

BOXING.

THE JOHNSON-FLYNN BATTLE.

WILL RESEMBLE RENO FIASCO.

ANOTHER VICTIM FOR NEGRO.

AMERICANS' SCATHING CRITICISM.

American writers view the forthcoming world's championship battle between Jack Johnson and Jim Flynn, the Pueblo fireman, which has been arranged to take place in Nevada, in anything but a hopeful light so far as the white man's chances of wresting the boxing supremacy from Johnson are concerned. One writer in criticising the match in question says the date for the present white hope's (meaning Flynn) execution has not yet been set, but the promoters imbued with the frank, open honesty which has ever characterised their type, have taken the public into their confidence to the extent of stating that the tragic details of the sad affair will be consummated in or about Nevada during the month of July. There is a section of country on the west coast of Africa (continues the writer) known as "the white man's grave," because of the deadly effects of its climate on European constitutions. In the light of what happened at Reno on a certain Fourth of July, and the promise of a similar horror occurring in the future, a like designation might well be bestowed on the state of Nevada, pugilistically speaking. It is a safe and conservative bet that not one of a hundred sportsmen believe that Flynn has the ghost of a chance with Johnson. Even if his record were a flawless one, which it is far from being, the fact that he is over-matched in weight, height and reach by the most scientific boxer of this or any other age would be sufficient reason for branding his pretensions as being composed of "the stuff of which dreams are made."

Because he overcame a similar handicap when he defeated big Al Kaufman in their second meeting, certain gentlemen who are financially interested in booming the stock of "Fireman" Jim Flynn affect to believe that he can accomplish a like result when he faces Johnson. Setting aside the recent and decisive knock-out of Kaufman by Al Palzer in half the time that it took Flynn to turn the trick, any comparison between the slow-moving clumsy Californian and the cool crafty panther-like negro touches the uttermost limits of absurdity. The old, wise maxim of the London prize ring—"A good little man can whip a big, poor man, but he can't whip a big, good man"—applies well in the case of Flynn versus Johnson. And the epithet of "poor" fits Kaufman exactly. Victories over Mike Schreck, George Gardner, Jim Flynn and Bill Lang of Australia are the brightest spots in an otherwise exceedingly punk record owned by Kaufman, and when you dissect those victories, what did they amount to? Gardner and Schreck were both all in when they lost to Kaufman. Flynn reversed the first decision by a clean knockout, and as for Lang—that awful impostor has been beaten by every man with the slightest claim to class who met him.

Five times during his checkered career Jim Flynn has taken the full, complete and satisfactory slumber count at the feet of opponents. He was knocked out by Tommy Burns, Al Kaufman, twice by Langford, and, lastly by the man he is now scheduled to meet—Jack Johnson. Flynn's supporters probably will try to ring in the "much-improved-now" racket and make it appear that the ex-fireman was nothing but a novice when Burns sent him on his initial trip to Dreamland. But a quiet slant at Flynn's record put the kibosh on that argument. When he tackled Burns, Flynn had been fighting over five years, and in that time engaged in no less than forty-two battles. If that doesn't make a veteran out of the accepted "white hope," will somebody kindly inform us what more is needed to clap the ancient warrior cognomen on the brow of a battler. And the Burns affair came off in 1906, since which Flynn has been merrily fighting with varied success. From the time he started until he retired

for good, John L. Sullivan took part in forty-one ring encounters, Jeffries in twenty-two, and Jim Corbett stepped out with a list of thirty-six. Flynn has been scrapping for eleven years, and has seventy-one battles to his credit. Surely if the man had an atom of championship timber in his make-up it would have emerged into view long ere this!

In support of Flynn, the manager of that boxer who is part promoter of the prospective "doings" in Nevada, offers the sage reflection that "everybody was surprised when Corbett beat Sullivan, and Flynn may likewise upset the form dope when he goes against the negro." But Mr Curley promulgated similar sentiments regarding the prowess of George Hackenschmidt when he propelled that widely overrated hero on to the wrestling mat for Frank Gotch to destroy, and one may be pardoned for supposing in his cheery unselfish desire to make glad the public heart he is again erring on the side of optimism. There is no possible analogy between the cases of Flynn-Johnson and Corbett-Sullivan.

