

BOXING.

JOHNSON HUNGRY FOR GLORY.

WILL FIGHT ANYONE.

Jack Johnson is as eager to fight as a good citizen ever becomes. He isn't particular as to the identity of his opponent. It's fight he wants, and he wants it soon, and he wants it for the glory more than the gold. Johnson likes glory. He likes to be pointed out on the streets as a man of distinction. He may have a white wife, but when he wanders down among his own people he likes to have the coloured lassies make eyes at him. Thus writes Barratt O'Hara, the well-known American boxing authority.

John L. Sullivan liked to be known as a "good fellow," Corbett cared chiefly for the golden showers that could be dragged from the clouds of fame. Fitzsimmons doted much and Jeffries not at all on publicity; but this Johnson chap dreams of the limelight when asleep and, when awake could, if necessary, apportion it into meals and live therefrom. To be a great public idol he would fight Jeffries, Ketchel, Corbett and Langford, in the same ring, one after the other, and for nothing. Not that he could get away with such a job, but if he had to in order to keep the public eye he would assuredly try it.

It is more than a question of individual idolatry. The whole philosophy of pugilism lies beneath. Johnson is a negro, and underneath the skin in his heart he is a loyal negro. In the 200 years of boxing as a public sport he is the first negro champion of the world, generally recognised, although almost a century ago one of his forbears laid claim to a similar distinction. Being champion, he wants the limelight for himself no more than his race. Moreover, he wants to make his reign—the reign of a negro champion—more brilliant than the reign of any of his white predecessors. Hence his eagerness to fight often, to take them all on, either beginning or ending with Jeffries.

WILL PUT UP BLUFF.

Bear this in mind, for in the course of the next few weeks much fight talk will centre around Johnson, and it is not unlikely that his friends will put him up to bluffing about guaranteed purses befitting the championship dignity. This may cause certain matches to hang fire, but it will all be bluff. In the end Johnson will throw down his hand and fight anyway. He won't let a solitary white man escape, and in the final play of influences in making the matches the money lever will count least of all. Johnson intends to whip them all or die in the attempt. That's my estimate of the man's mental attitude after talking with him daily for a week.

Right now Johnson has a forfeit up to fight Stanley Ketchel, the middle-weight champion, for a side bet of 5000 dollars, and all of the purse. Ketchel has a similar forfeit posted. Jack says he wants a guaranteed purse. So he does—if he can make the promoters come through with it. If they won't come through he'll take what he can get. Stanley doesn't take Johnson seriously. Better than Tommy Burns, but not a world-beater, is the Ketchel estimate of the new champion. If the Ketchel proposition falls through there is Jim Corbett. Jim is talking fight until he is blue in the vocal cords, and even he has reached the posting-of-a-forfeit stage. Jim isn't altogether sincere. He likes the advertising. He's playing to the galleries. But if he gets caught and a promoter more sentimental than sensible hangs up a good purse, Jim will fight the negro and get whipped, of course.

JEFF IS TAKING TIME.

Meanwhile Jeffries is waiting for the time to ripen. Jeff will fight when the red money is in sight. That's a moral; in my opinion he would fight if he were certain, absolutely certain, of winning.

"I'll be a dog if I get whipped by a negro," he said. "Don't take me for a fool. I know the public."

"What do you think of Johnson?" was asked.

"I haven't anything to say," he answered, then leaned over, smiled and added: "When I was matched with Munroe, I knew what he was. I knew that one punch would finish. But when anyone asked me what I thought of him I answered: 'I haven't anything to say.' I didn't have anything to say, that was true. I didn't lie."

INCIDENTS IN JOHN L. SULLIVAN'S CAREER.

John L. Sullivan has had a somewhat eventful career outside of the ring (says an American writer). He began his business life as a tinker in a South Boston tin shop long before he ever put a boxing glove on. John was very fond of playing ball, and noonday he returned to the shop about fifteen minutes after the whistle had blown. A burly foreman gave Sullivan a hard call down and also a kick with his heavy boot for being late, whereupon John, with a punch on the jaw, sent the bully through a glass window. The incident gained for Sullivan the name of the Boston strong boy, and made him a fighter.

