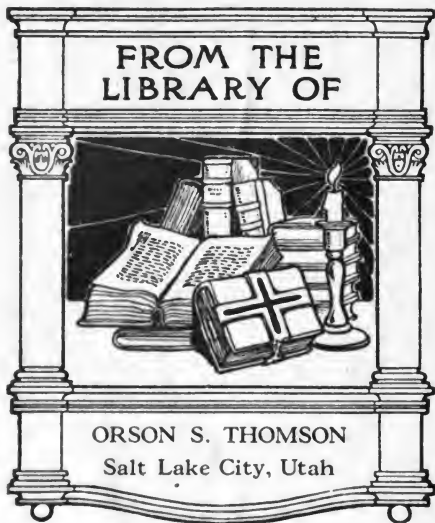
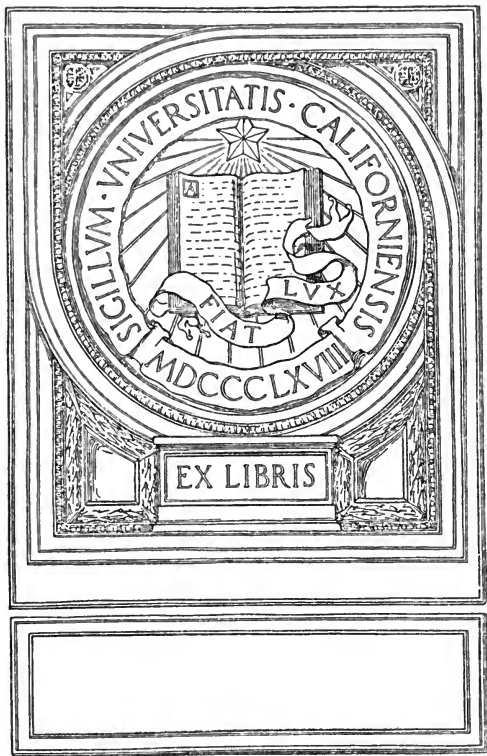


The
FIGHTING MAN

WILLIAM A. BRADY



No. 250



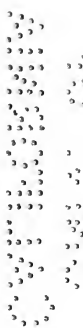




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THE FIGHTING MAN







William A. Brady

THE FIGHTING MAN

By

WILLIAM A. BRADY

With Many Photographs



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PUBLISHERS

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THE FIGHTING MAN

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I

I TAKE it for granted that the public is not much interested in my career except where it touches the careers of famous men. Therefore I shall dwell but lightly on my very early years.

I make no pretense at greatness unless that quality lie in the developing of greatness in others. If I were to claim that I discovered other men through sheer accident, or, so to speak, had their greatness thrust upon me, I would be guilty of cheap affectation. As a matter of fact, I have the rare quality of discerning quality in others. Developing a valuable quality when discovered, exploiting it,

making it available along profitable lines, are matters of executive ability.

I see no reason to apologize for the very frequent reference to myself that I shall have to make in this work. In order to avoid doing so I would have to use awkward and tedious circumlocution. I shall therefore talk of myself as I see fit, but, as the reader will see, I shall try to be fair.

To those who have never heard about me I might state as an excuse for my presumption in writing about myself and also as authority for the statements that I shall make and the views I may advance, that I practically began my career as a "peanut butcher" on the Southern Pacific Railroad, and that I am to-day paying the railroads of the United States something like four hundred thousand dollars a year for the transporting of my companies of players and properties.

I have been successful in many things, and I have almost always undertaken big things. I have demonstrated to myself that it is easier to do big things than to do little things. There

is an inspiration in it and the acquiring of the superior strength that inspiration always gives, the touching of the spring of unknown sources of strength in us. Doing big things makes us energetic to the highest pitch. That's why we say a man who is doing great things is drunk with power—that it has turned his head! The fact is it has lifted him into a higher stratum of activity.

As I have always tackled big jobs, my failures have been quite as gigantic and even more spectacular than my successes. But there's a mighty stimulation in a tremendous failure—something like being pushed under Niagara. It is a shock, a blow in the face—it has in it none of the soul-destroying action of a series of petty failures and disappointments. But, best of all, it's a great advertisement.

I don't know how I got the notion, but I got it somehow when I was very young, and it was that a man should be known as a fighting man. It may have come to me from my experience in school where I held my own with my fists rather than with my head. This gave

me a reputation that—although most of it was bluff—stood me in good stead and kept many of the bigger boys from infringing on my rights. On the other hand, it may have been the Irish in me.

Another policy that I adopted was one that makes for success in the business world. It was: "Never tackle anything but champions. Nothing else is worth while." Experience convinces me that this applies to all fields of endeavor. It is just as easy to engage the interest of a millionaire as it is to engage the interest of a shoe clerk. You must make your scheme big enough to be worth his while, that's all.

