battered and reeling and blind.

Do you remember Kid Lavigne in his battle with Joe Walcott, the ape-man from the Barbadoes? The Kid was literally slashed to ribbons. One ear was hanging by a shred. He was bathed in blood from head to heels. Yet he stopped the fiery Walcott.

Do you remember Terry McGovern, with the senses knocked out of him by that terrible hitter, Oscar Gardner, rising blindly at the count of nine to tear in, utterly unconscious of what he was doing, and lay Gardner in the resin at his feet?

Do you remember the classic battle between Jack Dempsey and Firpo, the Wild Bull of the Pampas, when Dempsey crawled back into the ring, stunned by the frightful blow that had hurled him out of it, and went raging into action, knocking Firpo down time and again until he had literally beaten the resistance out of the huge bulk that towered before him?

THE real killer is a comparative rarity in the ring. In him must be combined not only the will to do and a merciless heart, but the sheer power to accomplish his design.

And not in all the long history of the prize ring has there ever been a more ideal man of this type than Stan-

ley Ketchel, the Michigan Assassin.

They didn't call him the "Assassin" in merry jest.

His real name was Stanislaus Kiecal. He was a Pole; one of that rugged Northern race, the hardships of whose ancestors bred strength of bone and muscle; high courage and ferocity in battle.

When he tore at an opponent you might visualize that foe as a Don Cossack who had participated in a pogrom that laced the snows of Poland with blood. It was as though the one thought in Ketchel's mind was to revenge the woes of Poland on any man who entered the ring with him.

There is no "thrown" battle in the Assassin's record. He was a fighter, not an actor, and he would not have known how to fake a fight successfully.

He was fifteen when he ran away from his home in Grand Rapids, and went out where the West begins. Fifteen—but a strong young fellow with what the man in the street calls "guts."

For a while Stanley worked on a ranch, punched cattle, but the monotony bored him. Your killer of the ring lives on excitement and action. He must be moving.

In 1903 he drifted into Butte, which was wide open and humming. A tough prize fighter named Kid Tracey had won some measure of fame thereabouts. Boxing bouts were popular, but Tracey found some difficulty in getting any one to meet him. He was too good for the sort of opposition that could be furnished in Butte.

YOUNG KIECAL was jobless and hungry. Though only sixteen then, he had been through more than his share of informal fistic encounters. He was unknown and inexperienced, but the killer instinct was in his heart. So he offered to fight Kid Tracey.

The great man scoffed. He wasn't in the habit of murdering kids, he said. But the price of beans in Butte was high, and Tracey had to fight to live, so

he condescendingly agreed to fight "that Polack kid from Michigan."

It wasn't a fight in the real sense of the word. Stanley Ketchel, as the announcer presented him to the crowd—being unable to master Stanislaus Kiecal—flew at Tracey like an unleashed wildcat. Over swished his left hand, the hand that was to become so famous in American fistic history, down, down went the pride of Butte, his nose on the canvas.

Thus began the career of one of the most wonderful fighters that ever lived. From then until the memorable Fourth of July, 1907, only three men lasted the limit with him, cagy old veterans who clinched and clawed and did their best to keep out of the way.

And it was on that Fourth of July that the fame of Stanley Ketchel really began. His name was a byword in Butte and Gregson Springs and Miles City and Helena, but beyond that he was unknown.

The purses he earned were small, and he liked fun. So when a dollar came he spent it as recklessly as he fought in the ring.

It happened at that time that Joe Thomas was booked to fight in Marysville. Thomas had won the welter-weight championship by knocking out "Honey Bill" Mellody, and no one was conceded a chance in the same ring with him. The local men declined to meddle with his game, so Jim Coffroth brought the black-haired youngster as a sacrifice on the altar of Thomas' record.

Sacrifice?

Ketchel lacked then the knowledge that was to come to him later, but he was a killer then as always. Joe Thomas' speed and ring-craft enabled him to keep on his feet until the end of the twenty-round battle, but he was hacked and beaten and dizzy when the last gong clanged, while Ketchel was still fresh and able to go at top speed.

No local favorite ever lost a decision in Marysville, however, so the referee called the slaughter a draw.

IT was Stanley's introduction to the tricky side of the ring, but it brought him fame. No one in the East had ever heard of him, but every follower of the game knew Joe Thomas.

So column after column in the sports pages of the metropolitan dailies were filled with stories and conjectures about this unknown.

Just eleven months later Ketchel gave Billy Papke—who had scored seventeen knockouts in twenty-four fights, and had never been beaten—a frightful lacing before an enormous crowd in Milwaukee.

When Referee Jack McGuigan held up Stanley's soggy glove at the end of that ferocious battle, the latter's name was whipping over the wires to every corner of the United States.

This boy, who a year before had been fighting before small-town audiences for enough to give him a scanty living, stood on the threshold of a fortune he had never dreamed of.

Stanley Ketchel was the man of the hour—the greatest middleweight since the days of Jack Dempsey, the Nonpareil!

No man of his weight—no champion—has appeared since who compares with him more favorably than a Mexican diamond would with the Kohinoor. He possessed the vital spark, the killing instinct, the punch that marked him then as a wonder. It developed with the passing year.

Had the bullet of a murderer not cut short his career he would have been a champion indefinitely. Certainly there was no one on the fistic horizon when he passed into the Valhalla of fighting men who had a chance with him.

I first intimately heard of Stanley Ketchel from Jim Coffroth, who staged the greatest fights in the history of the West, and whose Mission Street Arena was the real "Fives Court of America."

Coffroth had come to New York from Milwaukee, where he sat at the ringside during the first Ketchel-Papke fight.

"No other man of his weight could have beaten Papke but Ketchel," said Jim, "for he really is a wonderful fellow. Nobody but Battling Nelson could have faced the licking Bill did without flinching, and let me tell you that this Ketchel is a merciless tiger in the ring.

"They told Billy to watch the kid's left. Everybody knew how powerful it was. Papke rushed from his corner, carefully guarding for that left—and pop! quick as you could wink, the right went over, and down he went. It hurt him so that he wasn't himself through the rest of the fight.

"Ketchell isn't left-handed, you know. I mean to say that he isn't entirely dependent on his left as Frankie Neil was. He is a hitter from either side, and an awful punisher, too. Why, the first time I saw him I was on to that.

"He was playing handball, and ordinarily a man plays strongly with either his right or his left. Ketchel was there with both, and I figured right away that he was a dangerous man to box with. Why, they laughed at me when I brought him down from Marysville to fight Joe Thomas. They thought he was a 'job.'

"Guess I figured him to a nicety, eh? He's an awfully decent fellow, too. Not red-headed, as some of the papers have it. His hair is black as a Spaniard's and he has dark eyes, too. Quiet, unassuming chap with few words to say. No braggart, and never wants any the best of it.

"**H**E doesn't need any the best of it. He's the best drawing card in the country today. There's only one who has a real chance with him. That's Jack O'Brien. I figure him the greatest of all the fighters except Ketchel.

"I was in Los Angeles when Tommy Burns and O'Brien agreed to fake their go. Jack didn't train a lick. Burns was working in a big pavilion, and the crowds there every day forced him to

go at top speed, but O'Brien stalled, knowing that the go was to be framed.

"Three days before the fight we drank four quarts of wine together. Now you know as well as I do that any man who is going to fight on the square never drinks. Billy Nolan was to take O'Brien, Battling Nelson and Abe Attell across the pond, and Jack was to fake with Burns before leaving for England.

"At the very last moment bets were declared off, and O'Brien fell back in his corner like a dead man. He had agreed to give Tommy all the money and part of the betting. When he knew that it was all off he had to fight on the square and out of condition, and he put up the finest fight you'd ever want to see.

"How was that for nerve?"

Jack O'Brien was the master boxer of his division then, a cool, crafty, courageous man, who knew every trick of ring strategy. Though he had been in the ring for fourteen years he was then only a shade over thirty, still in the prime of his strength. He had twice beaten Tommy Burns before that "framed" bout in the West, and Burns later became heavyweight champion of the world.

He was—as Coffroth had hoped—to pit his marvelous skill against the killer instinct and terrific punch of the young tiger from out of the West. And no fight in all the history of the ring had a more dramatic ending than the one that came with their first meeting.

They were matched for ten rounds in New York.

The East knew Jack O'Brien. They had seen him in two hundred fights. They had seen him beat sluggers like Bob Fitzsimmons and Joe Choynski and Joe Walcott. They had seen him outspeed ring masters like Kid McCoy and Jack Blackburn.

What if this young Galahad was the greatest fighter they had seen on the gold coast in years?

He wouldn't lay the weight of his glove on Jack O'Brien!

That was the verdict of the Eastern experts.

When the bell sounded for the finish of that fight it interrupted the count of the referee.

A man lay stretched flat on his back, battered into unconsciousness.

Another stood in his corner, looking down at his fallen foe.

The man on the floor was Jack O'Brien. The man on his feet was Stanley Ketchel.

If you look in the record book you'll see the mystic symbol "no dec"—meaning "no decision"—next to that bout, but no cleaner knockout was ever scored. Had the round lasted two seconds longer the bout would have gone down in Ketchel's record as a knockout.

For ten rounds O'Brien matched his speed and cleverness against the fiery assault of the western killer. But no left jab could keep him away; no speed could evade the headlong assault of Stanley Ketchel.

In that last round he caught O'Brien, literally herded him to his doom, smashing away with both hands until the pride of Philadelphia went down and out.

Three months later Ketchel again stopped him, this time in three flying rounds in which O'Brien was continually on the defensive, beaten from pillar to post and back again, frantically and hopelessly bringing into play every trick and stratagem that he knew.

Let it be said to the honor of the dark-haired boy that no other man, save that mighty black, Sam Langford, ever nailed Jack O'Brien. Langford did it in Jack's last fight after he had been softened by sixteen years in the hardest of all games.

Don't gather the impression from what I have said that Stanley Ketchel was merely a slugger, with courage and the killing instinct of a tiger. With those attributes alone he would never have accomplished what he did. He had

instinctive ring knowledge and speed and shiftiness, and no man of his weight, unless it was that physical freak, Bob Fitzsimmons, could strike a harder blow.

There was so much drama crowded into Stanley Ketchel's life that it is hard to pick out the bouts that were most crimson with the flare of it.

The finest, perhaps, were his fights with the "Illinois Thunderbolt," Billy Papke, his first meeting with "Philadelphia Jack" O'Brien, and his match with Jack Johnson for the heavyweight championship of the world.

There were others just a shade less so. Four times he fought Joe Thomas. The first was the "Native Son draw" already alluded to. Then three times he beat the veteran, knocking him out in thirty-two rounds, taking a twenty-round decision, and then erasing him altogether by stopping him in two rough cantos.

He knocked out the welterweight champion, Mike Twin Sullivan, in two minutes at Colma. Then Jack Twin, Mike's brother and buddy, took the quarrel upon himself. Jack had been recognized as the middleweight titleholder, but Ketchel toppled him over in twenty rounds.

Yes, there was color and excitement, indeed, to these bouts, but Papke, O'Brien and Johnson were his foils in battles that will go down as epics in ring history.

They were of entirely different types, yet Ketchel fought his swirling type of battle against them all. Each was at his feet one time or another. Twice he rocked Papke into dreamland, and twice O'Brien was unconscious when the last bell tolled. The giant Johnson, too, was smashed to the floor by the Ketchel punch backed by the Ketchel ferocity.

Neither Papke's savagery of attack nor O'Brien's consummate ring generalship nor the vast bulk and cleverness of Johnson were entirely proof against the killer.

Before his second fight with Billy Papke, Ketchel became the victim of his fair-weather friends. Then, a good deal more so than now, the winner of a fight was supposed to go out with the boys; to "cut into the grape to show that he was a good fellow."

MANY a great ringman sang his swan song to the popping of corks, and the Michigan Assassin came close to being one of them. He was young, and liked life and gaiety and laughter. He had never known what it was to have money before. Now his hands were overflowing with it.

And remember that, though he was known as one of the greatest fighting men in history, he hadn't reached his twenty-first birthday!

He was only a boy, with a boy's outlook. The future was a vague, misty thing, and he simply did not bother about it.

His training for the Papke bout was a farce. He put no more intensive effort into it than Jack O'Brien had done for the "framed" bout with Tommy Burns.

When he climbed into the ring before that vast crowd in Los Angeles he wasn't brown and hard as he always had been before. There was a sallowness to his skin, a slight roll of fat at his waistline.

And he was facing a man who, though not as great a killer as himself, was a frightful puncher and the second best middleweight in the world.

When they stripped off their bathrobes and stood in the center of the ring listening to the referee's instructions, Stanley Ketchel looked at Bill Papke, and for the first time really understood the task that lay before him.

The Illinois Thunderbolt was as "fine" as a man could be. The muscles over his stomach stood out in straight, hard ridges. Under his skin the huge muscles crawled like living things. His mouth was set like a trap. Stanley Ketchel was the only man who had ever

beaten him, and he was determined to die before the ignominy should be repeated.

It wasn't in the Assassin's heart to be afraid of anyone. Since their first meeting in Milwaukee he had known what sort of a man he had to face, but the blandishments of his fair-weather friends had convinced him that the task would be easier the second time. It had been so with Joe Thomas—why shouldn't it be with Papke?

Standing there, waiting for the brazen voice of the gong to send them into action, Ketchel knew that he had been wrong—that, in the poorest shape of his life, he was meeting his most terrible rival.

They went at each other like a couple of bulldogs. The Assassin and the Thunderbolt came together in the center of the ring, bending forward to the attack. It was Papke's right against Ketchel's left, and there was the thunder of Thor in each. Neither backed up an inch.

They smashed and hooked and hammered. Each was shooting in his punches straight and hard. Neither was trying to block. Each was intending to stop the other or be stopped himself. Boxing was flung to the winds.