When Corbett took the crown away from John L. Sullivan, the latter was 33 years of age by actual count and many moons older by virtue of the ravages made by dissipation on his once herculean frame. Corbett was only 25, in the full flush of strength, of young and vigorous manhood, and it was due to the blinding mist arising from over-heated hero-worship that the Sullivan adherents failed to foresee the result of that famous battle. But there will not be any hero-worship to tip the bettors the wrong steer when Flynn starts to earn his trimming money at the hands of the giant black, supposing that the Nevada authorities refrain from crabbing the present arrangements—which is another question liable to come up later.

Trying to awaken enthusiasm over a battered gladiator, 33 years of age, over-matched by his prospective antagonist in every quality that goes to make a successful fighter, is a task about as congenial and convincing as hammering cold iron in the attempt to produce a horseshoe. But the press agents have already gone to work for their cause with heroic zeal. They inform us that Flynn will proceed to Syracuse, where Tommy Ryan will endeavour to instill into him a grade of ring-cunning of high degree, and with the aid of Abe Attell, polish up the Flynn science to an extent calculated to dazzle the eyes of Little Artha until that all but blinded coon chucks up the sponge in sheer bewilderment. It's the best the scribblers can do, of course, but it comes under the head of coarse labour. You can't teach an old dog new tricks, and Flynn will never be anything but a rough earnest mauler on whom assumed cleverness would sit about as gracefully as a jag on a Salvation Army captain. But it's an old, old story, this banging of the big drum, skyward flare of the rocket and dropping of the stick to the dull, prosaic earth. There are always with us the boobies who fall for the lure of the ballyhoo, and it is for that class of innocents that the promoters of the meeting between Jim Flynn and the burly buffalo are catering.

The result of the Langford-McVea battle in Sydney on Monday, which ended in favour of the former pugilist is not surprising in view of the hard training which Langford indulged in prior to this match. Realising that another defeat at the hands of McVea would fully justify that boxer's claim to the honour of being the world's greatest fighter next to Johnson, Sam Langford settled down to the work of preparing himself for the fray in a determined manner, and entered the ring on Easter Monday in much better condition than on Boxing Day last. The "Boston Tar Baby," though unable to knock McVea out, easily outpointed him, no less than sixteen of the twenty rounds ending in favour of the Bostonian. Langford's victory must have proved a severe blow to those who freely laid odds against the stocky negro, and it will be interesting to learn what McVea has to say in regard to his decisive defeat. The merits of these rival coloured fighters has frequently given rise to discussion and after the Boxing Day encounter, the majority of ringsiders contended that McVea was a speedier and cleverer boxer than

Langford, a contention that did not coincide with the views held by English and American boxing critics. Surprise was expressed in English and American boxing circles at McVea gaining a points decision over the doughty Langford, but the result of Monday's fight will reassure the Langford supporters that their pugilistic idol is still a power to be reckoned with in the fighting arena. When several months ago Langford passed through Auckland en route to Sydney, he gave the appearance that he was carrying a good deal of superfluous flesh, while several Sydney writers commented on the fact that during his first encounter with McVea it was easily noticeable that he had not paid much heed to the question of reducing his poundage. It was, therefore, little wonder that at the Stadium on Boxing Day the Bostonian was unable to reproduce his real form, and he found in McVea a tough opponent who gave him no respite during twenty rounds of hard fighting, at the end of which McVea gained a well-deserved verdict. McVea evidently recognised that he was fortunate in clashing with Langford at a time when a lengthier period of training would have benefitted the latter considerably, for it was not for a long while that McVea could be induced to entertain the prospects of another meeting with the Bostonian.

Now that the big McVea-Langford battle is over, the next contest of importance to occupy the attention of ring followers will be the Langford-Barry match, which takes place in Sydney on Saturday week (April 20). These two well-known boxers have met so frequently, and therefore know each other's style so well that they have learned to box almost automatically when they cross arms. Every move they make is executed with machine-like precision, for each man knows just what to expect; and the element of uncertainty which lends zest to ring encounters is absent, so that it is unlikely that their next meeting will prove much of a drawing card.

In the history of the ring no name looms larger when past pugilistic champions are recalled, than that of the late Peter Jackson, but few boxing enthusiasts in this part of the world know that at the end of the eighteenth century there flourished in England another great pugilist of that name in the person of John Jackson, known in the Old Country as "Gentleman Jackson." This great fighter Jackson, deserved the nickname, for he came of a good stock, was educated, lived a life respected by all, and when a tutor of athletics was patronised by and acquainted with princes and the aristocracy of England, Jackson was a great athlete. He could run and jump as well as box and wrestle.