Just a bit of family history. My father was the founder of the *San Francisco Monitor*. He was a pioneer of what might be called the English-speaking Roman Catholic Church in California, and was considered the best general authority on Roman Catholic matters in the United States. He was a passionate advocate of secession and during the Civil War constantly used both tongue and pen to promote

the cause of the Confederacy. At that time mobs of lawless partisans infested San Francisco and riots were constantly breaking out in all parts of the city. And my father was one of the principal inciters of them. Every issue of his paper bore flaring articles in support of the South and to most of the people these articles were like red flags to a bull. That's the way my father got the name, "Fighting Brady."

On the night of the assassination of Lincoln my father committed an act of supreme fanatical folly. He got up on a stand on Montgomery Street and made a speech declaring that it served Lincoln right because he had gone to the theater on Good Friday night, and in so doing had insulted at least one-third of the population of the United States—the Catholics. The time for such a speech was, to say the least, not quite propitious. A mob sprang at my father, dragged him down from the stand, and would have hanged him, but he was rescued by General Macdowell, who was in command of the federal troops in San

Francisco and who chanced to be coming down the street at the head of his forces at the time. Failing to hang my father, the mob proceeded down Clay Street, broke into the offices of the *Monitor*, wrecked the plant and tried to fire the building, but were prevented. Then they rushed on to the offices of the *Alta Cala*, another pro-southern paper, and demolished the building.

My father was made prisoner and sent to Alcatraz, an island in San Francisco Bay, where he was kept for six months until the thing had quieted down. On being freed from prison he started a suit against the city of San Francisco for its failure to protect the property of the *Monitor*, and after three or four years of expensive litigation was awarded a verdict of something like thirty thousand dollars.

My father's treatment so disgusted him with San Francisco that one day, when I was a boy of three, he literally snatched me from my mother's arms and brought me to New York. Here, through the influence of United States

Senator Casserley, of California, he secured a position as head of one of the departments of immigration at Ellis Island. But he was a man of irregular habits and would not stick to any position, so he soon threw up his Ellis Island job and took to space writing on the New York papers.

Things went from bad to worse with us. What money my father could earn between his periodical irregularities was barely enough to keep body and soul together. Many times I used to sit, cold and hungry, in the threadbare room we occupied down on the East Side waiting for him to come home, and then cry myself to sleep. Then I took to selling newspapers and eked out just enough to keep me from starving. I don't remember ever having had a new suit of clothes in all that time. During the day I used to go to school and sit, pinched with hunger and anxiety, through the tedious hours. But at least I was warm, even if the room was stuffy at times.

Even then there seemed to be in me a spirit of domination. I used to boss the small boys

at play. I made them do my bidding. But I used to champion their cause, and many a time licked a bully twice my size in defense of some of my youthful toadies. As I said before, it must have been this experience that made me realize the importance of being known as a fighter. The big boys not only let me alone, but avoided picking trouble with anybody that had put himself under the protection of my wing.

But one night I went to bed shivering with an unknown terror. I felt that something had happened to my father. It was not that the hour was late, for he was accustomed to staying out until the small hours. It was just something I can't describe took possession of me. And thus I lay, shivering until daylight. In the morning I saw a paragraph in one of the papers to the effect that an unknown man had dropped dead in the street and had been taken to the morgue. The description fitted my father so closely that I experienced a shock. I made straight as an arrow for the morgue

—for I knew that I should find him there. And there I did find him!

My father had died and left me without a nickel in the world. In a way this was not a disadvantage, since it threw me definitely upon my own resources. Before, I had half waited for him, half depended on him. Now I must hustle for myself.

The Press Club, of which my father was a member, buried him in Cypress Hill Cemetery, and then, as I was quite a lad, gave me a job as day steward of the club. But, as I had acquired the restless habits of the street nomad, life at the club was too restricted for me. I didn't want to be working for anybody, keeping regular hours; I wanted to be out hustling for myself.

I don't remember how I chanced to turn my attention to the sporting life of the city. It must have been intuitive. There was nothing much in the air to suggest it. At that time the newspapers regarded sporting news as negligible. There was no such thing as a page

devoted to this field in any of the papers. Baseball was practically nothing—dismissed with a few paragraphs. In fact, there was no club playing in the city of New York at all. The Giants were unheard of, the Polo Grounds did not exist. The New York club was then known as the Mutuals, but they played in Brooklyn. We had to cross the ferry and then take an almost endless jaunt on a street-car out to East New York to see a baseball game. But we used to take the jaunt, all right, for that was the time of Bobby Matthews, the great underhand pitcher, and he was beginning to make the world sit up and take notice.

Neither did horse-racing amount to much at that time. In fact, the biggest sport known was the six-day walking matches at the Madison Square Garden, once or twice a year. This was the day of Dan O'Leary, who was called "the heel and toe man," and of Weston and Charles Rowell. O'Leary walked with a stride, chin up, and made a record of five hundred miles in six days. He had beaten Weston and was away up in the air about it, when sud-

denly from London came news of a new wonder—Charles Rowell. Rowell was the man who introduced the dog trot in New York for the first time.