After he became champion and was in high popular favour, Sullivan opened a big saloon in Washington-street, Boston. The opening was a regular circus and lasted for a month. I never saw so much wine and booze flow during the same time since. Sullivan, who was backed by a shrewd fellow named Mike Clarke, was obliged to remain in the cafe during the entire month. Clarke knew that Sullivan was the drawing card and wouldn't let him escape, so John ate and slept in the joint while hundreds of men gathered around him.

I really believe it was this prolonged racket that caused Sullivan's first breakdown. After two weeks of this all day and night wine guzzling Sullivan was a wreck, but he stuck to it until nature finally compelled him to quit. I think he was the sickest big man I ever saw when he was carried to the hotel for repairs. The saloon did but little business in John's absence, and he got so tired of posing as proprietor that he finally sold his end for a song.

Sullivan next tried his hand as sporting editor of a New York pictorial weekly, which was just before he fought Kilrain; but his copy, when it was in evidence, was so fierce that the owner of the paper soon dropped John from the payroll.

Mr. Martin Taylor, the well-known New Zealand coursing enthusiast, who will be in Sydney for the next six weeks (says "Amateur" of the "Referee"), desires me to say that he is prepared to back, in a six-rounds contest, a nephew of Bob Fitzsimmons—a young native of Timaru (N.Z.), 17 years of age, 5ft 11in high, and weighing 10st 10lb, against anyone his poundage in Australia, for £50 or £100 a-side. As it was Mr. Martin Taylor who introduced the late "Otto Cribb" to the boxing world, it might very reasonably be inferred that he knows what he is about in taking up the latest "Simmons development."

Alf. Gault, the Auckland feather-weight boxer, was billed to fight Frank O'Grady at the Galety Athletic Club, Sydney, on Saturday night last. Up to the time of writing the result of the contest was not known locally.

Once more Arthur Cripps defeated Joe Costa, the iron-jawed Italian, this time at the Brisbane Stadium and in the fourteenth round. In throwing in the towel from Costa's corner it was announced that the Italian's hand had gone back on him.

Sandow, the Auckland wrestler and boxer, was matched to fight "Rangi" Burns at Wollongong, N.S.W., on Saturday night last.

Johnson, according to Mr. McIntosh, is only getting from £50 to £60 a week for his show turns in the American vaudeville places—he got £200 weekly at the Tivoli in Sydney, while Tommy Burns was receiving £225.

Recently Peter Maher, the Irish champion, showed at the Wayne Athletic Club, Philadelphia, that he still retains some of his old power by knocking out Billy Turnbridge, a burly coloured heavy-weight, in three rounds. Turnbridge was no match for Maher at any stage of the game, for Peter knocked him through the ropes three times in the first round, but could not get the punch to the right spot. In the second round Peter knocked Turnbridge through the ropes twice. In the third round Peter got to Bill's jaw, and one punch settled the business. A whiff of old times, indeed, is Peter Maher. It was to Peter Jim Corbett handed the world's championship once, and when, soon, after Bob Fitzsimmons settled Peter in short order, Jim Corbett, like the pinafores schoolboy, said he didn't give the title "for keeps," and handed it back again. It was Peter Maher who fought those six slaughtering rounds with Joe Choynski in New York, and it was Peter Maher (as a brewer's carter) whom Peter Jackson met in Dublin, I think, and played with; this, of course, before Peter was heard of outside the Green Isle. Maher was a great fighter beyond any manner of means.

AERONAUTICS.

THE WILBUR WRIGHT AEROPLANE.

