

Sports and Pastimes.

BOXING.

When Sullivan Fought Kilrain.

EAST NIGHT UNDER LONDON P.R.

The discussion over the fight between Jack Johnson and Bombardier Wells for a purse of £8000 and the heavy-weight championship of the world, recalls the days of other battles, and the emolments the participants received for pounding each other into insensibility or a state approaching unconsciousness with bare knuckles, or with hands encased in small gloves.

The stake for which John L. Sullivan and Jake Kilrain fought at Richburg, Miss., 29 years ago, was the "Police Gazette" diamond belt, and not more than one-fourth of the amount which will be hung up for Johnson and his clever opponent. The approaching contest calls for a limited number of rounds with 5oz gloves; quite a different test from that called for at Richburg, when Sullivan and Kilrain fought with bare knuckles for two hours sixteen minutes and five seconds, or 75 rounds.

SULLIVAN'S UGLY TEMPER.

It was the last fight held in America under the rules of the London prize ring, and it was the bloodiest and most theatrical that veterans can recall. Sullivan, then in his prime, was the ideal fighting man. He had returned from England, after his unsatisfactory battle with Charlie Mitchell, and when his friends, Jimmy Wanely and Charles Johnson proposed backing him against Jake Kilrain, a strong, stalwart ex-oarsman of Baltimore, who had the influential backing of Richard K. Fox, the Boston boy was only too eager for the fray.

Money melted like snow under April rains, and though he made it fast, Sullivan was well-nigh crippled financially when the articles of agreement were signed. His temper, ugly in those days, was not improved when he learned that Mitchell was coming from England to prepare Kilrain for the battle, and Liney Tracy and the others engaged to spar with the "big fellow" in his preparation were hammered right and left by the mighty Bostonian, who, when his hands were up, forgot sometimes that it was a friend he was confronting.

LONDON PRIZE RING RULES.

For many weeks before the battle, the bands of both Sullivan and Kilrain were treated with a pickle to make them tough and hard until they were most formidable weapons of offence and defence. Some of the pampered darlings of the ring of to-day, who eagerly inquire about the loser's end of a purse before they will agree to spar with pillow-like coverings on their hands, would faint if they had seen the grim preparations for the Sullivan-Kilrain tilt. For the sake of those who have never seen a battle under London rules, it may be stated that the code calls for bare knuckles, and the contestants are naked, save for a breechcloth or short tunic. The feet are, of course, shod with tightly-laced shoes of leather, with spikes in the soles to prevent slipping, and short socks extending just above the shoe-tops are considered necessary. Thus equipped, the men battle on the turf in a ring 20ft square.

In contests under these rules it was permissible to wrestle; and it was also considered no violation of the ethics to punch in clinches—in fact, it was at this style of fighting that Sullivan was a past master. A round ended when either man was knocked down or thrown, and the seconds of the fallen man were permitted to carry him to his corner. The rests between rounds were 30 seconds in duration.

SELECTING THE BATTLEGROUND.

There was a tremendous clamour when the articles calling for a contest between Sullivan and Kilrain were signed, and one State after another throughout the greater part of the Union announced that the barbarous display would not take place within its confines.

The late Francis Stevenson was commissioned to seek a battleground. After consultation with some of the leading sportsmen of Louisiana, it was given out

that the fight would take place within 200 miles of New Orleans, and that quaint old city at once became the Mecca of thousands of admirers of the manly art from the United States and Canada.

The air was surcharged with excitement, and word was quietly passed on Sunday to be prepared to leave that evening for the battleground. Tickets, including admission to the arena, were sold at the headquarters of the promoters of the battle for 20 dollars, and all were instructed to be at a certain point at a given hour without fail. The cars, more than two score of them, had been standing in the yards all day long gathering heat until they fairly pulsated, and nobody who passed through that night will ever forget the suffering undergone during the wait of more than three hours which ensued before the trains pulled out over the North-Eastern Railroad.

The trains were in charge of a band of Texas Rangers expressly imported to preserve order; and the platform of every car had a slouch-hatted individual, who looked as though he understood how to handle the short rifle he carried in the hollow of his left arm. The cars were thronged with men in every walk of life. Planters had left their growing crops, lawyers their briefs, and business men their daily associations to see what promised to be the greatest fight ever fought on American soil.

Gamblers, fighters, and sports of every degree sat cheek by jowl with men bearing the best names in the southland, all in shirt sleeves, panting for air in the stifling atmosphere.

It was almost eight o'clock when the battleground was reached on the Mississippi line, not far from the village of Richburg, in the pine woods of Charles Rich, after whom the town was called. Rich's sawmill, closed for the day, was in plain view from the arena, a rough board four-sided affair, with seats rising sharply from the roped-in square of ground where the men were to fight.

Both the contestants and their seconds were on the ground early, and after a few minutes' wrangling the various officials were chosen, and the sun was giving a sample of his powers when the men stepped into the ring. Sullivan, low-browed and determined looking, was savage as he sat in his corner and looked from beneath his black brows furtively at Kilrain and his whispering adviser, Mitchell, while his attendants were rubbing his arms and legs.