A match was arranged between O'Leary, Rowell, John Ennis and a man named Harriman, who was also a fine heel and toe walker. On the opening night there was probably the biggest crowd of people ever got together at the Madison Square Garden for a sporting event. It was the time of the Orange uprisings; the Hibernians and other Irish societies were in full blast; anti-English feeling ran high, and so all the Irishmen of the town turned out to see Dan walk rings around the little Cockney from the hated isle.

At twelve o'clock the match started. O'Leary pulled out with his head in the air and chin up. And in behind him fell Rowell with his dog trot. The Irishman discovered what the Cockney was about and put on more speed. But the faster he walked, the faster Rowell trotted. In about twenty-four hours O'Leary walked himself silly, but Rowell kept

right on till the end and won, making something like five hundred and eighteen miles.

At that time there were no telephones, and as telegraphing was too expensive, I established a messenger service between the Garden and the newspapers on Park Row. I got a number of boys from my neighborhood to do the running and paid them in free passes to the show. At the end of each hour I sent a batch of scores to the papers by these fleet-footed messengers and received twenty cents per score from each paper. Thus I cleaned up about two hundred dollars a week every time there was a big event.

Although young and comparatively inexperienced, I was much impressed with the crudeness of the methods then in vogue of reporting sporting events. At that time amateur athletes used to draw a lot of money. Sprinters, jumpers and five-mile runners were in great vogue. It is too bad the American love of sport does not include these things to-day. If it did, it would serve to encourage and build up more great athletes. We go to see baseball,

prize-fighting and horse-racing, but not to those vastly superior sports. I would rather go to see a five-mile run with fifty starters than any other sport in the world.

Somehow I felt intuitively that the day would come when love for sport would broaden, that the newspapers would realize this and take it up and push it along, and my business instinct suggested that there would be a considerable demand for expert information. The Press Club used to get exchanges from all over the country, and I started in compiling from these a scrap-book of sporting records of all kinds. I continued this work during my stay in the club, about two years.

As I had predicted, the sporting spirit of the public began to broaden. The newspapers showed signs of sitting up and taking notice, and the records I had compiled came more and more into service. I got to be known on Park Row as an authority on all sports, and made much extra money reporting events in this field.

But presently I was seized with a kind of

craving to get back to California. It must have been just the nomadic spirit of the boy that swept over me and carried me off my feet, for I was giving up a sure thing in New York and saw no definite opportunities on the coast. I was without means, for, although I had made considerable money, I had saved none. But to the boy who had seen life in the streets of New York as I had seen it, the prospect of beating my way on the railroads by blind baggage or brake beam had no terrors. I traveled as far as Omaha on an empty stomach. This was literally true, as I had ridden face down under a car about all the way. At Omaha, through some local influence, I got a job as a peanut butcher on an emigrant train. By "emigrants" I don't mean foreigners exactly, but the poorer class of people who were going west that way.

The emigrant cars were usually hauled at the rear end of freight trains and made mighty slow progress. In those days a "peanut butcher" on such a train was literally a hotel on wheels—a kind of general outfitter. I used to

carry as part of my stock canned beef, canned vegetables, jellies and mattresses. I was running between Omaha and Red Wing, Nebraska—a rather lonesome trip—and as I had always loved cards and was more or less clever with them, as many New York boys of the street are wont to be, I was always on the lookout for a little game. This I did more for the pastime of it than for the purpose of enriching myself at the expense of my humble fellow traveler. About the third trip out, I got into a game of poker with one of those “unsophisticated” emigrants and lost my entire stock—mattresses, canned vegetables, jellies and all! When I got back to Omaha minus my “hotel” I was summarily fired.

Next I carried newspapers for the *Omaha Republican* for fifty cents a week. I used to get up at five o'clock in the morning and work a couple of hours each day. I had learned among other things in New York to play billiards, and I now applied my art in this direction to supplementing my income as a newspaper carrier. Three months of that sort of

thing was enough for me. I wrote to the Press Club of New York, and they sent me a pass to San Francisco.

Then I got a job as news agent on trains between San Francisco and such points as Sacramento, Ogden, Deming, Los Angeles and Santa Cruz. I worked at this for about two years and a half. But the theater was in my blood; I was stage-struck all the time; every purpose, every thought pointed to the theater. San Francisco at that time was filled with amateur dramatic societies. One of these used to give monthly performances at Platt's Hall on Montgomery Street, and was headed by A. M. Lawrence as principal actor, who up to a short time ago, was William R. Hearst's right-hand man, and the managing editor of the Hearst newspapers in Chicago. Lawrence's brother, Fred, and Thomas A. Wise, who recently made a wonderful hit as Falstaff in New York City, were also in the company. I gave my first performance with this company, playing the signal man in *Under the*

Gas Light, and the Indian in *The Octoroon*—and if I do say it myself, I was very good.