Now that aeroplanes are "in the air," it is interesting to learn what Wilbur Wright has to say about the manner in which he and his brother were criticised regarding their refusal to compete for the London-to-Manchester prize. Many people were surprised that the Wright Brothers did not immediately declare a purpose to win it. Their backwardness was contrasted with the forwardness of another experimenter, and publicly made the basis of an unfavourable judgment as to the credibility of their past performances. Wilbur Wright states, however, that it was never his practice to publicly announce intentions which he had no settled purpose of promptly carrying to a successful conclusion. Consequently it has resulted that while he has repeatedly said that he believed the prize would be won, he never said that he himself was about to make an attempt to win it. Wilbur Wright regards it as practically certain that the "Daily Mail" prize will not be won at the first attempt, and that it may not be won at the tenth attempt. The same authority points out that neither public safety nor the safety of the aviator will permit that he shall fly directly over cities. He therefore cannot follow a railroad line directly. He must make detours, and, after a city is passed, be able to select the right one of many lines which diverge from each large city. One of the Wilbur Wright aeroplanes, in the charge of an expert specially trained by the inventor, is due for delivery to Messrs. J. and N. Taft, in Melbourne, early in July.

ATHLETICS.

GOTCH WINS WRESTLING BOUT.

Frank Gotch, the American, who relieved Hackenschmidt, the Russian Lion, of the world's championship in the wrestling line, has just defended his title successfully in a mat contest with "Yussiff Mahmout of Bulgaria," at Chicago. The match took place on the night of April 14, and Gotch won with two straight falls.

There was a wrangle before the affair started. Yussiff wanted to wrestle in his bare feet, and Gotch insisted that the 'Garian wear shoes. Finally Yussiff offered to pay 500dol. out of his end of the purse for the privilege of going bare-footed, and Gotch agreed. They say Yussiff was as a child in the hands of the big American. Gotch won each fall with a crotch and half-Nelson, the first in eight minutes, and the second in 9min. 10sec. It is said that Gotch did not try for his dreaded toe hold once during the match.

If all that has been published about Gotch recently is to be believed, he has received some alluring offers from different parties in Melbourne who are anxious to arrange a Gotch-Hackenschmidt match for Melbourne Cup time. It is understood that it is Gotch's intention to take in the Alaska-Yukon Exposition at Seattle, and then go on to Australia.

R. E. Walker and V. Duncker were the stars at the Maritzburg sports on April 17, in a special 120yds hurdles event. Duncker was timed to do 15-1-5sec. which ties the world's record—if correctly taken, and everything else was in order. Apparently it was not a competition, merely an attempt on record (with a pacemaker), and thus it would not count as a record in Australasia, although it may be in accordance with S.A. rules. R. E. Walker won his heat in the 100yds handicap from scratch in 9 4-5sec, but through a bad start he could only manage fourth place in the final (inches separated the quartette). In the 220yds handicap V. Duncker, 12s yds, beat R. E. Walker, scr., by a yard in 22 3-5sec. In the final of the 100 metres handicap Duncker, 7yds, again beat Walker, scr. Duncker won by a yard in 10 4-5sec.

In the final of the Second Johannesburg 100yds Handicap on April 10 the placings were: W. Routledge, 12 ½ yds, 1; R. Munro, 12yds, 2; G. Thompson, 12 ½ yds, 3; A. R. Postle, scr., 4. Time, 9 ½ sec. Routledge left the others at the start, and won by one and a half yards. In the finish Postle was three and a half yards behind the winner; yard between second and third. In his heat in the semi-finals Postle won by inches in 9 4-5sec. On the same night B. R. Day won his heat in the 250yds from scratch in 27 4-5sec, but was unplaced in the final.

From particulars to hand of the race between Postle and Day for the 440yds Championship at Johannesburg on April 17, it would appear the Irishman was not in form—he was not running well, and did not fancy his chance. There were 6000 people present.

Writing to the Sydney "Referee" from New York, Mr. Hugh D. McIntosh says he is seriously contemplating running a "Marathon" race (26 miles 385 yards) in Australia, during the coming Summer—this evidently prompted by the success of the big "Marathons" in the United States. Mr. McIntosh, if he goes on with the scheme, will bring with him Dorando Pietri (Italy), T. Longboat (Canada), and J. J. Hayes (U.S.A.), and they will be pitted against a picked squad of the best distance runners Australia.

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