And the crowd stood up and howled.

The battle lasted twelve rounds, and every round was a martyrdom for Stanley Ketchel. Yet, battered, panting, tired to the verge of exhaustion, he hung to his guns with fanatic fury.

He saw the Kewaunee man through a red haze, but he kept shooting punches from every angle. Few men had ever lasted the limit with him, and even now he didn't believe that Papke could.

After every round the crowd dropped back in their seats gasping. It seemed impossible that the men could continue at that clip, but continue they did—the perfectly conditioned Papke and the burned-out Ketchel.

In the last, desperate twelfth round the mob stood, the blood cry choked in

its throats—tense, white as they saw the greatest killer of the age go to his doom.

Thunderbolt Billy, a killer himself, put everything he had behind his right hand smash in that round. It caught Ketchel squarely on the point, and he went down, dazed and bewildered. He was beaten then—bloody, sick, but undaunted.

He dragged himself to his feet, slack-chinned, arms dangling, the blood drooling from his battered face to meet his inevitable doom.

The crowd was howling now. It was in at the death.

AND great as Stanley Ketchel had been in his hours of victory; as tireless on the triumph trail, he was greater now than he had ever been.

No towel was thrown in as a white token of surrender for him. To his mind there was only one way that a champion could be beaten, and that was by a knockout.

And Papke, cool and merciless, administered the *coup de grace* with his thundering right hand.

Ketchel went down again. This time exhausted nature refused to respond to the spurring of his great spirit. The referee counted ten over his prostrate body, and his seconds carried him mournfully to his corner.

He had lost the middleweight championship of the world!

Yet it was destined that his conqueror was to hold that championship for the shortest time on record—until poor little, war-torn Eugene Criqui came on the scene to take the featherweight championship from Johnny Kilbane and lose it to Johnny Dundee within two months' time.

The Illinois Thunderbolt won the title from the Michigan Assassin on September 7. On November 26 he again sat in the corner opposite his greatest rival.

But he faced another man altogether. Ketchel had turned his back on the

white lights and gay companions. He had gone off into the open, breathing the clear air of the plains; purging his system of the poison that had dulled it before.

His eyes were bright, his color high. Once again he was the deadly tiger who had strewn fistiana with the bodies of fighters who stood between him and his ultimate ambition.

There are dullards who say that a man never comes back.

Stanley Ketchel proved that saying a fallacy, indeed.

This fight was as bruising and savage and bitter as the other one had been. But this time it was Papke who was the victim. He was game and a terrible hitter, and no man of his time, unless it was Battling Nelson, could stand up more staunchly under a fruitful beating.

But no man of living flesh and blood could have assimilated the unleashed fury of Stanley Ketchel that night. He was a better man than Billy Papke. He knew it, and he was there to prove it to the mob that had howled joyfully at his downfall two short months before, and he proved it in eleven rounds.

But luck refused to stay in the saddle for Stanley Ketchel. A madly jealous man shot him down without warning at Conway, Mo., on October 15, 1910, exactly a year after his epic battle with Jack Johnson.

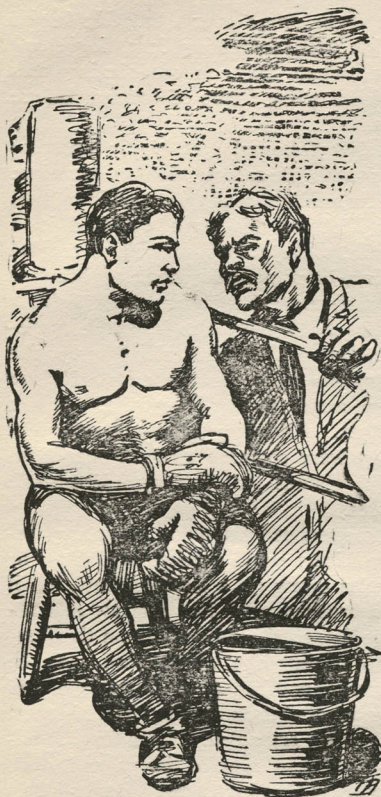
He was then only twenty-three years old, in the prime of his health and power. There were no men in sight who had the remotest chance of beating him. His mind and heart were set on another meeting with Johnson, whom he was thoroughly confident he could defeat despite the disparity in size.

He might have.

For to the killer like Stanley Ketchel nothing was impossible. The tiger doesn't hesitate to do battle with any foe—and no tiger was ever more dangerous than the Michigan Assassin when he crawled through the ropes with the gloves on his mighty fists.

The UNKNOWN KID

By
E. R.
VADEBONCOEUR



They touted him as the coming champ, but the "wise money" was on the other fighter—and only the Kid knew why.

IF the Unknown Kid had had his choice he would never have alighted from the train where and how he did. But a brakeman made the choice for him, so he "unloaded" abruptly on the right-of-way, just outside a tiny, somnolent, country town, ploughing up a generous furrow of cinders in the process.

The whole-souled jolting stirred afresh, rather than diminished, his appetite and when he pulled himself to his feet the tall, gangling redhead steered a course for the nearest farmhouse. He ambled ludicrously along with his shambling gait, his abnormally long arms dangling nearly to his knees, his ham-like fists swinging beside him, perpetually clenched and, apparently, grown that way.

The Unknown Kid didn't know that

the farmhouse he picked for his breakfast was the country training camp maintained by Jim Maxon for his string of boxers. Neither did he know that the dapper, tricky little manager with the drooping left eyelid was in one of his jesting moods. So, when he volunteered to "do anything" for a hand-out and followed Maxon down the lane to a barn, he stepped into trouble up to his ears.

Before he realized it, the Kid was in the cool, smelly half-gloom of an improvised gymnasium and Maxon's trainer, Spike Dugan, short, snub-nosed and as redheaded as the bewildered Kid, had taken him in charge and was tying a pair of 12-ounce gloves on his huge hands.

Maxon beckoned a swarthy athlete away from his bag-punching and led

him over to the redhead.

"Bo," said he to the Kid, "this is 'Battling' Rivers. You're going to take him on. You look as though you had a few laughs in you. If you make good, you eat; if you flop, you don't. Go to it!"

The Kid's knees sagged. Battling Rivers! He made a break for the door, but Maxon caught his arm and swung him back, laughing harshly. Spike Dugan looked up into the redhead's terror-stricken face and what he saw there aroused his sympathy.

"Aw, say, boss, I don't think—" he began.

"Of course you don't think, Dugan," Maxon interrupted him angrily. "You're just a sap. Come on, bo. Do your stuff." Maxon spun the Kid around, placed a hand in the small of his back and propelled him out on the floor. The next thing the redhead knew something thudded lightly on his mouth and his lips went numb.

The Kid was worse than frightened. He was downright scared. His fear was so obvious that Rivers had little taste for his work and danced around lightly, jabbing away with his left until the red thatch bobbed like a cork, but pulling his punches steadily until Maxon let out a roar:

"Get in there, Rivers!" he yelled. "This is a fight, not a fox-trot. Quit dancing and sock. Make him take it!"

So Rivers opened up. He slipped both hands to the Kid's lean stomach in a lightning succession of trip-hammer punches and, as the redhead, mouth open and gasping, doubled over with both hands across his midriff, Rivers hooked a vicious right, swinging his whole body behind it. There was a sodden thud as the leathern knuckles smote the Unknown Kid fairly on the jaw and he went down in a heap, dizzy, puzzled and trying to figure out in his punch-addled brain just what had happened.

For an instant he sprawled there. Then something stirred under his fiery mop. A blind, unreasoning wave of

hot anger swept over him. He leaped to his feet, forgetting fear, forgetting pain, intent only on annihilating that dark, scowling figure of torment before him.

What followed was highly unorthodox and, therefore, doubly amazing. Rivers, smiling coolly, stepped in to meet the Kid, but his smile vanished in a breath. He found himself entangled with a brick-topped cyclone, fighting as no self-respecting boxer would fight.

The Kid's head was hunched, turtle-like, between upraised shoulders. The enormous hands on the ends of those long arms were flying like thrown sledges. And they were not swinging. They were shooting straight ahead like twin pistons in lunging, irresistible drives.

The redhead was upon his quarry before Rivers could sidestep or duck. The Battler threw up a guarding left, but it was brushed aside like a straw and the huge fist, catching him high on the forehead, threw him off balance. As he wavered another crashed through and he staggered back, feeling as if his chest wall were crumpled. Then he was enveloped in a rain of blows and went down, badly hurt, his eyes slightly glazed, his breath coming in labored sobs.

He dragged himself to his knees to find the redhead looming over him, still in his queer, turtle-like posture, his blue eyes aflame, his mop of red hair bristling. He heard Maxon's shouts:

"Get up there, Rivers! Box with him. Stand him off and cut him to pieces. Flatten him for that!"

Still kneeling, Rivers shook his head to banish the mists. He inhaled deeply and in a moment his eyes were clear and he was on his feet, dancing away from the redhead, who broke into pursuit.

BUT this time there was a different story. Rivers beat the Kid to the punch and the old fear welled up in the redhead's breast. He retreated, but the leaping, bobbing form appeared every-

where and leaden, merciless punches caught him at every turn. Twice he fell, blinded, helpless, and when he dragged himself to his feet for the second time he was begging abjectly.

"Don't, don't," he moaned, covering his face. Rivers stared, then dropped his hands and, with a muttered "Yella!" stalked across the floor, pulling off his gloves. In an instant Spike was at the Unknown Kid's side, leading him to a water pail, dousing his battered and bleeding face and murmuring crude condolences in his ear.

And watching the gasping, blubbing red-head through eyes that were mere slits, Jim Maxon was hatching a colossal fake. The thing had been born in his crooked brain as the Kid launched his furious offensive. For a flash the scene had been blotted out and Maxon was back at another ringside, under a broiling sun, with 30,000 screaming, shouting fans in a delirious uproar as a red-headed, freckle-faced giant battered and crushed down a heavyweight champion to enthrone himself as the most beloved idol in ring history.

Well did Maxon remember the little procession that always wended its way to the ringside when Red Bob fought. There was Mrs. Bob, wearing her trim blue jersey, and so small she could have stepped under her big husband's arm. Always Mrs. Bob walked to the ring, hand in hand with Red Bob. And on Red Bob's shoulder rode a tiny carbon copy of the fighter. Little Bob was four years old when his father became champion and for two years he had ridden to the ringside for every fight. The tiny mite had been born with a birth-mark—a clean-cut boxing glove of red in the palm of his little hand.

Little Bob and his mark became a by-word among fight fans and his father and mother were completely wrapped up in him.

The day after the big fight the blow fell. Little Bob disappeared. There was talk of kidnapping, but no trace was ever found. Red Bob hung up his

gloves. He never wore them again. Somewhere out West the broken-hearted champion and his wife bought a ranch and retired to it. Their friends saw them no more.

That was the story that flashed through Maxon's mind as the Kid ripped and battered Rivers for one inspired instant. It was in just that fashion that Red Bob had waded through the toughest field of heavyweights in the world's history. No one had ever fought that way before or since.

And now this tramp, for just a flash, had duplicated the old master's famous crouching, lunging, furious attack. Already the scheme was taking shape in Maxon's fertile brain.

In half a dozen strides Maxon was across the floor and at the side of the Kid, lying sprawled out, his breath coming in jerks, while Spike rubbed his heaving stomach.

"Rip off that right glove, Dugan," Maxon commanded, and, as Spike obeyed, Maxon bent over, caught the huge, naturally-doubled fist, pried open the fingers and examined the palm.

"No callouses there," he grunted. "Typical tramp. I'll bet he never worked a day in his life. 'Doc' ought to be able to fix that up in short order." Then, to Spike:

"Fix him up and put him to bed in one of the bunks, Dugan. Then come into the house; I want to talk to you."

The scheme which Maxon unfolded to the little trainer made him gasp, but his protests only angered his chief.

"Never mind the 'buts,'" Maxon snapped. "I don't need any sap to advise me. You've got your job; now do it."

And so, when Maxon left for town that night, the Unknown Kid had a home—temporarily, at least—for the first time in his life.

Once decided, Maxon wasted no time. The next day a shifty-eyed, bald-headed man arrived at the farm with a kit of needles and a collection of pigments and chemicals. For two agonizing hours

the stranger pricked away at the tender skin on the Kid's right palm. When he had finished, the Kid's huge paw was sore as a boil and swathed in white gauze, but under the bandage lay the nearly-perfect outline of a boxing glove in vivid red.

In the next month, Spike worked a near-miracle with the Unknown Kid. Sawing, chopping and digging of deep and useless holes hardened and dulled the palm with its doctored birthmark. Daily tilts in the gymnasium gave the Kid a smattering of boxing fundamentals and a superficial finish sufficient to deceive a casual observer.

The diminutive trainer gave his gangling pupil much, but he couldn't give him heart. He convinced himself of that reluctantly, for a real friendship was developing between the oddly assorted pair.

And then Jim Maxon returned. He summoned the redhead into the farmhouse, uncurled the clenched fingers of the ham-like right hand, grunted satisfaction and waved him out without a dozen words.

"It's all set," he confided to Spike later. "Rivers is boxing Babe Barry at the Arena a week from tonight. The winner gets a crack at Williams for the title and the place will be jammed to the rafters. Every sports writer in New York will be there and I've slipped this bum in for a ten-round semi-final.

"I'm fighting him under the name of The Unknown Kid. That'll get them wondering and when he stops old Joe Levin he'll have them talking their heads off."

"But look here, boss," Spike objected. "Levin can still fight, even if he is gettin' old. He's a good main-bout draw for any club and he's never been knocked out."

Maxon tossed his head impatiently. "I'll do all the figuring that's necessary. Levin and I understand each other, see? All you've got to do is follow orders and here they are, so listen."