About that time Bartley Campbell came on from New York to produce *The White Slave* and other plays. He brought with him Georgia Cavyan, Augustus Levick, George Wessels, Max Freeman and Louis Sylvester, all of whom were high-priced eastern stage folk. Campbell's plan was to fill the small parts during this engagement with what was known as "Pacific Coast Actors."

That period was notable for its talent in embryo that lurked undiscovered in San Francisco. David Belasco was a poorly paid stage manager at the Baldwin Theater under Thomas Maguire; Joseph R. Grismer was leading man at the Baldwin, and Henry Miller was playing in stock. Al Hayman, creator of the theatrical syndicate, was working in the box office of the Bush Street Theater. The real theatrical magnate of California was Frederick W. Burt. Practically unknown men from the East drifted into town occa-

sionally. Dan Frohman came out there as manager of Callendar's minstrels—all negroes—and his brother Charles Frohman was agent for the company and doubled in brass.

An eastern company playing San Francisco was a novelty! Occasionally the Union Square Stock of New York or some other specially organized company would come there and play for six or eight weeks, presenting a series of eastern successes. But such companies did not tour the coast. Unless they were willing to "barnstorm" there was no place for them to go. Los Angeles was a village; San Diego was a little bit of a town, and Seattle had one main street and no theater. We used to play in the school hall there and in Portland we used the first floor of a market building. There were no railroad connections between California and Oregon, and when the traveling companies did not take the coast steamer they used to go over the mountains by wagon.

I saw Campbell, reminded him that I had met him in the Press Club of New York, of which he was a member, told him that I was a



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Georgia Cayvan and Henry Miller



David Belasco

full-fledged actor and asked him for a job. He took an immediate interest in me and cast me for one of the best parts that were to be distributed among the California actors in *The White Slave*. At rehearsal, when my cue came, I walked on the stage and spoke my lines with the nerve of an old-timer. There was a commotion in the wings and I flattered myself that the stage folk had been greatly impressed with my work. But it was not that that caused the excitement. The California actors had recognized in me the peanut butcher whom they had met on the trains, and there was great professional agitation and murmuring. The thing was preposterous. Mr. Campbell was called to the side of the stage and after a few moments walked up to me, took the part out of my hand, and said, "My dear boy, you are not an actor. I am sorry, but I must have somebody of experience to do this. If you will wait until rehearsal is over, I will see what I can do for you."

I spent the rest of the afternoon crying in the wings.

When rehearsal was over I tackled Mr. Campbell at the stage door. "Come to Mr. Burt's office," said he, "and I'll see what I can do for you."

This cheered me greatly, since I felt that an all-powerful man like Burt could do big things for me. The magnate was very good-natured. "Mr. Campbell has told me your story, young man," said he. "I'm going to make you call boy of the company at ten dollars a week."

I never forgot Burt's kindness. Later on, when the tide turned against him on the coast, he became my right-hand man in New York, handling all my finances. He remained with me up until a few years ago, when he fell suddenly on the street one day and died in my arms.

I was nominally call boy, but was in reality assistant stage manager, since Mr. Freeman almost immediately relegated all his duties to me. I even prompted and rang the curtain up and down—and all within ten days. The

piece had been running about two weeks when Max Freeman was taken sick. Mr. Freeman was playing the gambler, "Natchez Jim." There was nobody to take his place, and as the company was doing an enormous business, the news of his illness caused great consternation back on the stage. It was a quarter to eight and all the available men around had been tried and found wanting. In spite of the shock I had felt at having the part taken from me so summarily before, I still had nerve enough left to try for "Natchez Jim." I waited until the whole bunch of aspirants had been disposed of and then plucked Mr. Campbell by the sleeve and said, "Give me a chance at it, will you?"

He looked at me for a moment, puzzled at what he must have thought my supreme effrontery, but he was desperate. "For God's sake, let him try it!" he exclaimed.

I knew every line of the piece and so, with author, director and actors looking on to see what I could do, I strode on the stage and

spoke the first line of the part with so much ginger that my voice almost shook the building.

"Go down and make up," was Campbell's verdict.

I rushed down-stairs to the room of William H. Thompson, who, by the way, is the best character actor in America and always has been, and he made me up. I wore a long black wig, a black mustache and goatee and heavy black eyebrows. Freeman's coat did not fit me, so they had to reef it in behind with safety pins, which they did very skilfully; and I went on, made up as the desperate Mississippi gambler who ran the whole act. I was then less than nineteen years old. The first word of encouragement I received when the curtain fell on the act was from Georgia Cavyan, who slapped me on the back and told me I was fine. I never forgot it.