Kilrain was serious, as betokened the occasion, for it would give the stoutest-hearted man that ever trod the squared circle a few tremours to face such an adversary as Sullivan was that day. Sullivan's coal black hair was cropped closely, with the exception of that portion above the brow, which was probably half an inch long. His moustache was gone, and his face was that of a typical gladiator. There wasn't a vestige of flesh upon it that didn't belong there. The skin upon his body was milky white, and he opened and closed his huge hands, dyed a dark brown by the stain put upon them to toughen them, as though eager to get to work.

Kilrain, who was a trifle taller, and not quite so sturdily built as his dread rival, was trained to the minute. Mitchell, who had fought Sullivan twice, and who was one of the greatest masters in the art of condition, had been sure of that. Now, while waiting the call of time, with his arm around Kilrain's shoulder, he poured out a volume of injunctions on how to lay the champion low. Like Sullivan, Kilrain was clean-shaven, and his hair was closely cut.

SULLIVAN IS THROWN.

The scene when John Fitzpatrick, the Mayor of New Orleans, who acted as referee, called the men to the centre of the ring, will never be forgotten by those who were present. The contestants and their seconds formed a Muttese cross, clasping each other's hands for a brief moment, and at the call of "time" the seconds ran to their respective quarters, and the gladiators faced each other with hands in the proper position.

There never lived a man who could stand toe to toe with Sullivan and exchange blow for blow, and Kilrain knew this. Mitchell knew this, too, and he had schooled his protégé to be wary of the sledge-hammer tactics with which Sullivan had conquered the world. An

expert at wrestling, he was urged to try for a fall whenever the occasion offered itself, and it was therefore no surprise after one or two trialing exchanges to see Kilrain duck under Sullivan's guard, seize him about the waist, and come crashing to the earth with his elbow full in Sullivan's stomach.

The fall brought a storm of cheers from the Kilrain camp. Sullivan was unseated by the impact of the fall, but in a moment he was after Kilrain like a lion, and for the balance of the battle, which for severity has few parallels, he was constantly on the offensive. His tremendous blows to the body, whether delivered at long range or in the clinches, when back and kidneys were pummeled, sounded like the assaults of a cooper on a barrel. Kilrain fought valiantly, but nothing could withstand Sullivan's bull-like rushes, and time after time Jake was hurled to the earth.

SULLIVAN'S FAIR TACTICS.

Mitchell never for a moment was riled. He taunted Sullivan, calling to Kilrain, "Go at him, Jake! He can't fight! You've got him, had!" Sullivan was infuriated, and he hurled defiance at Mitchell, saying that when he finished Kilrain he would lick him (Mitchell) in the same ring.

Sullivan, always the idol of the sporting element, won the admiration of all at the ringside by his fair tactics in this battle. Kilrain spiked the big fellow severely in one of the clinches. The big champion let it pass, but when the thing occurred a second time and the blood welled through the holes in his shoes as he stepped forward to deliver a blow, his only remark in remonstrance was:—

"Don't do that. Fight like a man, Jake!"

The crowd cheered itself hoarse, and there was no more spiking or anything that savoured of unfairness.

The heat became intolerable, as the sun mounted the heavens. The tall pines afforded very little shade, and it is a matter of record that the mercury reached 107 when the battle was at its height. The bodies of both men, burnt by the sun, were torn where the knuckles ploughed furrows in glancing blows, and the suffering of the contestants must have been extreme. The tortures of the spectators were not imaginary either, for the majority of them had had no food since the previous evening, and there was not a drop of water to be had for love or money. Then, too, there was the broiling heat, and all wished for an early

finish of the fight, and a quick trip back to town.

MITCHELL THROWS UP THE SPONGE.

Kilrain was a pitiable spectacle at the end of the 56th round, and time after time he dropped to the earth to save punishment. Under a strict interpretation of London prize ring rules this would have lost him the battle, but the referee, who had the confidence of everybody, and who stood so high in the estimation of his fellow-townsmen that they had elected him Mayor, was not thoroughly posted on this point, and the men fought on.

Mitchell was a madman, and it was only after the repeated wailings of his friends, who did not want to see a game man cut into ribbons, that the Englishman consented to throw up the sponge and it was almost noon when Kilrain was carried to his corner for the last time.

Sullivan, standing in the centre of the ring, his face bruised and swollen, shouted to Mitchell to "come on and get what's coming to you," but the Englishman was already on his way to the train with the crowd, which broke and ran, thoroughly sated with blood for the nonce. In New Orleans that evening, when clean clothing had been changed, after refreshing baths, Sullivan was toasted in magazines as the greatest fighter the world had ever seen. Kilrain was praised for his gameness, and while the glasses were brimming he was tossing in pain under the care of a physician, as the result of the terrific beating he had received. It was days before he could leave his bed to travel to his home in the North.

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