THERE was a buzz of expectancy as the big redhead strode down the aisle to the ring, followed by Spike and Maxon. The crafty manager had refused to tell who the Unknown Kid was. He had refused to discuss him at all. No one had seen him; no one could find out anything. Rumors flew through the crowd.

If there was a buzz when the Kid entered the ring, when he left there was pandemonium. Behind him Levin was "cold" in his corner, spraddled across the stool where his handlers had dumped him after that spectacular second round. He had cleverly worked the redhead into one of his furious fits of temper, then let one of the Kid's punches land. And the punch had dropped him like a sack of grain—knocked out for the first time in his long ring career.

Maxon, with Spike, was through the ropes even as the referee finished his count and raised the redhead's hand aloft. They whisked a towel over his shoulders, a sweater over that, a bathrobe over all and before any one realized what was happening the Kid, still in his trunks, was in a car with Spike and was hurried away from the club.

The next day saw the beginning of a smoke-up that was a monument to the cunning of Maxon. With boxing writers talking of the reincarnation of old Red Bob and fight circles agog, Maxon became suddenly inaccessible to the scribes he usually sought out himself. For two days they speculated. They re-hashed the story of Red Bob and Little Bob, they told of the kidnapping and the champion's retirement. Then Maxon allowed himself to be cornered.

"What, that bum? Nothing to it. You guys must be crazy." He countered their questions with just the right shade of insincerity. "He's just a tramp I picked up. Go out and talk to him yourselves."

They did. They descended upon the training camp and found Spike as uncommunicative as Maxon. From the

redhead they drew little more. He insisted he didn't know his name. He didn't even remember having any parents.

Finally they applied the acid test. They pulled off his training glove, unclamped the huge fingers and found, cuddled in the saucer of his palm, the boxing-glove birthmark.

From that time on the build-up needed no nursing. The discovery of Little Bob, given up for dead, unwittingly following in his father's footsteps, attained instant fame as the greatest of all sport romances. Photographers invaded the camp. Old pictures of Red Bob were raked from dusty files and, if they failed to show sufficient resemblance, enthusiastically wielded air brushes supplied the deficiency.

Overnight the Unknown Kid stumbled blinking into the limelight. Jim Maxon grinned knowingly but said nothing.

"Read the papers. They seem to know more about him than I do," was his stock retort.

If you don't think your hard-boiled fight fan is foolishly sentimental, consider the cases of Georges Carpentier and Luis Firpo. Consider what they accomplished on a capital that was nine-tenths "color" and one-tenth ability. It was on this generous gullibility that Maxon played and things came his way rapidly.

Offers flooded him, but he scanned all proposed opponents warily. Every one with a real punch was turned down without hesitation.

At last the chance he had been seeking came and the Unknown Kid—still billed as such—climbed into the ring against Lefty Moore in his second fight. Moore, the logical contender for the heavyweight championship, was a phenomenally clever boxer, but a woefully weak hitter and not too robust in absorbing punishment. His skill had put him above the ruck and kept him there.

Maxon reasoned that the Kid's first flurry of rage would brush aside Moore's

powder-puff punches and crush him down before the boxer had a chance to get started. If Moore weathered the first storm and slipped over a smart cuff or two, the Kid would fold up. Maxon knew all this and he staked the success of his whole scheme on the fight.

He won in the first round.

Again the Unknown Kid was rushed from the ring, his fatal weakness still hidden, while a frantic crowd swarmed the aisles, shouting and cheering for Little Bob and fighting to grasp his hand or pat him on the back.

And so the stage was set for Maxon's big coup. Instantly he accepted the first offer of a tilt with Marty Johnson, the title-holder. He knew it was to be the end of the little comedy. He knew the clumsy, timid Unknown Kid had not the slightest chance of lasting more than a round or two. He knew the redhead would quit—if not actually knocked out—the first time Johnson connected with one of those pole-axing rights, but he had nothing to fear for himself, no matter how miserably the Kid might perform.

Never once had Maxon mentioned the Unknown Kid except to deride him. If people chose to think that he, Jim Maxon, was lying, that was their own hard luck. And his bets—those juicy, sure-thing bets on Johnson—would be deep under cover. He'd see to that.

In the red barn preparations for the big fight went forward busily. Like a Trojan Spike worked with his protégé, prepping him for the slaughter, and always hoping that he might show that vital spark of gameness that would enable him to go down in a fighting finish.

His hopes were fruitless and when he piloted the Unknown Kid through the huge Coliseum to the ring he knew he was bringing out a rank quitter.

He grinned as he and Maxon fussed over their man while the throng cheered deafeningly, but his heart was sick. His hand, resting lightly on the redhead's shoulder, detected a telltale quivering as a new roar of cheers heralded the

appearance of Johnson. He felt a distinct flinch and noticed that the Kid's lips were trembling as the champion hopped lightly through the ropes and dropped coolly to his stool.

Spike steered his sacrificial offering through the formalities. Then he and Maxon slipped from the ring. He caught a flashing glimpse of the Unknown Kid's white face as he went and he could have strangled Maxon, who crouched beside him, wearing his professional mask of indifference.

THEN the bell! The "fight" was on and it was a pitiful spectacle to Spike, who knew what was happening up there in the white light that bathed the ring. Mechanically the Kid went through the motions Spike had taught him. This time there was no stinging attack to lash the redhead into fury. Johnson, sparring carefully, was feeling his man out. A look of bewilderment spread over his face. He ceased to frown. He boxed carefully a moment longer, then he smiled.

Deliberately and with perfect timing the champion feinted with his left, then hooked his right at this ridiculous, shuffling figure. The Kid staggered back on his heels, then backed off. Like a sure-footed tiger Johnson flew after him and unleashed a terrific, leaping right smash. In his flying onslaught he misjudged his distance and the punch glanced harmlessly off the top of the thick red poll.

Then a howl went up that rocked the roof. The Unknown Kid was down. He had slipped to the floor almost before the glancing blow landed and was lying there, still and quiet.

It was all so pitifully obvious that the crowd was up on the seats, booing and screaming, "Quitter!" The referee bent over as he swung his arm in the count and barked sharply at the recumbent figure. Under his verbal prodding the Kid dragged himself reluctantly erect at the count of eight. A vicious uppercut ripped through his half-hearted

guard and again he slumped to the floor, just as the bell ended the round.

Hauled to his corner, the redhead pleaded for mercy. "I'm done," he wailed. "'At guy'll kill me if I go out there again. Lemme go, please. He'll kill me, I tell ya. He'll kill me!"

Now, it was no part of Jim Maxon's scheme to have the Kid quit in his corner. Things like that cause held-up purses, gossip, investigations and other unpleasant things. So Maxon talked "Dutch" to the Kid.

"Listen to me, you big stiff!" he grated into the redhead's ear, at the same time raising the Kid's water-bottle significantly into view. "Do you see this bottle? Well, I'm going to cave your yellow skull in with it if you don't go out there when the bell rings and take your medicine. Stick out your chin and stop one, the sooner the better. But you can't dog it in your corner. Snap into it!"

The Unknown Kid did as he was bidden. Slowly, uncertainly, he advanced from his corner for the second round to be met by the dark-browed champion, leaping across the ring to end the farce. Contemptuously the title-holder jabbed a rapier left in half a dozen lightning stabs to the mouth and blood spurted from the Kid's lips to trickle down his chin. He was looking for his chance to drop and as a looping punch thudded over his heart he folded his knees clumsily and went down on his face, quitting cold.

It was just at this point when, according to Maxon's scenario, the farce should have ended, that two new actors stepped in. Unnoticed in the din, a huge old man, stoop-shouldered but powerfully built, had upreared his bulk from an isle seat and started for the ring.

A broad-brimmed black hat was jammed down on his head and his right hand clutched an umbrella by the middle until the knuckles showed white through the skin.

His left hand was closed over the tiny

hand of a sweet-faced little old lady who walked beside him, so tiny she could have stepped under his outstretched arm without ducking her bonneted head.

The couple reached the ringside just as the Unknown Kid took his final "flop," just as the referee started his toll. For an instant the big man's eyes swept over the ring, then he reached up and out with the handle of his umbrella and tapped smartly and steadily on the ring floor.

In one buzzing ear of the redhead, flattened down against the mat, came that imperative rapping, strumming hollowly on the raised planking like a pounded drum.

"—three—four—five—" droned the referee.

Slowly the Kid rolled over and his half-closed eye fell upon the leonine head and shoulders of the tapper, rising above the edge of the ring. The big man's blue eyes were pinpoints of glinting steel. His face wore an angry flush. And he spoke in a booming, big voice that carried clearly to the redhead.

"Boy," he thundered, leveling his umbrella at the Kid, "*get up!*"

"—seven—eight—nine—"

The Unknown Kid came up from the floor. Why he did it he didn't know, but he scrambled to his feet in the nick of time and swung apprehensively around to meet the next assault. It came in a leaping, bobbing, slashing attack and the redhead began to wilt.

From somewhere behind him he heard that booming voice again:

"*Fight, boy, fight!*"

A nasty left hook, barely falling short, scraped agonizingly across his face. From deep down in the breast a hot tide surged up, engulfing him in an insane fury. With a perceptible jerk his head dropped down, turtle-fashion, his shoulders hunched up into a protective cradle, his body swayed forward and launched out.

For just a breath that eternally booming voice goaded him on, then it

was drowned in a vast roar, for the crowd sensed the drama taking place there at the ring. The supposed Little Bob was fighting again, and old Red Bob, miraculously appearing out of thin air, was tongue-lashing him into a brick-topped hurricane.

And like a hurricane the Unknown Kid went after the champion, driving those crushing, piston punches. The first caught Johnson on the right shoulder and spun him like a top. The second thudded solidly, checking the title-holder in midspin and sending him headlong across the ring to slide to a stop with his head hanging over the edge of the platform.

This time it was Johnson who was saved by the end of the round. Gasping through his wide-opened mouth, the champion caught at the ropes, hauled himself to a swaying, upright position, then staggered to his corner as the bell pealed a life-saving clang.

Behind him the referee and a yelling, joyous Spike grabbed the raging redhead by the arms and dragged him, kicking and struggling to his corner.

And now Maxon, his face livid, came leaping into the ring, elbowed Spike aside and, pulling a bottle of smelling salts from his hip pocket, swung it briskly upward, ostensibly to give the Kid an inhalation.

Like a flash, Spike acted. His hand lashed out, struck Maxon's wrist and the bottle, instead of discharging its fiery liquid "accidentally" into the redhead's eyes, went sailing over the ropes.

Came that great voice again:

"Thanks, Spike!"

Old Red Bob was in the ring.

A big hand closed around Maxon's arm and propelled him from the corner. Red Bob stooped over the panting Kid, now half dazed and gazing dreamily off into space.

"Come out of it, boy," he admonished and slapped the flat of his big palm smackingly across the redhead's jawl. The Unknown Kid came out of it with a start to find himself staring at a wag-

ging finger and listening to amazing words.

"Your old man's talking to you now, son," the big voice was saying, "and I mean business. I didn't come two thousand miles to find my son a coward. If you don't march out there and flatten that fellow, I'm going to take you home and thrash you to within an inch of your life!"

Vaguely the Unknown Kid became aware of a tugging on his dangling glove. He leaned over and stared down into what he thought was the sweetest face in the world. Tears streamed down the upturned cheeks of Mrs. Bob as she stood on tiptoe to reach that huge hand with both her tiny ones.

"Bobby-boy," she pleaded, "don't make your daddy and me ashamed of you. Don't be—*yellow!*"

What happened in the third round is ring history. The Unknown Kid new from his corner, an irresistible savage, when the bell rang. He met Johnson in mid-ring and for just an instant the two traded thumping, killing punches.

Then the champion broke ground, the redhead after him. A terrible right, straight from the shoulder, crashed full into Johnson's face and he was catapulted stiffly against the ropes. The taut strands tossed him back in a rebound to meet a pile-driving left squarely on the point of the chin and, like a limp, cloth figure, he collapsed in a heap.

There was no need for a count. . . .

MAXON went up the stairs two at a time. He had confirmed the bad news. His commissioners had placed every cent he had given them and it was lost, irretrievably. It was not in the nature of the man to take his loss si-

lently. He was out to square accounts.

Bursting into the crowded dressing-room, he pushed and shoved his way to the chair where the Unknown Kid sat grinning happily. Red Bob stood by, smiling proudly at the new champion, while Mrs. Bob fussed busily over a deep cut in the Kid's cheek, and Spike, chattering deliriously, pulled off the soaking gloves.

"Just one minute," Maxon shouted, confronting the big old man. "You're Red Bob; I remember you. Don't let this bum gyp you. He's a faker and I can prove it. Look here!"

Maxon snatched at the Unknown Kid's right hand, hauled it up into view, uncurled the fingers and pointed accusingly at the "birthmark."

"He took me in, too," Maxon yelled. "That mark was put there by a tattoo sharp not six months ago. I can prove it!"

Before any one in the stunned group could speak, Spike had crossed the floor in a bound. His face flaming, he faced Maxon determinedly for the first time in his life, thrust his jaw forward and spoke

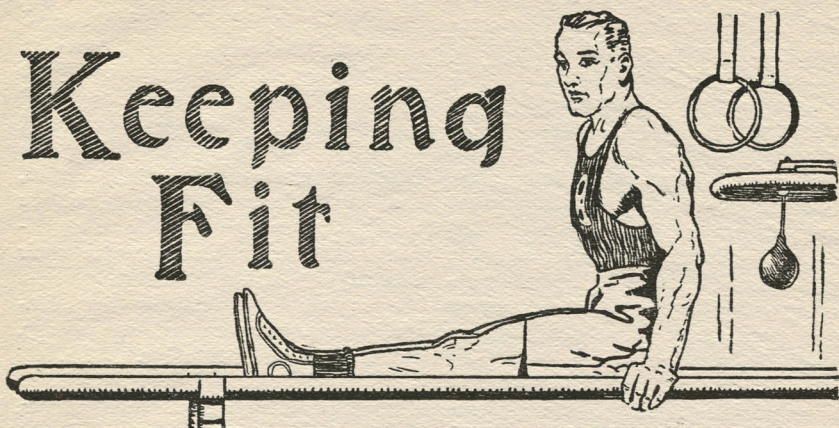
"Wrong again, you big stiff. That's the second time tonight. Now *I'm* gonna tell *you* somethin'. When you framed this deal you made one big mistake. You looked at the wrong fist! Hold out your *left* hand, Kid!"