And now Mr. Freeman, who was rehearsing *Siberia* for its first production on any stage, claimed that he had too much work to do and that I was good enough to continue in *The*



William H. Thompson



The Mormon Temple—Salt Lake City

White Slave, so they let me play the part through the rest of the engagement.

Years afterward I had a chance to repay Freeman for his kindness to me. He played with my wife in London and he played with her in New York, and whenever he was out of a job I tried to help him. I met him on Broadway only about twenty-four hours before he committed suicide. He was too proud to tell me he was in such a bad way. I slipped him a five-dollar bill, and I am afraid with that he got the rest of the liquor that gave him the nerve to do what he did. It is one of the great regrets of my life that I did not know then how desperate his condition was. I might have saved him!

I remained at the California theater through the Campbell engagement, during which we produced several plays. These Burt had arranged to have reproduced on tour on the coast by the Burt Dramatic Company, which was headed by Joseph R. Grismer and Phoebe Davis. I was sent on to Sacramento to stage the plays for the touring company, and there

for the first time met Grismer, who afterward became my partner, and who, in fact, is interested with me to this day in several plays, the principal of which, *Way Down East*, made us over one million dollars in nineteen years. Phœbe Davis, now dead, played "Anna" in this piece for most of that time. So great has been the drawing power of *Way Down East*, so undiminished, that I am constantly refusing offers amounting to thousands of dollars a month for the privilege of putting this piece on in stock.

As Grismer was on the point of leaving Burt and starting the Grismer-Davis Company, he took me over at twenty dollars a week to be his stage manager and play the comedy parts. I toured with this company about three years, during which time I received the most valuable experience of my life. We played about everything. One night I would be the newsboy in *Under the Gas Light*, and the next the king or the first grave-digger in *Hamlet*. Then I would play "Puffy" in *The Streets of New York*, and again, "Danglers"

in *Monte Cristo*. And so it went—constant change, constant study, new experiences. Our repertoire was at least a hundred plays long. Each of us used to carry his costumes and make-up for ten or fifteen plays in one little trunk. We played mining camps, discovered new territory, and in fact were one of the first dramatic companies to play Montana. The great boom of the Northwest had not begun. Butte was only a little bit of a place, and Spokane was nothing at all. There was not a decent hotel in the whole section. Salt Lake City was a veritable metropolis. This town was as far east as any of the Pacific Coast companies had ever dared go. I felt as if I were in London when I trod the boards of the Salt Lake theater.

The Mormon Church owned the playhouse and we had to pay a tithing for the privilege of performing there. Brigham Young was a great lover of the theater. He used to bring all of his numerous families with him to the play and take all the boxes he wanted. Sometimes there would be four boxes filled with his

offspring. Also, he used to love to go back stage and talk to the actors, and we came to regard him as a broad-minded man of great ability.

For that matter, all of the Mormons are crazy about the theater. They seem to be peculiarly gifted in a dramatic way. I have never seen so large a percentage of really talented amateur players in any other community. They had a dramatic company which used to give three or four performances a year in the Salt Lake theater and did splendid work—work worthy of any professional company. These performances were social events and got the support of the Mormon Church. A young man named Wells, who afterward became governor of Utah, was one of the best leading amateur actors I've ever seen.

Annie Adams, who came from the Mormon country, was a member of our company one year, playing in *The Shadows of a Great City*. She used to have her little girl along with her. This little girl used to sing pretty songs and pick the banjo, and played the part of "Pea-

nuts" in *Under the Gas Light*. For her services while traveling around with our Pacific Coast Company I paid her eight dollars a week. Afterward, when I produced *She* at the Alcazar Theater in San Francisco, she was one of my ballet of six that danced in the cave scene. To be brief, this selfsame little girl is known now as Maude Adams, probably the greatest of American favorites.

During "off time" when the Grismer Company was not playing, I got a lot of experience with one of the greatest actors I ever knew, Mr. William E. Sheridan. Sheridan was little known in the East, but was a great favorite on the Pacific Coast. His performance of "Louis XI," "Shylock," "Richelieu," "King Lear" and "King John" compared favorably with those of Irving, Booth or any other of the great actors of my time. Later I played small Shakespearean parts with Booth, Rossi, Salvini and Madame Ellemerich, a great German actress who came to San Francisco and played in English for the first time, but later, disappointed with her reception there,

returned to Germany. These artists all played with California stock companies.

I had the low comedy instinct, and when I played with the great stars I have mentioned my experience was largely confined to such parts as the first grave digger in *Hamlet*, "Roderigus" in *Othello*, "Gobbo" in *The Merchant of Venice*, the fool in *King Lear*, "Touchstone" in *As You Like It*, the Lord Mayor in *Richard III* and "Peter" in *Romeo and Juliet*. That was my line and I was considered one of the best in the field.

What I learned about Shakespeare from this experience has stood me in good stead. For one thing, it has enabled me to advance and assist Robert Mantell in his Shakespearean productions, from which I receive from twenty-five thousand dollars to thirty thousand dollars a year as my share of the profits.