The dawn of John Jackson's career contains as much romance as a Conan Doyle book or drama. Imagine a boy less than 19 desirous of having a go with a big professional who had won nearly a score of battles off the reel without knowing defeat. This was a man named Fewterel. Jackson got himself fit to lower the professional's number, but began to think he might lose social caste and get into trouble at home if he persevered in his intention. He therefore hesitated, but a friend reminded him that he might have to meet a charge of cowardice if he retired, and the poor chap was simply distraught. In this dilemma Jackson sought advice from a local magnate, who unhesitatingly told him to go on, and he did, and won a fight lasting nearly two hours. It took place nearly twelve miles from London. The Prince of Wales, afterward George IV., was present and the first to congratulate the young victor.

Jackson stood 5 feet 11 inches and weighed about 200 pounds. The boy knew the art of sparring and, usually avoided punishment until he had the measure of his man, when he went in to win. After his first big victory, Jackson was well launched, and, with splendid patronage and the friendships he had established, did not have to bother about family interference. In less than a year Jackson had to meet a huge man of six feet, all muscle and brawn. The youth scored heavily from the beginning and Ingleson, his opponent, was all but out when Jackson slipped and injured his leg so badly that he could not stand. He asked to be allowed to finish in a

chair, and begged his opponent to take a seat, too, but this was too much for conventionality, and Jackson had to give up. The injury proved serious, and for six years Jackson did no fighting. Then he was drawn out to challenge Mendoza, then champion. Jackson won in 11 minutes, but Mendoza perhaps had reasons to grumble, for Jackson caught hold of the champion's shock of hair and basted him in the face with his right. They say Mendoza went to the barber after that. Jackson retired after that fight, and so did Mendoza. The two retired champions, Mendoza and Jackson were urged to meet again, but nothing came of it, and Jackson never fought again. He lived to be 77 years old, honoured, respected, and successful.

Jackson had innumerable pupils, including Lord Byron, who was a profound admirer of the gentleman pugilist. Byron was then a young man only come of age, and used to spar with his mentor daily. He used Jackson as his type of manly perfection in more than one of his poems. Jackson was quite a Beau Brummel in appearance and dressed to suit the part. He gave many athletic exhibitions and unquestionably raised the tone of sport in those days. He gave demonstrations before English royalty and visiting monarchs. In fact, he was persona grata not only with the young bloods about town, but with veterans who loved anything savouring of true sport. Jackson lived in good sporting times, had the advantage of hereditary cleverness, and by his education knew the psychological moment to retire. Not only that, but in after life he managed himself well, made no mistakes, kept up his corner socially, and was tactful to a degree, so that all thought well of him.

Charles E. ("Parson") Davies, the dean of American fight managers is now 62 years of age, and is best known to pugilistic history as the manager of Peter Jackson, when that great black boxer was at the height of his fame. Davies always maintained that Peter was the cleverest scientific fighter that the ring ever knew, not even excepting the present champion. Under Davies's management, Jackson won an international reputation and it was not until after the Parson ceased to act as his pilot that the big negro drifted into the vortex of dissipation and hit up the fast pace pace which resulted in his death.

Joe Choynski, Jimmy Barry, Tommy White, as well as other lesser lights of the ring, also were handled by "Parson" Davies, whose skill as a matchmaker was universally acknowledged to be something extraordinary. His clerical nickname was bestowed upon him by no less a person than Henry Ward Beecher. In 1873 Davies was conducting a six-day walking match in New York. Then, as now, the famous sporting promoter affected garments of black, cut in rather priestly fashion. His silver-gray hair, urbane demeanour, and clean-cut features stamped him to the eye of the casual observer as "one of the cloth" beyond the possibility of doubt. Beecher, who was interested in athletics, attended the walking match on the second day, and his attention was attracted by the stately, severe figure of Davies as he paced solemnly up and down beside the track. The great preacher eyed the unknown with considerable interest, and turning to friend asked, "Who is the reverend gentleman?" His astonishment on being informed that the person he had mistaken for a member of his own profession was none other than the sportive promoter of the walking match was intense. "It is a fine illustration of the saying that appearances are deceptive," commented Beecher. "I will never venture to judge a man by his garments again." The story got out, and thenceforth the title of "Parson" was destined to stick to Davies for the rest of his life.

Jack Read again filled the role of conqueror in a contest at the Brisbane Stadium on Saturday night week, when he defeated the ex-New Zealander, Billy Elliot, after twenty exciting rounds. The meeting of these clever lightweights provided Queenslanders with a most scientific battle, a feature of which was the gameness displayed by both contestants, Read, whose stamina stood to him, gaining a well-earned verdict.