The Kid held it out and there, redly dim and dull but unmistakable, lay the irregular outline of a boxing glove.

"Ya see that, Maxon?" Spike's words cracked as though they were flipped from the end of a buggy whip. "I knew that six months ago, but I didn't tell ya. 'Cause why? 'Cause yer just a big sap!"

Clenched fists and courage—the weapons of the he-man breed since the world was young! You'll find action stories of these fighting men every month in FIGHT STORIES. On the stands the 10th.

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.

CONDITION is a word that has many meanings, but when it's used by a physical trainer, it means the state of health of the human body. The study of condition and how to obtain it is not only interesting, but it is of the utmost importance, yet it is surprising how few people begin this study until they have lost their health.

A few years ago I conducted a column of questions and answers for one of the big metropolitan dailies, and before the column was a week old I was receiving on an average of five hundred letters a day. The surprising thing to me was that I got these letters from men and women of varying ages between eighteen and sixty years. Now, I was prepared for queries from persons in the forties, for that is about the time of life when one begins to fail physically. I mean that is the time when persons begin to realize that they are failing.

But most of the questions had to do with weight-reducing or building up. I

received so many of these that I finally wrote an article on "girth control" in which I told in detail a method of building up to normal weight, and a method of reducing to normal. I was sorry afterward that I did this, for it kept me busy for a long time with a clientele of correspondents who evidently believed I had nothing else to do but prescribe diets for invalid relatives and undernourished babies.

It is not my intention in this article to take up the matter of girth control. I will go into that thoroughly in a future article. I am merely concerned at present in telling how good physical condition may be attained.

The two things most essential to a healthy condition, of course, are diet and exercise. One must eat properly to nourish the body and its glands and organs, and one must exercise in order to prevent stagnation. Sunshine and fresh air are concomitants. You could diet and exercise all you want, but if you were encased in a compartment

filled with foul air and without sunshine, you'd die very quickly.

So far as diet is concerned, that is a problem that must be worked out by the individual. If you happen to be overweight you must cut down on the *amount* of food that you take every day. I do not advocate the cutting out of sugar, fat, starch or any essential food *entirely*, for it is necessary for a person to maintain a balanced diet, whether reducing or building up, but to reduce you must curtail the amount that is taken into the body. I always have maintained that it is better to under-eat—that is, for an adult to under-eat—than it is to over-eat.

Recently I received the following letter which is typical of many that I have received. Perhaps it may fit the case of some of the readers of this article:

Dear Jimmy:

I am forty-one years of age; of late I have been going through a set of exercises every morning, which was advised by my doctor. But I find that the slightest exertion tires me. When I was in college I was one of the star athletes, having rowed on the crew and played on the football team. I also took part in track athletics, doing the quarter in pretty fair time for those days. The doctor told me I had been leading too sedentary a life, and that I needed exercise. He prescribed ten minutes a day. But I'm all in long before I have exercised five minutes. Do you think the exercise is too strenuous, or what? Will appreciate your advice.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM B. WALSH.

If I had received a letter like this ten or fifteen years ago, I would have hesitated to answer it, because I never liked to step into the picture when a physician was on the job. But about five years ago, one of the official medical journals took an editorial rap at my writings when I published a series of articles on diet, exercise and health for one of the big news syndicates, saying that it was a fine state of affairs when great newspapers would publish such a series by a "trainer of prize-fighters" instead of getting a reputable physician for the job, or something to that effect.

I spoke to a friend of mine, one of the most prominent medical doctors in this country, and he laughed. "That shows what that writer knows about it," said my friend. "You are doing a good work, Jimmy. Far from taking the bread out of the mouths of the doctors, as this editorial veiledly accuses, you are a help, for you bring people to a realization that they should watch their health."

I wrote a "sharp note" to the editorial writer, and received an apology. And now to get back to Mr. Walsh.

THE doctor is perfectly right, sir, in ordering exercise in your case, but he evidently counted on your co-operation. There is a grave likelihood that your heart may be slightly enlarged, as a result of your early strenuous athletic activities. From your letter I guess that you must have ceased to exercise long ago, else the doctor would not have ordered exercise for you, and you wouldn't tire so quickly.

Now, all you have to do is grade the vigor of your exercise. Don't go at it right from the start as if you were trying to set a record. Exercise at only half speed, and exercise only until you begin to feel tired, then stop. Also, alternate your exercises with a deep-breathing exercise. That is, stop every minute and take a few deep breaths, enough to make you feel comfortable.

In this way you will find that in a few days you have gotten so that you can go through the allotted ten minutes of exercise without tiring.

Some years ago I formulated a rule which I called the "heart exercise creed," as follows: "Rest completely as soon as the exercise causes shortness of breath, heart-racing, oppressed feeling in the chest, or fatigue."

That I have found to be the best rule for regulating exercise for any individual, regardless of age, sex or physical condition. You can see that by following this rule, even Mr. Walsh can easily get in his ten minutes' exercise a day.

His doctor told him to exercise ten minutes a day. But I am sure he didn't mean for him to pile it all in ten consecutive minutes. My advice to you, sir, is to follow your doctor's orders to the letter—exercise three minutes in the morning, four minutes in the afternoon, and three minutes in the evening. That will make up the ten minutes, your doctor will be satisfied, and you will be greatly benefited.

That advice applies only to Mr. Walsh, but remember, a great many more hearts are hurt by insufficient exercise than are hurt by excessive exercise. The business man of today is apt to pen himself up in his office for months at a time, neglecting to take regular daily exercise. It is the exercise of today that counts, not the exercise you took on your vacation last year.

Here's a letter from a young man whom I judge to be about twenty-five or twenty-six years of age:

Dear Mr. De Forest:

The other day I played a game of handball with a friend from the office in a downtown gymnasium. I won, but it was a close game, and right after it I collapsed completely. I became deathly sick and had to go home, being unable to return to the office that day. I am young, and have been an athlete since I was a kid. Only last summer I played on a basketball team for two weeks, and you know that's as strenuous exercise as a fellow can take. This collapse has me a bit frightened. Can you advise me, please?

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. BULGER.

P. S.—I have been working very hard for the last three or four months. Do you think I am being overworked? W. J. B.

Now this young man has told his whole story in that postscript to his letter. He has been "working very hard" and therefore has had no time to take any physical exercise. After a lay-off of several months he goes into a strenuous competition, in which he carries along after his heart has warned him to stop. The game was close, and because he is young he was able to force himself out to the limit, only to have the old heart chastise him when it was all over for disobeying its warning.

THE only trouble was, Mr. Bulger, that you piled too much of a load on to the heart; you drove it along at top speed just a mite further than it was prepared to go. Perhaps it was not so very long after your luncheon that you went into the game, and the heart had not gotten a sufficient amount of rest after going through the rather arduous task of helping in the process of digestion.

At any rate, if you would apply the heart exercise creed that I have outlined above you would avoid any such unpleasantness. If you had merely called time when you felt tired, and taken a minute or two of rest, you would have been able to go through with the game without serious consequences.

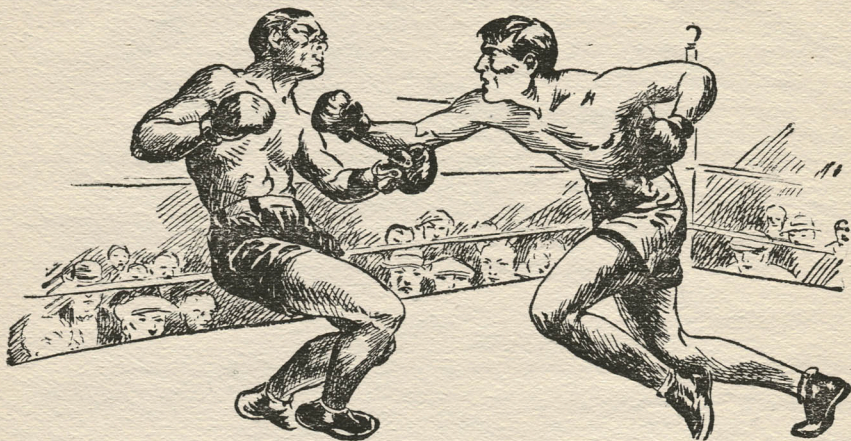
But even so, after a long lay-off from exercise, it is imperative that you do not begin to exercise with a spurt. No man should begin violent exercise of any kind without some preparation for it.

In conclusion, I want to say that I am not advocating laziness in exercise. Merely going through the motions does not constitute real exercise. I regard ordinary walking as no exercise at all, any more than I regard ordinary breathing as exercise. Why, eating a meal is more exercise than either of these two things, unless they are done with a bit more vim and vigor than the ordinary routine walking and breathing.

If a person will step out briskly, swinging the arms and stretching the legs, exercising the calf muscles and the ankles and the toes, then walking is a great exercise. But if one merely rolls or loafs easily along, strolling listlessly, you can see for yourself that there is a slight motion at the ankle, a very slight motion at the knee, and a slight motion at the hips. The upper part of the body remains almost stationary.

So much for *how* to exercise. In my next article I will take up the matter of reducing to a normal weight in scientific, healthful manner.

FRAMED!



By BILL BRITT

Champion at last! Fame and wealth within his grasp! Yet Peter Anson, remembering a promise, turned down his first big battle. So they framed him—!

THOUGH Peter Anson won the heavyweight championship of the world by stopping Tommy Cripps in eight rounds, he continued to live in a single room of a Flatbush boarding-house. In this he was unique. Scan the list of champions from Broughton downward. You cannot name another one than Anson who failed to make a splurge following his ascension to the purple.

The new title holder did not stay in Flatbush from choice. A cramped room, with an outlook over backyards festooned with clotheslines, was not an ideal setting for one who loved the open. Nor do meals served by boarding-mistresses compare with the ambrosial concoctions of Scotti at the Ritz. However, not having money, Anson could not spend it. All he earned prior to his title-winning tilt had gone to pay the debts piled up by his father's failure and death. His end of the purse for beating Tommy Cripps had been scarcely large enough to cover training expenses.

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One golden spring evening, after supper, Anson went up to his room, pulled a chair over to the open window, lit his pipe, and solemnly regarded the landscape. It consisted of a variegated collection of undergarments, drying on lines, a brigade of discontented cats and a colorful slice of sky. To the heavyweight champion of the world it was more than that, for Marigold Havens' window fronted his own across the width of two yards—and Marigold was the girl he loved.

He was not thinking of his stringent finances, for with "World's Champion" tacked on to his name, that difficulty would soon solve itself. He was puzzling over a most unusual promise that he had given Marigold.

Some one knocked on the door with an energetic fist that disregarded the thinness of the panels. At Peter's invitation to enter, a breezy man in a check suit and fedora hat came in, apparently surprised to find the champion in such poor quarters.

"Hello, Ted," said Anson, recognizing the boxing promoter.

In his characteristically brisk way Ted Richards returned the salutation, drew up a chair, and plunged at once into the object that brought him there. He offered Anson a fabulous sum to fight Gunner Brown, the English heavy-weight champion, and the only man in the world conceded an even chance with the big American.

Peter listened quietly, and then declined. The promoter was plainly astounded.

"But—but you can't refuse," he protested. "Two hundred thousand for your end, and—why, I'll even strain a point, and make it a cool quarter of a million."

"I couldn't do it if you gave me one side of Broadway from Forty-second Street north."

"You're not signed with some one else?"

"No."

Richards shook his head helplessly. "Then I'm blessed if I see how you can afford to turn me down. You need money, and I know that you're not afraid of the Britisher. Come, Peter, use a little judgment. Get yours while the getting is good."

Anson wanted to. A purse of that size would enable him to quit the game—clean up the balance of his father's debt—marry—but he could not accept it.

"Why won't you?" demanded Richards.

Peter said quietly, "I'm engaged to Gunner Brown's stepsister. She asked me not to fight him, and I promised. And you can't buy my word, you know."

Ted looked in the champion's steady eyes, and understood that argument was useless. So he shook hands rather awkwardly, and went away.

Peter leaned back in his chair, dead pipe dangling in his fingers, and conjured up in the sunset a vision of Mari-gold, with her thunderous copper hair and blue eyes. Perhaps she might release him from his promise, but he did

not intend asking her to. He sat there for several hours, thinking.

A shrill treble piped through the key-hole. "Hey, youse, in dere, wake up! Here's a telegram for y'."

"Bring it in," called Anson, and an impudent mite popped into the room like a blue-clad jack-in-the-box.

The wire was from Leslie Gribble, President of Immortal Players, Inc.

Will you accept two thousand dollars weekly on ten weeks' contract to appear in photoplay to be produced by this company? If agreeable, wire acceptance to Film City office of this company. On your way West stop at our Chicago office, and sign contract with Mr. Mayer there. He has been instructed to advance you whatever sum you desire. Report to our Director, John Hallahan, in Film City.

L. L. GRIBBLE.

Anson creased the yellow slip in his fingers, and smiled that slow, inscrutable smile of his. He scribbled an acceptance, and gave it to the boy with a half-dollar.

IT was seven o'clock of a Southern California morning, so perfect that it thrilled even the hearts of Native Son press-agents. At that hour stars of the flickering film roll about beneath silken sheets and curse the industry that makes them rise with the chickens; dynamic directors tear through breakfast with one eye on the clock and the other on atmospheric conditions; and "extra" people, after inking frayed edges of trouser or skirt, start off to haunt the "lot."