With the phenomenal rise of motion pictures, most of the cities throughout the United States, barring New York, Chicago, Philadelphia and Boston, became very unprofitable for traveling attractions, and Mantell, after suf-

fering one very bad season, was tempted by a very big offer to enter this new field of entertainment. He made the temporary change on my advice, as I felt that the amount of money offered him by the motion-picture company was not to be sneezed at, and that he should avail himself of the opportunity to lay aside a nest egg for his later years. Fortunately, the producers of Mr. Mantell's motion pictures did not call upon him to play Shakespeare. So he devoted himself to thrilling melodrama and did not appear in any of his great characters on the screen.

Mr. E. S. Sothern, after playing his farewell performances in *If I Were King*, at the Shubert Theater, and having devoted something like forty thousand dollars to different charities, including the Actors' Fund, also went into motion pictures and really made his farewell performances before the public on the screen.

The retirement of Sothern and Marlowe from the theater was a great loss. They both left the stage in the heyday of their success.

In fact, I understand that Mr. Sothern's reason for retiring at so early a period in his career was that he wanted to be remembered at his best. Sothern was never a great Shakespearean actor; probably his finest performance was *Hamlet*. He was a fine light comedian, but not robust enough to play Shakespeare. Marlowe was unquestionably the finest actress of legitimate rôles of her time, and, as I said before, her retirement was a distinct loss to the theater.

I don't agree with the popular notion that Shakespeare spells ruin. Edwin Booth died rich and so did Lawrence Barrett and Salvini. Mansfield would have died rich if it had not been for his artistic tastes which prompted an extravagant outlay for scenery and costumes. Booth and Barrett in their famous tour together cleaned up over six hundred and fifty thousand dollars in one season of about forty weeks, and Mansfield in the later years of his life made easily two hundred thousand dollars a year.

As long as the American stage exists Shake-



Maude Adams



Annie Adams
(Mother of Maude)

speare is bound to be played profitably by at least one or two persons, a man and a woman. Sothern and Marlowe are now clearing up one hundred and fifty thousand dollars a season from these classic plays. In the course of time some one will be called on to take the place of Sothern and Marlowe and Mantell, and I know of no one who is being prepared to do it. You ask the average actor to play Shakespeare and he looks at you contemptuously and says, "What do I want to play that old stuff for?"

Not long ago I offered a prominent actor—an old man—who commands about one hundred and fifty dollars a week, two hundred dollars a week to go out with Mantell and play such old men's parts as "Polonius," "Antonio" and "Kent" in *King Lear*. He replied that he would rather play modern parts at fifty dollars a week than Shakespeare at two hundred dollars. This attitude of the American actor I can not understand.

Let the young actor take this tip from one who has studied Shakespeare, played it and

for many years observed it both from an artistic and a business standpoint: study Shakespeare, get an apprenticeship in a Shakespearian company, go at it seriously and play it as often as you can.

Finally I broke away from Grismer and accepted an engagement with M. B. Curtis, who years later shot a policeman in San Francisco and got into serious trouble. We went east playing *Samuel of Posen* for part of a season, then I left Curtis and went with Louis Morrison and a woman named Celia Alsberg, who were touring the East in *Cymbeline* and *Measure for Measure*.

But Shakespeare wrote his failures as well as his successes and *Cymbeline* and *Measure for Measure* may be classed as two of the former, as far as the box office is concerned. The result was that the Morrison Company got into financial straits and came near going to pieces. Then I proposed to Morrison that he make a production of *Faust*, which Henry Irving had just done successfully in England. I had got hold of one of Irving's souvenir books and had

also a printed copy of *Faust*, written by Bailey Bernard. This play had never been presented in America with the Brocken scene—a mountain scene full of witches, devils and the like. I persuaded Morrison that it would be a great scheme for him to do “Mephistopheles” and have this Brocken feature in the play.

Morrison secured booking for *Faust* at the Columbia Theater, Chicago—we were then somewhere in West Virginia—and I was sent on there a month in advance to produce the play. I think I had about four hundred dollars saved up at that time, and I was given full swing. When I got to Chicago I started in to prepare the thing on what was then a big scale. Morrison failed to send me money as he had promised, but such was my confidence in the piece that I did not hesitate to spend the entire four hundred dollars of my own money to push the production along. I finally succeeded in getting *Faust* on with the Brocken scene in it. But the piece failed and we again found ourselves facing dissolution. At an opportune moment, however,

we got a guarantee to go over and play a few weeks at a North Side theater which was in bad shape, and in doing this made enough money to buy tickets for part of the journey to California.

In due time we started for the coast with *Faust*. The way was rough and the road was hard and it was a case of "bust at any minute." We got no farther than Denver at the first jump. But I persuaded Morrison to produce *Under the Gas Light* in that city Christmas night and we got one thousand seven hundred dollars in the house, which saved our lives and paid the balance of our fares to San Francisco. In San Francisco Morrison raised some money and we produced *Faust* at the Baldwin Theater on a really elaborate scale, with Henry Miller in the title part. The piece was an enormous success.

I fancy this change of fortune swelled Morrison's head, for I began to observe that he was inclined to take more credit for the piece than I thought he was entitled to, particularly as he had not paid me back my four hundred

dollars, and I had a line on the program stating that the piece was produced under my personal supervision. I shall never forget that line on the program: "Produced under the personal supervision, etc." I had never enjoyed anything of the kind before. I used to keep a program in my pocket and take it out surreptitiously and read those fascinating words over and over again. I confess that it swelled my head a little, too!

But the line on the program presently ceased to satisfy my ambition. I began to think I was entitled to something more. Always at the end of the Brocken scene there had been an ovation wherever we played it, and Morrison had always taken the curtain calls alone. I anticipated that he would continue to do this, and when we opened in San Francisco I had packed the gallery with my friends. I had many friends in that city, and they were all tough, too. So every time Morrison came in front of the curtain there were shouts and calls for "Brady!"—"Brady!"—and he was forced to bring me out or the gang would never have

allowed the play to proceed. I was getting forty dollars a week when this demonstration in my behalf occurred, and the next day I told Mr. Morrison I'd have to have seventy-five dollars or I'd quit. He said, "Quit!" which was something of a shock to my vanity. But I guess he was anxious to get rid of me, and if so I played right into his hand. Instead of getting promotion I had, by getting the boys to shout for me, brought about my own defeat. At any rate, Morrison and I parted company.

He went on playing *Faust* up to the day of his death ten years later and made many, many fortunes out of it!

II

HAVING got a name by this time, I immediately went off on my own hook and signed a contract to play a starring engagement at a ten-cent theater on Mission Street, which is now known as Morosco's. It was a place where they starred Pacific Coast favorites. I was to supply the piece and play the leading part and to receive ten per cent. of the gross receipts. The engagement was for two weeks. I opened in *The Lights of London*, playing "Seth Prene." I never shall forget how I felt when I saw my name in big blue letters over the door: "WILLIAM A. BRADY in LIGHTS OF LONDON." I used to stand on the opposite side of the street for hours and regard it with vast admiration and content. Really, I had arrived!

I was an enormous success there and my en-

gagement was extended from two weeks to twelve. When I quit I was two thousand seven hundred dollars ahead of the game. As I had no faith in banks, I used to carry this money with me in a little black bag slung over my shoulder like a bookmaker at the derby. I was a rolling stone. I slept wherever night overtook me. For eighteen months I carried this money in the little black bag through Arizona, Texas, Arkansas, Montana, Wyoming, down dark streets, in dangerous places like Tucson, Arizona—always with a six-shooter in my back pocket. But after a while my money got to be so bulky that I used to go and buy cashier's checks from different banks, payable to myself. It was wonderful the assortment of paper I acquired in this way. When I finally reached New York and was about to produce *After Dark*, I went to the Bank of the Metropolis and brought out this bunch of checks and certificates of deposit from almost every section of the United States. The receiving teller looked at me in amazement.

“Anything the matter with them?” I asked.

"They're as good as gold—every one," said he.

Thus I started my first bank account with something like thirteen thousand five hundred dollars.

At the end of the Morosco engagement I joined a young actor named Webster and we formed the Webster-Brady Company and toured the Pacific Coast in the same manner as Grismer had done with his company. By this time Grismer had extended his trips to Denver and Texas, leaving his valuable Pacific Coast routes open, and I jumped in and got his business. I started out with a repertoire consisting of *Lights of London*, *The Pavements of Paris*, *Lynwood*, *Monte Cristo*, *Hazel Kirke*, *After Dark* and one or two other pieces. We were successful right from the jump.

At that time Rider Haggard's novel, *She*, had got tremendous vogue throughout the country and was for sale in all the big stores and railroad stations. Everybody was reading it. So it occurred to me to dramatize this

novel, and I did so one afternoon in Reno with the aid of a bottle of mucilage and four or five copies of the book. We produced *She* at Hazard's Pavilion in Los Angeles, which I had rented for the month's engagement. It was an enormous success. I think we did one thousand two hundred dollars the first night as against the two hundred dollars or three hundred dollars to which we usually played. In fact, three hundred dollars was a pretty big house. But when the people massed around trying to buy tickets for *She* I knew I had reached my turning point.

I was playing "Job," the servant who shakes with terror at the end of the play when he sees *She* burn up, and it was part of my business to fall shrieking on the stage as the curtain descended. But some stage mechanism failed at the critical moment in this scene on the opening night; the panoramic effect was spoiled, and the scene was received with derision instead of horror. Sensing disaster, I lay on the stage crying—crying that I had lost everything. I had invested every dollar I had in the

world in the enterprise. "It's a failure," I blubbered. "I would not let good enough alone."