Peter Anson, being none of these, neither growled nor hurried. He strolled out the Santa Ricoro Boulevard, wondering just what paces Director Johnny Hallahan would put him through. More than one person who did not know the champion turned to admire the acme of physical perfection

he represented. The sunburned tone of his skin was darkened in comparison with his blond hair; his shoulders were broad, but not bulky enough to detract from the tiger-like liness of his body.

Early as it was, and peaceful as were his inclinations, the champion had already engaged in one altercation that morning—a sordid little affair with a chap who lived with his brother, at the boarding-house. Coming down from his room, Anson found this fellow shaking a girl. Peter seized him by his beefy shoulders, and sent him spinning away. The man flung out his arms in a wild effort to retain his equilibrium, then went down heavily. Anson looked at the girl. The sleeve of her dress was ripped sufficiently to disclose a purple bruise on the skin.

"Please go," she whispered. So Peter left them.

He thought of the affair now, as he strolled out of Film City. Occasional roadsters of violent color rushed by, spurring up clouds of dust. They were manned by ambitious directors, chafing at the limitations of time.

By this time Peter had passed the pretentious rows of residences that line Santa Ricoro Boulevard a mile beyond Film City's limits. Their scramble of architecture had merged into frankly utilitarian buildings—the hangar-like factories of canned drama. As a future worker in this environment the champion looked about with interest. A sign on one of the buildings informed him that it was the business office of Immortal Players, Inc.

A moving-picture cow-puncher arrayed in the conspicuous habiliments of his calling lounged on the steps, rolling a brown-paper cigarette with the fingers of his left hand. He looked up—recognized Anson from the pictures he had seen in the papers—and nodded, not abashed, as some fight fans are by the proximity of greatness.

"Hello, Peter," he grunted.

"Hello. Can you tell me if Mr. Hallahan is here yet?"

"Yeah, Johnny's in the office, chewin' the fat with old Gribble. They're most probable framin' up some pretty tough stunts for you—the slave-drivers."

"Gribble?" said Anson, hesitating, with his hand on the doorknob. "Oh, yes, he's the president of the company, isn't he? What sort of a chap is he?"

"You don't know him?"

"No. I have never had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Gribble."

The cow-puncher blew a smoke ring into the air, and watched it shred out in the sunshine.

"Gee, but you're lucky!" he said.

JOHNNY HALLAHAN, director-in-chief of Immortal Players, Inc., shoved the advertising section of the *Film City Gazette* across his desk into the damp, pudgy hands of President Leslie Gribble. The latter adjusted his glasses to the bridge of his fleshy nose, and read the item his editor pointed out:

"Wanted: An Englishman, six foot tall, over one hundred and eighty pounds. Must be skilful boxer. Apply to John Hallahan, Immortal Players Studio, Santa Ricoro Boulevard, City."

"There, Leslie," said Hallahan, "is what you ordered—and look at the result. The waiting-room out there is filled with ten tons of pork-and-bean fighters, whose only knowledge of England is that it's the place where Joe Beckett gets licked. Yet every one of them will try to convince me that he is still seasick from the trip over. It isn't such a bad idea to stage a picture with the world's champion as a star—but why an Englishman for his opponent? Why not a Siberian tennis champion or a Formosan crochet star? I suppose you think I've nothing else to do but pick out slack-chinned Johnnies with buck teeth and yellow hair."

If Hallahan's asbestos hide could have been withered by a look, Gribble's would have accomplished it.

"You're a good director, my boy," he said, "but you don't know everything. This is the first step in taking Mr. An-

son's championship away from him."

"What do you mean?"

"Just this: Gunner Brown is the only man in the world with an even chance of beating Anson—and Peter won't fight him. I don't know why, but Ted Richards called me on the long distance and told me, and Ted doesn't speak until he is sure of what he's saying. Well, I've got the Gunner here in Film City, all ready to go on with Anson."

"You said Peter wouldn't fight."

"That's where the idea comes in. I'm going to send Anson out into the Santa Catalina hills on location for a couple of weeks. He hasn't a manager or any friends to keep him posted about what's going on. You can see to it that he isn't in good shape when he comes back."

"What then?"

"I'll put up an arena, announce a fight between Anson and Brown. Peter'll go into the ring thinking that it is part of the picture. And then the Gunner can knock him for a goal while we clean up on the betting."

The director scoffed. "There's a million reasons why you can't pull off anything like that, and I'll tell you fifty or sixty of them. In the first place, Anson wouldn't fall for it. In the second, even if he was trimmed nobody would take it seriously, because it was in the movies—"

"You'll understand in a minute," explained Gribble tolerantly. "I have Peter's signature on a contract to fight Brown. Impossible? Not at all. Mayer, in Chicago, arranged that while Anson was signing for this picture. The old substitution trick, you know. As for the champion getting wise—not a chance. This advertisement here will forestall that. Brown will come in answer to it, see? We'll hire him in front of Anson—who never saw the Gunner in his life. Do you think he would be suspicious of a tramp extra-man? What if he does find out after he gets in the ring? It will be too late then."

"By George, that's good!" said Hallahan suddenly.

"Of course it is. The stage is all set now. Brown is waiting out there now with the rest of the pork-and-beaners. Here's his picture, Johnny. The Gunner's brother, who is incidentally his manager—sent it to me. I've never met them, you know. Richards and Mayer have done all the work so far. Sweet-looking baby, isn't he?"

A taffy-haired stenographer opened the door. "Mr. Anson is here," she informed the duo.

They went out into the waiting-room, Gribble still clutching the newspaper. There were a score of men, chiefly prominent for bulging jaws and disfigured features, sitting about. The executives ignored them, and rushed to the door where Peter stood. Their greeting was rather stickily effusive.

Hallahan explained why the men were waiting, and intimated that he waited on the champion's approval before picking one of them out. Gribble's eyes were roving about the waiting-room, and settled on a big, red-faced chap with rather prominent teeth . . . Gunner Brown, he knew.

"You!" he said sharply. "What's your name?"

"Curran, sir."

"You're a fighter?"

"Yes, sir."

"Weight?"

"One hundred and ninety-five."

"Good enough. What do you think of him, Anson?"

The champion looked at him sharply. There was something familiar about him. . . . Why, yes, he was the brother of that chap who had been abusing the girl at the boarding-house. However, there was no use holding that against him. The fellow probably needed the job.

"Oh, I guess he'll do," said Peter. "He looks to be in top-notch physical shape. Do you want to work with me, Curran?"

The Englishman gave him an evil

glance, then dropped his eyes. "Yes, sir," he said sullenly.

TWO hours later a number of big touring cars hummed swiftly out the foothill road. They contained the actors who were to participate in the picture, for Johnny Hallahan did not intend that the time should be wasted. Anson thought it peculiar that they were going on location for so long a time, but, admitting his ignorance of the devious ways of directors, said nothing.

Their headquarters were half a dozen cabins deep in the Santa Catalina hills. The motors took them as far as possible; then they continued on horseback. It was far enough from human habitation and pernicious newspapers to satisfy even Leslie Gribble. There were to be no messengers between Film City and the location on which they were working in order to prevent the slightest information from getting to Anson's ears.

Then Johnny went to work. He had mapped out a stunt picture that kept them on their toes—hair-raising runs through the brush and over boulders; struggles on the very lip of the canyon; rescues from the icy waters of the stream.

Peter Anson thoroughly enjoyed every moment of it. He had expected to spend a lot of time in the studio, working under the glare of the Cooper-Hewitt lights. Life in the open—the exhilaration of strength-building effort—and the spice of danger, added a piquant zest to existence. Time flew, and almost before he knew it the two weeks were over.

The exhausting work had tired out many of the stunt actors, but it had not injured Anson in the least. That bothered Johnny Hallahan. He decided to stage an affair that would send the champion into the ring in no condition to fight.

There was a steep path down the face of the nearby canyon. Below it a swift mountain stream hurdled over its rocky bed, swirling in deep pools, and racing

over pebbly narrows. Only the soft murmur of it came up, mingled with the thrush of willows and the elfin music of insects. The day before they returned to Film City Johnny took the company out there.

"We're going to try a run down the face of the canyon," he said. "Peter, here, will be in the lead, fanning old Thunderbolt between the ears with the butt of his gun. You want an oblique angle," he added to the camera-man, "and shoot low. I don't want much above his head. When you get to that point"—indicating a rock marked with chalk midway down the steep declivity—"Pedro'll rope old Thunderbolt, and bring him to a stop. For heaven's sake, get a little life into it! We don't want any make-overs."

Peter Anson climbed into the saddle, his heart beating not a fraction faster in spite of the narrow and frightfully steep trail that faced him.

"Ready! Action! Go!" snapped the director. Anson touched Thunderbolt with his spurs, and the stunt-pony started lickety-split down the trail, with the posse pounding behind, yelling and firing. Pedro, the little Mexican *vaquero*, was in the lead, circling his lariat above his head. When Peter came abreast of the marked stone the coil of braided hair snaked out and dropped around his shoulders. It seemed to the champion as though a mighty hand reached out of nowhere, lifted him from the saddle and dashed him to the ground. Sprawling on his back in the whirlwind of dust he saw the other actors sweep by; then pull up, and ride back as Johnny yelled "Cut!"

Peter Anson was bruised from neck to heels, and his left wrist was beginning to swell ominously. In his brief experience in filmland he had learned to "take a fall" as trick riders do, but this had been so unexpected that he came to the ground all bunched up. Thunderbolt—not he—was to have been lassoed. He rose dizzily, spitting out a mouthful of sand and blood.

The doctor with the outfit examined him, and found a sprained wrist, in addition to a score of bruises. Johnny Hallahan was raving mad—or pretended most admirably that he was.

"The dumb greaser!" he shouted. "I'd like to feed him to the squirrels. A dozen times I told him that it was Thunderbolt he was to rope, and every time he opened that silly mouth of his and said, 'Si, señor.' Then he lays you out. Fortunately, we're just about finished here, anyway."

"It is fortunate that I haven't any fights scheduled in the near future," said Peter grimly. "If I had I would be an ex-champion sure as shooting—and I can't afford to lose the title yet a while."

The director averted his eyes. "Yes, it is lucky," he said.

WHILE Peter Anson was in the Santa Catalina hills on location, Gribble carried out every detail of his plan. An arena that seated some ten thousand people was built on the "lot" of Immortal Players, Inc., and on the day of the fight it was packed with sweating, enthusiastic fight fans. Anson was the favorite, of course, but the flood of cash that appeared to back Gunner Brown sliced the odds from two to one to even money. That, in itself, aroused hectic interest. Something was in the wind.

Gribble prowled around, uneasy as a wet cat. His fat face had lost its wonted color, and there were moments when his hands trembled with nervousness. He felt morally certain of the outcome, but it was his spineless nature to worry over every chance he took. On the other hand, Hallahan was as cool and debonair as if only a trifle hinged on the result.

"You're sure everything is all right, Johnny?" Gribble asked for the twentieth time. "If anything goes wrong I'll be wiped out."

The director puffed calmly at his cigarette. "So will I—but nothing can

go wrong. Gunner Brown is a fighter who can give Anson the battle of his life, even if Peter was in perfect shape. Just now our champion is in better condition for the hospital than the ring. You've seen Brown training. Besides, he has a grudge against Anson. Peter and the Gunner's brother had a scrap the morning we left for the hills, and the Englishman had all the worst of it—broke his arm, I believe, when Peter knocked him down. So the Gunner wants to clean Peter for purely personal reasons. Nothing can go wrong."

Anson drove up to the arena in Gribble's limousine. His wrist was heavily bandaged and taped, and his badly bruised left arm was wrapped in cloth. He had suggested that the boxing scene be held up for a day or two. Hallahan countered with the plea of financial necessity. The company was laboring under difficulties, and it would strain them to keep the enormous mob of extra people any longer than was absolutely necessary. He pointed out that the boxing scene would be no more than a mild workout, anyway. So Peter, always good natured, agreed.

Now he paused outside the arena. The immensity of it, the enthusiasm of the mob puzzled him, and then, in an instant, he understood that he had been framed. Inside the stadium an opponent was waiting for him . . . a good one, no doubt . . . Gunner Brown?

Peter Anson's lips tightened. He had promised not to fight that fellow. It would take the biggest sort of moral courage to stand by his word in the face of that crowd—but if Gunner Brown was his opponent he would not fight. Marigold held his promise. Only she could release him from it, and she was three thousand miles away.

Johnny Hallahan came to the door of the limousine, but he did not look directly at the champion.

"Who is this fellow I am to fight?" asked Peter.

"You picked him out yourself. Some tramp scrapper."

"I want to know, Hallahan. Do you think that I am a blind fool? I can see that this isn't a moving-picture but the stage setting for a real fight."

So, feeling absolutely confident of the outcome, and knowing that it was only a few minutes until Peter would find out the truth, anyway, the director told him everything that had happened.

"You're going to box Gunner Brown," he finished, "Gribble has your signed contract, and if you welsh now you'll never fight again. There is a big enough purse to make it worth while, anyway."

"Not to make it worth my while," said Anson quietly. "I promised not to fight Gunner Brown—and I'm not going to!"

Such a contingency had never occurred to Johnny Hallahan. He threatened. He pointed out that Anson would be irrevocably ruined if he refused. Peter realized the truth of the assertion, but his promise to Marigold was a barrier that he refused to hurdle.

At that intensely interesting moment the moving-picture cow-puncher whom Anson had first seen on the steps of Johnny Hallahan's office, rushed up, sweating profusely and out of breath.

"I've been chasin' you around like a locoed cayuse," he panted. "Here's a telegram marked urgent, important, rush an' all the rest of it."

Peter tore it open.

"If you get the opportunity to fight Gunner Brown do it. I release you from your promise—more, am anxious for you to get that bout. Dearest love, Marigold."

"How do I know that this isn't part of the frame-up?" asked Peter in his quiet voice.

The puncher grinned feebly. "I may be dumber than a long-horned bull, but I know some things. I listened around, and heard about this frame-up—an' two or three other things—so I took the

liberty o' sending a telegram to Miss Havens. You can trim this Gunner-person. Go in and do it."

Peter Anson went into the ring, his lips thinned into a hard line. He had been tricked into fighting for his title when he was in better condition for a doctor than a crucial battle. If he went down to the canvas for ten seconds it meant the end of his happy dreams. He wasn't going to lose if brawn and courage could beat this mighty champion of England.

When the bell rang for the first round Peter advanced to the center of the ring. He had mapped out his plan of combat. Battered as he was, it was impossible for him to sustain a long battle. He must end it quickly if at all.

His opponent circled around him, left fist pumping in and out. Anson hurled himself forward, and ripped into Brown like a madman. The Englishman covered up, and retreated. The mob howled, for Peter was the favorite, and the super-cautious tactics of the invader delighted them.

Though able to hit only with his right hand, Anson made that fist count. He herded the Gunner into a corner, and belted away like a madman. The title was forgotten. He was fighting for his future—for Marigold's happiness.

The Gunner huddled up his shoulders, wrapped his arms about his body and jaw, and sought to weather the storm. As a championship fight it was a farce—not the farce that Gribble and Hallahan had expected—but exactly the reverse. The crowd howled its execrations on the vaunted fighting machine from England.

The end came twenty seconds from the end of the round. Brown sought to slip out of the corner and essay a little footwork. Peter nailed him with a savage hook to the jaw that threw the Gunner back on his heels. The Briton's eyes glazed; one arm jerked up in a futile gesture of defense, then Peter caught him with a savage blow that sent him quivering to the floor.

There was no need for the referee's count. Had each second been a minute long Gunner Brown would have been unable to drag himself to his feet.

TEN minutes later the moving-picture cowboy accompanied Peter Anson into the latter's dressing-room.

"I can't understand it," mused the champion, caressing his sprained wrist. "The Gunner should have been able to trim me under these conditions."

The cowboy chuckled. "He might have—but, you see, it wasn't Gunner Brown you fought."

"What!"

"Listen. I got this story right. Remember the guy you licked at your boardin' house the mornin' you reported to Hallahan? That was Gunner Brown himself, who had followed you there to keep a line on you. He

busted his wrist when he fell, an' so far as he was concerned the scrap was off. But Brother Nat saw a chance to clean up without hurtin' the Gunner's fighting reputation. He took the English champ's place himself. Easy enough, wasn't it? Nobody knew 'em, and the fight was staged too quick for any European sportsmen to get over. Nat collected the money—gave the story clearin' his brother to the newspapers—an' hiked for a train East. You're all set now, Peter-boy. I wired from the ringside for Miss Havens to come out here right away. After you're married she can tell you that she is sorry for tryin' to keep her stepbrother from gettin' trimmed. For that matter, you can take him on when your wrist is better—an' eat up Ted Richards' quarter of a million. Everything's fine, ain't it?"

Peter admitted that everything was.

THE OLD MAN IN CLEVELAND

KID BROAD had a rich and exciting career. The Kid wasn't handsome and he wasn't clever, but he could put up a rattling good fight any time. He was matched with a hard hitter one night—oh, an awfully hard hitter.

"He belts me one on the jaw in the second round, see?" said the Kid. "Down I went, scratching canvas. I rolled over, an' said to meself, 'Get up, Kid, the old man in Cleveland 'll read about this in the paper to-morrow.' An' I got up.

"In the third he lands another one, and while I'm listenin' to the referee, I said, 'Don't forget the old man in Cleveland. He'll read about this.'

"Durin' the next couple o' rounds I'm down half a dozen times, an' each time I says, 'You don't want the old man in Cleveland to find out that you was stopped.'

"Then in the sixth this bozo lets one go from his heels, and I didn't know nothin' until I heard 'eight,' and found meself on me back. Everything was dark and wobbly. The old jaw felt like a mule had been beatin' tattoo on it wit' his hoofs.

"So, I just rolled over, and said, 'I don't care what the old man reads. He takes too many papers, anyway.

"An' I stayed down."

CHAMPIONS

OF THE PAST AND PRESENT



Present Champions

Heavyweight

GENE TUNNEY

Weight 192 lbs.; height 6 ft., ½ in.; born May 25, 1898, New York City

Light Heavyweight

TOMMY LOUGHRAN

Weight 175 lbs.; height 5 ft., 11½ in.; born Nov. 29, 1902, Philadelphia, Pa.

Middleweight

MICKEY WALKER

Weight 160 lbs.; height 5 ft., 7 in.; born July 13, 1901, Elizabeth, N. J.

Welterweight

JOE DUNDEE (Samuel Lazzaro)

Weight 147 lbs.; height 5 ft., 7 in.; born 1902, Baltimore, Md.

Lightweight

SAMMY MANDELL (Samuel Mandello)

Weight 135 lbs.; height 5 ft., 5½ in.; born Feb. 5, 1904, Rockfield, Ill.

Junior Lightweight

TOD MORGAN (Bert Pilkington)

Weight 130 lbs.; height 5 ft., 6 in.; born Dec. 24, 1904, Seattle, Wash.

Featherweight

TONY CANZONERI

Weight 126 lbs.; height 5 ft., 5 in.; born Nov. 6, 1905, New Orleans, La.

Bantamweight

Title has been in dispute since Charley Rosenberg outgrew class

Flyweight

IZZY SCHWARTZ

Weight 112 lbs.; height 5 ft., 4 in.; born 1904, New York, N. Y.

Chronology

HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONS

- 1889 John L. Sullivan defeated Jake Kilrain in 75 rounds at Richburg, Miss.
- 1892 Jim Corbett knocked out Sullivan in 21 rounds at New Orleans.
- 1897 Bob Fitzsimmons stopped Corbett in 14 rounds at Carson City, Nebr.
- 1899 James J. Jeffries knocked out Fitzsimmons in 11 rounds at Coney Island, N. Y.
- 1905 Jeffries retired, and presented the title to Marvin Hart.
- 1906 Tommy Burns beat Hart in 20 rounds at Los Angeles, Calif.
- 1908 Jack Johnson stopped Burns in 14 rounds at Sydney, N. S. W., Australia.
- 1915 Jess Willard knocked out Johnson in 26 rounds at Havana, Cuba.
- 1919 Jack Dempsey knocked out Willard in 3 rounds at Toledo, Ohio.
- 1926 Gene Tunney beat Dempsey in 10 rounds at Philadelphia, Penna.

LIGHT-HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONS

- 1917 Battling Levinsky assumed title.
- 1920 Georges Carpentier knocked out Levinsky in 3 rounds at New York, N. Y.
- 1922 Battling Siki knocked out Carpentier in 6 rounds at Paris, France.
- 1923 Mike McTigue beat Siki in 20 rounds at Dublin, Ireland.
- 1925 Paul Berlenbach beat McTigue in 15 rounds at New York, N. Y.
- 1926 Jack Delaney beat Berlenbach in 15 rounds at New York, N. Y.
- 1927 Delaney retired and McTigue was recognized as champion.
- 1927 Tommy Loughran beat Mike McTigue in 15 rounds at New York, N. Y.

MIDDLEWEIGHT CHAMPIONS

- 1884 Jack Dempsey (the Nonpareil) knocked out George Fuljames in 22 rounds.
- 1891 Bob Fitzsimmons stopped Dempsey in 13 rounds at New Orleans, La.
- 1896 Fitzsimmons relinquished title. Claimed by Kid McCoy and Tommy Ryan. The title really lapsed until 1907, when Stanley Ketchel was recognized after beating Jack Sullivan in 20 rounds.
- 1908 Billy Papke knocked out Ketchel in 12 rounds at Los Angeles, Calif.

- 1908 Ketchel stopped Papke in 12 rounds at Los Angeles, Calif.
- 1910 Ketchel was killed and Papke again claimed the title.
- 1911 Cyclone Johnny Thompson beat Papke in 20 rounds at Sydney, N. S. W., Australia.
- 1914 Thompson outgrew the class and Jimmy Clabby claimed the title.
- 1915 Les Darcy defeated Clabby in 20 rounds at Sydney, N. S. W., Australia.
- 1917 Darcy died. George Chip was recognized as champion.
- 1917 Al McCoy knocked out Chip in 1 round.
- 1918 Mike O'Dowd knocked out McCoy in 6 rounds.
- 1920 Johnny Wilson beat O'Dowd in 12 rounds at New York, N. Y.
- 1923 Harry Greb outpointed Wilson in 15 rounds at New York, N. Y.
- 1926 Tiger Flowers defeated Greb in 15 rounds at New York, N. Y.
- 1926 Mickey Walker defeated Flowers in 10 rounds at Chicago, Ill.

WELTERWEIGHT CHAMPIONS

- 1892 Billy Smith defeated Danny Needham in 14 rounds at San Francisco, Calif.
- 1894 Tommy Ryan beat Smith in 20 rounds at Minneapolis, Minn.
- 1896 Kid McCoy knocked out Ryan in 15 rounds at Maspeth, L. I., N. Y.
- 1897 McCoy entered the middleweight class and Smith again claimed the title.
- 1900 Rube Ferns won on a foul from Smith in 21 rounds at Buffalo, N. Y.
- 1900 Matty Matthews beat Rube Ferns in 15 rounds at Buffalo, N. Y.
- 1901 Ferns stopped Matthews in 10 rounds at Toronto, Canada.
- 1901 Joe Walcott knocked out Ferns in 5 rounds at Fort Erie, Canada.
- 1906 Honey Melody beat Walcott in 15 rounds at Chelsea, Mass.
- 1907 Mike Sullivan defeated Melody in 20 rounds at Los Angeles, Calif.
- 1910 Sullivan outgrew the class and the title was claimed by Jimmy Clabby. After Clabby in turn grew too heavy there was no recognized champion.
- 1915 Mike O'Dowd claimed championship, but also outgrew it.
- 1916 Jack Britton claimed championship.
- 1917 Ted ("Kid") Lewis beat Britton in 12 rounds at New York, N. Y.
- 1919 Jack Britton knocked out Ted ("Kid") Lewis in 9 rounds at New York, N. Y.
- 1922 Mickey Walker beat Jack Britton in 15 rounds at New York, N. Y.
- 1926 Pete Latzo outpointed Walker in 10 rounds at Scranton, Penna.
- 1927 Joe Dundee defeated Latzo in 15 rounds at New York, N. Y.

LIGHTWEIGHT CHAMPIONS

- 1885 Jack McAuliffe recognized as champion.
- 1893 McAuliffe retired undefeated, and Kid Lavigne claimed the title.

- 1899 Frank Erne defeated Lavigne in 20 rounds at Buffalo, N. Y.
- 1902 Joe Gans knocked out Erne in 1 round at Fort Erie, Canada.
- 1908 Battling Nelson stopped Gans in 21 rounds at Colma, Calif.
- 1910 Ad Wolgast won over Nelson in 40 rounds at Port Richmond, Calif.
- 1912 Willie Ritchie won on a foul from Wolgast in 16 rounds at Daly City, Calif.
- 1914 Freddy Welsh outpointed Ritchie in 20 rounds at London, England.
- 1917 Benny Leonard knocked out Welsh in 9 rounds at New York, N. Y.
- 1924 Leonard retired, and Jimmy Goodrich won an elimination tournament.
- 1925 Rocky Kansas defeated Goodrich in 15 rounds at Buffalo, N. Y.
- 1926 Sammy Mandell defeated Kansas in 10 rounds at Chicago, Ill.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHT CHAMPIONS

- 1922 Johnny Dundee recognized as champion. Tex Rickard created the class at this time.
- 1923 Jack Bernstein beat Dundee in 15 rounds at New York, N. Y.
- 1923 Dundee beat Bernstein in 15 rounds.
- 1924 Kid Sullivan beat Dundee 12 rounds at Brooklyn, N. Y.
- 1924 Mike Ballerino beat Sullivan in 10 rounds at Philadelphia, Penna.
- 1925 Tod Morgan knocked out Ballerino in 10 rounds at Los Angeles, Calif.

FEATHERWEIGHT CHAMPIONS

- 1887 Harry Gilmore claimed the championship, but outgrew.
- 1889 Ike Weir was recognized as the best featherweight.
- 1890 Billy Murphy stopped Ike Weir in 14 rounds at San Francisco, Calif.
- 1891 George Dixon recognized as champion.
- 1897 Solly Smith defeated Dixon in 20 rounds at San Francisco, Calif.
- 1898 Dave Sullivan stopped Smith in 5 rounds at New York, N. Y.
- 1898 Dixon won on a foul from Sullivan in 10 rounds at New York, N. Y.
- 1898 Ben Jordan beat Dixon in 25 rounds at New York, N. Y.
- 1899 Eddie Santry knocked out Jordan in 16 rounds at New York, N. Y.
- 1899 Dixon defeated Santry in 20 rounds at New York, N. Y.
- 1900 Terry McGovern knocked out Dixon in 8 rounds at New York, N. Y.
- 1901 Young Corbett stopped Terry McGovern in 2 rounds at Hartford, Conn.
- 1904 Corbett entered the lightweight class and the title was claimed by Abe Attell.
- 1912 Johnny Kilbane beat Attell in 20 rounds at Los Angeles, Calif.
- 1923 Eugene Criqui knocked out Kilbane in 6 rounds at New York, N. Y.

- 1923 Johnny Dundee beat Criqui in 15 rounds at New York, N. Y.
 1925 Dundee retired from the featherweight class and Low ("Kid") Kaplan won elimination tournament.
 1927 Kaplan outgrew the class and Tony Canzoneri was recognized as champion after beating Benny Bass in 15 rounds at New York, N. Y.

BANTAMWEIGHT CHAMPIONS

- 1890 George Dixon beat Nunc Wallace in 18 rounds at London, England.
 1894 Dixon entered the featherweight class and Jimmy Barry was recognized as champion after knocking out Caspar Leon in 28 rounds at Lamont, Ill.
 1899 Barry retired undefeated and Terry McGovern claimed the title. He knocked out Pedlar Palmer, the English champion in 1 round at Tuckahoe, N. Y.
 1901 McGovern entered the featherweight class and Harry Forbes claimed the title.
 1903 Frankie Neil stopped Forbes in 2 rounds at San Francisco, Calif.
 1904 Joe Bowker defeated Neil in 20 rounds in London, England.
 1909 Bowker retired.
 1910 Johnny Coulon was recognized as champion.

- 1914 Kid Williams knocked out Coulon in 3 rounds at Vernon, Calif.
 1916 Pete Herman beat Kid Williams in 20 rounds at New Orleans, La.
 1920 Joe Lynch beat Herman in 15 rounds at New York, N. Y.
 1921 Herman regained the title from Lynch in 15 rounds at New York, N. Y.
 1921 Johnny Buff beat Pete Herman in 15 rounds at New York, N. Y.
 1922 Joe Lynch knocked out Johnny Buff in 14 rounds at New York, N. Y.
 1924 Abe Goldstein beat Joe Lynch in 15 rounds at New York, N. Y.
 1924 Cannonball Martin beat Abe Goldstein in 15 rounds at New York, N. Y.
 1925 Charley Rosenberg beat Cannonball Martin in 15 rounds at New York, N. Y.
 1926 Rosenberg outgrew class; title in dispute.

FLYWEIGHT CHAMPIONS

- 1919 Jimmy Wilde recognized as champion.
 1923 Pancho Villa knocked out Wilde in 7 rounds at New York, N. Y.
 1923 Frankie Genaro beat Pancho Villa in 15 rounds at New York, N. Y.
 1925 Fidel La Barba beat Frankie Genaro in 10 rounds at Los Angeles, Calif.
 Fidel La Barba retired.
 1927 Izzy Schwartz recognized as champion.

A ROCK-'EM AND SOCK-'EM FIGHTER

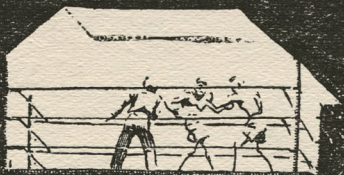
BOBBY BARRETT has been knocked out fourteen times, but even up to the day he quit the ring was a great drawing card. On the strength of victories over Johnny Mealey and Oakland Jimmy Duffy, he was rushed along too fast for his strength and experience—an error committed all too frequently in the fight game. When just a raw kid he fought Lew Tendler, Charley White and other leaders in their difficult profession.

Barrett was a caddie-master at the Aronomink Golf Club in Philadelphia before taking seriously to the ring. His brick red hair was a familiar sight to the club members, and later became a flaming beacon to the fans who loved a rock-'em and sock-'em, sure-enough fighter. For ten years he stuck to the fighting game, meeting with more reverses than successes, but always packing 'em in when he fought.

There never was a better illustration of the power of the punch than this same Bobby Barrett. He never learned to box, never acquired the skill which might have put him on the top of the heap, but the crowds came just the same because they knew the odds were all in favor of a knockout one way or the other. They knew Barrett would tear in with all he had. They knew he would fight furiously and dramatically to get over one of his famous round-house punches, and they knew that if one of those punches landed, his opponent would take the count.

Even though the odds were against its landing, the possibility was there, and that possibility alone tinged young Bobby Barrett with a glamor and color that made him the box-office attraction he was.

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.

A GREAT roar ascends as down the aisle toward the ring come the fighters and their handlers. Men and women alike stand on chairs in their eagerness to glimpse these modern gladiators and acclaim them. Up the steps into the roped arena they go. A staccato banging on the bell. The roar subsides. Introduction. Instructions. Again the bell—a single, sharp stroke—and the fight is on!

Struggle! Punch! Conquest! All the drama of strength and skill packed into thrilling three-minute rounds forever provides an indefinable, unescapable lure to countless thousands of fight fans—those at the ringside, those at the radio . . .

Fight Stories will endeavor to capture the essence of this great sport, with all its sidelights of drama and comedy, all its manifold phases of human interest, and put the result before you in the shape of bang-up, gripping action stories of the ring.

The ring symbolizes struggle. Struggle symbolizes life. Life, then, is our field, with the ring its point of focus—and what a whale of an interesting point of focus it is, whether pitched

in a stadium, in a college gym, in army camps, or aboard ship.

So here you have before you the first issue of *Fight Stories*. We hope you'll like it. Whatever your reaction, drop us a line. Tell us what you like, what you don't like, what you want—start an argument or two if you wish—for these columns are yours.

Advance information concerning *Fight Stories* was sent to some famous figures of the fistic world, and letters and telegrams have been pouring in ever since. We couldn't get them all into this issue, but here are a number from men whose names you will readily recognize:

I believe there is a great field for the kind of a magazine you are about to publish. There are thousands of youngsters and elders waiting for just such a publication. I am looking forward with great pleasure to reading the first issue. Good luck!

GENE TUNNEY,

(*Heavyweight Champion of the World*)

Your magazine called *Fight Stories* is a corking idea. It will do the game lots of good and will be of great benefit to the coming young men. The game needs something like this. Success is assured. Congratulations.

JAMES J. JEFFRIES,

(*Ex-Heavyweight Champion of the World*)

CHAIRMAN FARLEY OFFERS CONGRATULATIONS

Heartiest congratulations on your new magazine. I am sure the stories you will present will be extremely popular with the large public interested in that character of narrative. I wish you every success and feel that *Fight Stories* will be successful from every point of view.

JAMES A. FARLEY,
(Chairman N. Y. State Athletic Commission)

Please accept my congratulations and best wishes for success with your new magazine, *Fight Stories*. A periodical of this type should do much to elevate the boxing profession and bring to the fore those boxers worthy of public recognition. There is enough real romance and adventure surrounding the lives of boxers who have risen from obscurity to fame to make interesting reading not only for fight fans but for all interested in the phenomenal rise of any man.

HUMBERT J. FUGAZY,
(Famous Fight Promoter)

WILL ELEVATE BOXING

Your magazine can do much to elevate boxing and bring the true facts as well as the romance of the game before the public. Boxing is a clean and manly art if properly conducted and deserves a high place in the sporting world. I wish you a world of success in your new venture, and you can count on me to co-operate at all times.

PAUL PREHN,
(Chairman of the Illinois Athletic Commission)

You've a great field for *Fight Stories*. The public never has been more keenly interested in boxing than at present. I know you'll score a K. O.

TOMMY LOUGHRAN.,
(Light-Heavyweight Champion of the World)

A WORD FROM THE LIGHTWEIGHT CHAMPION

I think that a magazine of this kind is a great thing for the fight game. It encourages boys to take up boxing as a business, and gives them the right slant and the high courage to carry on. It also proves instructive to that part of the public who may have the wrong idea as to the boxing game. I am for it, and wish you all kinds of success in *Fight Stories*.

SAMMY MANDELL,
(Lightweight Champion of the World)

I was pleased to learn of the plans for your new magazine, *Fight Stories*. It's a knockout of an idea. Best wishes and good luck.

IZZY SCHWARTZ,
(Flyweight Champion of the World)

"SHOOT THAT LEFT!"

George Bruce, author of "Shoot That Left!" the novel in this issue of *Fight Stories*, has an interesting background on which to draw for his yarns of the prize ring. He says:

"Shoot That Left!" is the result of my experience as newspaper man covering sporting events for one of the largest newspaper syndicates in the country. Sitting ringside night after night at "star" bouts, soaking up the atmosphere of the ring, knowing the fighters, the heart-breaking unending toil that is the lot of every pugilist seems to give one a different slant on the whole game from the slant it brings to the "fan"—the man who pays his money at the gate and takes his choice.

I've learned how much a punch can hurt, how much heart it takes to stand up under the fire of a superior man and keep boring in for more. I know what hanging arms and heaving chest mean to a pugilist in the way of agony—and many times, as I have sat in a wooden chair looking up at a game stand by a boy who refuses to "dog it," I've thanked my lucky stars that my part of the program was to rap a typewriter for the edification of the general public rather than take a chance of getting my own jaw rapped by being one of the parties to the rough house inside the ropes.

It's plenty easy for a sporting writer to come out the next day and knock one of the contestants. Had the same sporting writer been in the ring and taken a few of the "knocks" himself, his viewpoint would have undergone a serious change.

"Shoot That Left!" is a story of the ring. It is a story that lives in the mind and heart and memory of every boxer. It is his atmosphere and his world. The incidents are all actual facts—insofar as the attempt of Spike O'Toole and Sailor Madden to "frame" Buster Martin through the mediumship of a girl. It's done—often! Still, "the best laid plans of mice and men—"

I hope all you resin rubbers will like this yarn. If it strikes home I'd like to know about it—it means that more will follow.

GEORGE BRUCE.

JACK BYRNE WRITES—

JACK BYRNE, who wrote "Breed of Champions," that rattling good yarn of amateur boxing in the current issue, relates below a little incident that provided the theme for his story:

"Breed of Champions" is based on something that happened to me and is still very real in my memory. It is based on the first

time that I admitted to myself that I was afraid.

My kid idols were two uncles of mine. One was heavyweight champion at his college, the other was champion on his feet. I thought they were super-men, invincible, and I was mighty proud to be able to say they were related to me.

Then, one summer, one of them came up to spend a couple of weeks with us. He brought footballs and baseballs and all sorts of sporting equipment with him, and he used to spend most of his time playing around with the kids in the neighborhood. One day he produced his gloves and decided we'd have some boxing lessons.

What happened is much the same as the story. He socked me one while we were sparring and I took a quick dive. And I knew that *he* knew I was afraid to take it. So next day I did the only thing possible to show him I wasn't a quitter.

I managed to get some of the other kids sparring, and then I boldly offered to scrap a little with a chap who was plenty bigger. Well, I took quite a beating but when my uncle stopped it I was still piling in there and asking for it. And I would have taken a couple more beatings just to hear him tell me again that he understood.

I have always been interested in amateur boxing because to my notion it is the finest part of the fight game. It's clean and wholesome and it builds men. If you want to see a real scrap with nothing in the bag just hie yourself to the next series of amateur bouts that hit town. You'll find action and thrills—and maybe laughs—that you can't get anywhere else.

JACK BYRNE.

COMING UP!

THERE'S a smashing assortment of yarns in coming issues of *Fight Stories*, to say nothing of the fact features which include further instalments of Battling Nelson's life-story, another article by Old-Timer under the title of "Famous Fights I Have Seen" and that helpful department of Jimmy De Forest's, "Keeping Fit."

In "The Durable Dane," Jack Kofoed takes you through the mazes of Nelson's early career. You ride the brake-beams with him from Hegewisch to Hot Springs. You hope and sweat and battle with him through a score of fights—fights with Christy Williams, Adam Ryan, Mickey Riley, Clarence English, Spider Welsh, Martin Canole, Aurelia

Herrera, Young Corbett, and his first engagement with Jimmy Britt. The drama of his career unfolds before you with the interest and reality of a motion picture.

As for any one who is interested in conditioning—and who among red-blooded Americans is not?—there is Jimmy De Forest's own department. De Forest is in every respect "a trainer of champions." His wealth of experience in putting fighters into superb physical condition, from Jim Jeffries down to Jack Dempsey, with countless lesser luminaries in between, is now at the disposal of readers of *Fight Stories*.

Whether you are interested in boxing, or in maintaining a strong, healthy body to withstand the rigors of our American life, or in protecting or regaining your health, De Forest stands ready to help you with sound counsel.

EX-SERVICE AUTHORS

Eugene Cunningham, the famous fictionist who won several boxing titles during his career in the U. S. Navy, offers *Fight Stories* readers a unique tale of the ring with a cow-country locale. He calls it "Unlucky Tiger."

Arthur J. Burks, whose "Referee's Decision" was a feature of this issue, comes through with another one of battling Marines in Haiti in a wow of a story called "The Fight Before Christmas." You'll like it.

"Fist Proof" is the title of another dramatic short story by Theodore Roscoe, whose name is well known to you.

Jack Conway has a rollicking tale of the theater and prize ring, while M. H. Wallace rings the bell with a yarn called "Right On the Button" and T. W. Ford brings you right up out of your seat with a novelet which is a sequel to "Battlin' Beppo," the novelet in this issue.

THE BUSIEST FIGHTERS

WHO among the great array of fighters from time immemorial has fought the most battles, win, lose or draw? Perhaps our readers have some little-known information on this subject. If so, send it in. It is generally known that Abe the Newsboy claimed to have engaged in more than a thousand combats, but Abe wrestled as much as he fought, and there are no conclusive records at hand to prove his contention.

Kid Beebe, who fought for many years, and met some of the best feather-weights in the game, seems to have been among the world's busiest fistmen.

Here is a list of stars who engaged in more than two hundred fights each:

	Fights
Kid Beebe	612
Johnny Dundee	327
Jack Britton	293
Ted Kid Lewis	286
Young Erne	282
Harry Greb	258
Sam Langford	243
Young Stribling	212
George Chaney	201
Benny Leonard	200

GAMENESS

They say the difference between a game man and a quitter shows when they are knocked down. The game man gets up. The quitter stays on the floor.

This is not entirely true. Sometimes it is a question of ability to assimilate a punch rather than of courage. Bombadier Wells, the Englishman, was as game as any one, but he could be knocked out easily. He just didn't have the resistance. Joe Choynski, with a heart like a lion, felt a strong punch so much in his legs that he could not control them.

Both Wells and Choynski were as game as Joe Grim and Joe Jeannette. Yet Grim was knocked down thirteen times in a six-round bout with Bob Fitzsimmons and rose every time. Jean-

ette was dropped thirty-two times in a finish fight with Sam McVey, but came along to win out.

No one could question the courage of these men. But it must be remembered that they had abnormal strength and vitality, which Wells and Choynski did not have. So the next time you see a man go down on the floor and stay there, don't jump to conclusions and question his gameness. He may want to get up and be unable to do so.

LEVINSKY COMES BACK

THE comeback of Battling Levinsky is one of the most interesting and dramatic features of the past year's ring history. Levinsky, a smart, young man, some time ago revived the light-heavy-weight title and took it for his own. He lost it to Georges Carpentier before the Frenchman met Jack Dempsey, and after losing a fifteen-round decision to Gene Tunney in 1922 he retired from the game.

About a year ago Levinsky became convinced that he could outpoint most of the rugged sluggers he saw in the ring. He started out again and has been surprisingly successful. Levinsky is forty years old, but clean living and proper training have kept his body in perfect condition.

He defeated Matt Adgie, a youth who was known and feared for his punch, and then went ten fast rounds with Billy Stribling; and though Stribling had run up a string of knockouts, he was unable even to knock the ancient mariner down. Another of Levinsky's surprises was in fighting a draw with Tiny Roebuck, a young giant twenty years his junior and fifty-seven pounds heavier.

It just goes to show that the man who takes care of himself intelligently can retain his vitality and skill past the time when athletic ability is supposed to fade.

SAM'S WALLOP

SOME of the old-timers' opinions of other old-timers make interesting reading. For example, Gunboat Smith, whose "occipital" punch nearly ruined Jack Dempsey in the early stages of the Mauler's career, believes that Sam Langford was one of the most devastating hitters of all time.

"Sam was the greatest puncher I ever saw," says Smith. "For a week after my first bout with him I could hang my hat on the side of my head, there were so many lumps. I didn't need a collar button, either, for Langford raised one on the back of my neck.

"He hit me on the top of the head so hard that he knocked my tights clear up to my chin, no kiddin'. If he was around today and as good as he was then they wouldn't have to look for any logical contender. He'd be it."

WHIMS OF FIGHTING MEN

Eddie Burnbrook, who won the Army welterweight championship some years ago and became known as one of the hardest punching men of his weight when he turned professional, is a curious soul.

Eddie has scored more knockouts than almost any other man in the game. He hasn't the hardest chin in the world, and has been beaten more than once himself, but no one ever questioned his courage.

His favorite pastime is crocheting. No kidding! This slugging prize-fighter would rather crochet something like a bed-spread than do anything else in his spare time. His home is full of doilies and centerpieces and what-nots that he made himself.

No one can call him a sissy, though. He's far too hard-boiled for that. But he is as amazingly skilful with the needle as a painter with his brushes, and is rather proud of his deftness.

THE UNLUCKIEST FIGHTERS

DID all you statisticians know that Spencer Gardner has lost more decisions than any other fighter in the game? He had 42 verdicts charged against him, though in this he is but little ahead of the English feather-weight, Freddy Jacks, who lost 39 referee's decisions.

The following table, showing some interesting comparative figures in the matter of lost decisions, does not include knockout defeats.

	Lost
Spencer Gardner	42
Freddy Jacks	39
Bill Beynon	38
Young Joe Brooks	37
Dick Lee	33
Curly Walker	32
Tommy Robson	32
Arthur Hayes	32
Terry Martin	32
Louis Ruddick	31
George Dixon	29
Bobby Garcia	29
Johnny Dundee	25
Tony Marullo	25

ASK US ANOTHER

THIS department will undertake to answer to the best of its ability such questions concerning boxing and the history of fistiana generally as may be put before it by its readers. Just send in your letters and watch these columns for the answer. In addition, we hope to make this phase of our work an open forum in which everyone will feel free to partake. Just take your pen in hand and let 'er go. We're here waiting for you—on the receiving end.

All of which, fistically speaking, concludes our first round of editorial effort. We now retire, as gracefully as possible, to our corner to await the bell announcing round two.

FICTION TREATS FROM FICTION HOUSE

"SHIP me somewheres east of Suez!" Kipling wrote the slogan for every lover of adventure and the Out-Trails when he penned those picturesque words in his "Mandalay." But not all of us can gratify that yearning to roam to the far places of the world, so we have to do our globe-trotting and fight our battles in the pages of our favorite magazines. And even the most adventurous-minded can get enough thrills from the June issues of the Fiction House magazines—chuck-full of yarns of cowcamp and mountains and Western ranges, of tropic seas and the frozen Northland, of Africa's jungles and China's mysterious depths, of cloud-high flyers in peace and war. "It's a FICTION HOUSE magazine"—the sterling-silver hallmark of action-adventure fiction.

ACTION STORIES for June leads off with *Yellow Guns*, Jack Byrne's rousing Western adventure novel of three strange partners who banded together in the cowtown of Vigilante to buck the lawless six-gun spread of Honest Dan Morgan. Albert Richard Wetjen contributes another of his famous Shark Gotch series, *The Shark Shoots It Out*, a complete novel of the South Seas in which the indomitable Gotch sets out to tame Anea, the island that God forgot. Walt Coburn, tophand cowboy-author, comes through with *Lights of Despair*, the human-interest yarn of a youth who returned from No Man's Land to Arizona, to get the men who had made him an outcast. Other stories by Arthur J. Burks, George Bruce, Theodore Roscoe and C. A. Freeman, rounding out another all-star line-up of action-adventure authors! *Action Stories* out the first of the month.

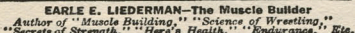
LARIAT STORY MAGAZINE for June presents an all-star, all-fiction line-up that would be hard to beat. Eli Colter's *Hard-Boiled Haig*, a complete cowboy novel, leads the spread. It's the sort of fast-moving, action-crammed yarn that makes mighty fine reading. In it you'll hear the grim bark of rustler guns and listen to the glib tongues of yarning punchers through bunkhouse nights. *Trouble on the Hoof* is another of those gripping, colorful little yarns of the cattle range that Frederick C. Davis can write so well. *Two Bucks for Courage*, by the *Lariat* favorite, Jack Smalley, is the story of a banty-legged little puncher who does his stuff on the hurricane deck of a sunfishing bronc. And these are only a few stories in a line-up that includes such authors as Eugene Cunningham, George Cory Franklin, Francis James, Carson W. Mowre and Walt Coburn! *Lariat* on the stands the fifteenth.

AIR STORIES for June! A corking bookfull of adventures of the sky-trails, led off by George Bruce's *Ride 'Em, Airboy!* a stirring novelet of mile-high competition for glory in a flying circus. *Hawk of the Sky-Patrol*, a gripping saga of the Northlands and a flyer of the Patrols, by Francis James, is the complete novel in the June issue. Another Gales-McGill yarn, by Frederick L. Nebel, *Birdmen of Passage*, appears in the

line-up. *Ghost Control*, a whip-stalling tale of a flightless air officer, by Andrew A. Caffrey; part one of a new serial by Thomson Burtis, *Phantom Wings*; *Sitting Pretty*, by Theodore Roscoe. Ending out the flight in a new department, *True Stories of American War-Birds*! Each month a true story from the activities of an American flyer during the war. *Air Stories* on the stands the first of the month.

WINGS for June carries a line-up of real air stories, written by real airmen! *The Ghost Ship*, a complete novel by George Bruce, introduces the Scandinavian Air Hound and Stubby Jenks, aerial detectives, who solve a mystery which baffled the greatest city in the world! Raoul Dexter, a new *Wings* author, brings *Wings of the Storm*, a futuristic yarn of combat above the high seas. The second of the Red and Doug series, *Silver Eagle*, by Carson W. Mowre, appears in this issue. *No Man's Skies*, a tale of a woman who fights men with their own weapons, by Slim Hawkins; *Flying Twins*, by Frederick C. Davis; *Air Insurance*, by Theodore Roscoe; and another Hangar Yarn, *Lady Luck's Ace*, by Bob Travers. Another true tale of an American war-bird will appear in the new department, *True Stories of American War-Birds*. Watch for it! *Wings* on the stands the fifteenth of every month.

NORTH•WEST STORIES features in the first June issue a big, complete Western novel by W. C. Tuttle—*Masked Men*, a smashing yarn of loot-trails and a road-agent who wanted to go straight. In the same issue there's another story of Ananias Jones, and Sheriff Bill Morton rides the Bitter Creek range again in *The Mark of Sheriff Bill*; other outdoor stories, too, by Miles Overholt, DeHerries Smith, Tom J. Hopkins, and E. S. Pladwell. In the second June *North•West* Frederick L. Nebel's complete Northern novel, *The Red Coat of Tradition*, leads the way. Howard J. Perry tells another high-climbing yarn of the tall timber; Miles Overholt, J. Frank Davis, Kenneth Gilbert and Owen Finbar are represented by their usual colorful yarns of the Snow Frontier and the Sand Frontier. *North•West Stories* on the stands the 8th and 22nd.



and I offered something that would give you ten years more to live, would you take it? You'd grab it. Well, fellows, I've got it, but don't wait till you're dying or it won't do you a bit of good. It will then be too late. Right now is the time. Tomorrow, or any day, some disease will get you and if you have not equipped yourself to fight it off, you're gone. I don't claim to cure disease. I claim to give you the power to fight it off. You won't get the doctor will starve to death waiting for you to take sick. Can you imagine a mosquito trying to bite a brick wall? A fine chance.

As Re-Soldier Means
I like to get the weak ones. I delight in getting hold of a man who has been turned out of his popelike position. It's easy enough to dish a task that's more than half done. But give me the weak, sickly chap and watch him grow stronger. That's what I like. It's fun to me because I know I can do it and I like to give the other fellow the laugh. I don't simply give you a veneer of muscle that looks good to others. I work on you both inside and out. I not only build big, muscular bodies on you, but I build up those inner muscles that surround your vital organs. The kind that give you real pep and energy, the kind that fire you with ambition and the courage to tackle anything set before you. The kind that

All I Ask is Ninety Days

Who says it takes years to get in shape? Show me the man who makes any such claims, and I'll make him lay at his words. I'll put one full inch on your arm in just 36 days. Yes, and two full inches on your chest in the same length of time. Meanwhile, I'm putting life and pep into your old back-bones. And from then on, just watch 'em grow. At the end of thirty days you won't know yourself. Your whole body will take on an entirely different appearance. But you've started. Now come the real works. I've only built my foundation. I'll want more '36 in on legs, and you'll make those friends of yours, who think they're strong, look like something the cat dragged in.

When I'm through with you, you're a real man. The kind that can prove it. You will be able to do things you had thought impossible. And the beauty of it is you keep on going. Your deep, full chest breathes in rich, pure air, stimulating your blood and making you just bubble over with vim and vitality. Your huge square shoulders and your massive muscular arms have that craving for a job that will give you the flash to your eyes and the pep to your step that will make you admired and sought after, both in business and social worlds.

This is no idle prattle, fellows. If you doubt me, make me prove it. Go ahead, I like it. I have already done this for thousands of others and my records are unchallenged. What I have done for them, I will do for you. Come, then, for time flies and every day counts. Let this very day be the beginning of new life to you.

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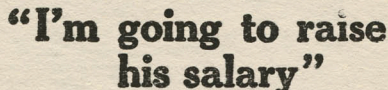
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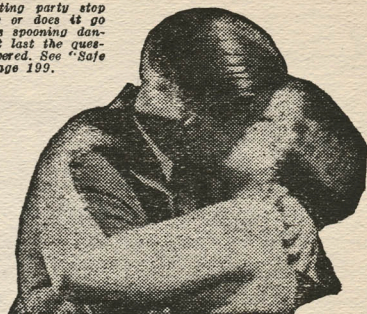
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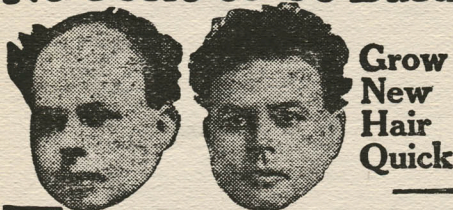
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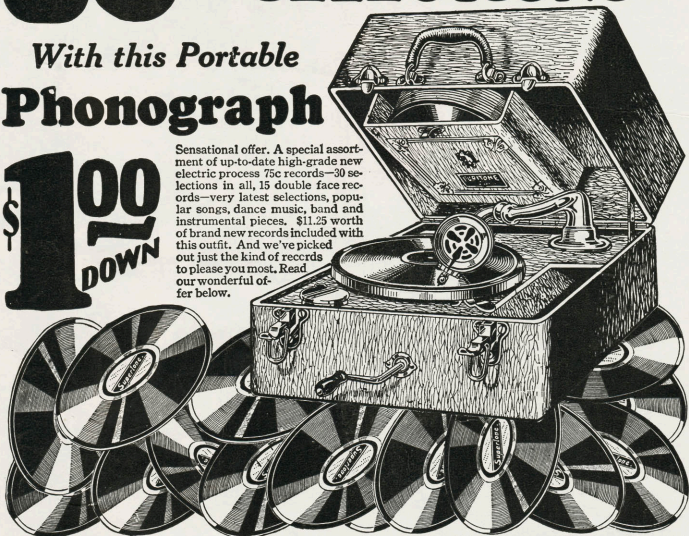
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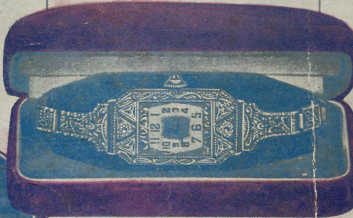
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