But instead of that the novelty and the grip of the play proved so strong that the next morning there was a long line at the box office window. We played to eight thousand dollars a week, which meant enormous profits to us, as the company expenses were considerably less than a thousand. Money began to roll in and I said to my Pacific Coast actors, "We are going to New York with this piece."

I immediately invested part of my profits in tickets from Los Angeles to the Missouri River by way of the northern route and we started away to conquer the East—to show them that we were not the histrionic rubes they had so generously esteemed us to be.

It so happened that Charles Frohman and William Gillette had also conceived the notion of dramatizing *She* about the same time that the notion struck me. Frohman produced the piece at Niblo's Garden, New York, with great success, and about the time I was ready

to start east with my version of the play, he and Gillette were ready to start west with theirs. And so we came into conflict at Minneapolis.

Frohman had an enormous production, fine scenery, and carried from seventy-five to a hundred people. I carried a small production and only eight people. I advertised one hundred people on the stage, for I used to pick up local supernumeraries in the different towns that we played. As Minneapolis was the biggest town we'd played up to that time, I got there a fortnight ahead of the company. We were to play one week ahead of the enemy.

Thinking that he had a mere boy to deal with whose wings it would be easy to clip, Mr. Frohman had sent a man named Charles McGeachy out to Minneapolis to squelch me with advertising matter and expose me as a faker. This movement on Mr. Frohman's part led to a little misunderstanding between us that lasted several years, carried across the ocean and was eventually settled in London.

Frohman's man put large advertisements in



"When I was poor but happy"
Charles Frohman



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Daniel Frohman and Isaac Marcossou

the newspapers declaring that the Brady Company was nothing but a barnstorming organization composed of about eight persons, that we were reinforced by local "supers," that I was a cheat and a faker, that I had no right to produce the piece, the sole right to which had been conveyed to Mr. Frohman by Rider Haggard. This was not the case, since Mr. Haggard had failed properly to copyright the book in the United States and in consequence had no "American rights" to convey to anybody. I told this story to Rider Haggard in London a few years ago at a dinner and he and Mrs. Haggard and myself had a hearty laugh over it.

McGeachy published all these statements in the *St. Paul Globe* and the *Minneapolis Tribune* and from what I heard he was in high feather over the crushing blow he had thus dealt the presumptuous youngster from the coast. But there was one factor in the case which the astute Mr. McGeachy in his enthusiastic eagerness to make a hit with Mr. Frohman had overlooked—the libel laws of the State

of Minnesota. No sooner was his advertisement published than I called on the most famous criminal lawyer in Minneapolis, William W. Irwin, and showed him the paper, and he immediately declared the thing was criminal libel. Said he, "For five hundred dollars, I will have this man arrested and for fifteen hundred dollars, I will guarantee you that I will have him indicted."

I peeled fifteen hundred dollars off my roll and laid the same on his desk. "I'll take that much worth," said I.

A few hours later Mr. McGeachy was snatched out of his bed in the hotel and haled to the "cooler" by three or four able-bodied Minneapolis cops. Nor did we keep the fact a secret. The papers were full of it next day and it was a tremendous advertisement for my show. In fact, we captured Minneapolis by our performance of *She* while the enterprising McGeachy was cooling his heels in a cell.

That experience at Minneapolis did me more good in a business way than anything I had ever done before. The news of it was scat-

tered abroad in the land; it was remembered; and it established me as a fighting man. In brief, it contained this warning—"Hands off! Let Brady alone!"

I was only twenty-three, and a man of such tender years, however tough his experience, would naturally be regarded by the managers as an easy mark, a callow youth, one not to be taken seriously as a competitor in the field—one who could be effectively flattered or bullied. But by putting McGeachy in jail I had forestalled this. Any man, they would reckon, who had the nerve bodily to march up with a handful of actors and scenery that you could almost load on a wheelbarrow, and challenge to combat the splendidly organized cohorts of Frohman was, if a fool, at least not a coward.

I could sense the standing my row with Frohman had given me the instant I set foot in the Rialto as a manager. The Rialto was then in the neighborhood of Union Square and meant something then. It was an unorganized manager's exchange. To-day it is only a lounging ground for actors and lies in the

neighborhood of Forty-second Street. There we used to meet managers from all parts of the United States and book our shows. We booked in three ways: first, by personal contact; second, by correspondence; third, by traveling with the company and booking time with the local theater man for the following season. In those days, if a company fell down, failed to please, the manager of the theater was thrown on his own resources to keep his house from going empty. In such a case, he would hurry to New York, go to a variety agent, and get a company together to play the open time at his theater. He could get a bill of eight turns for six hundred dollars—the same thing would cost him four thousand dollars to-day. But all that has been remedied. It is the business of the great booking agencies now to supply the manager with attractions, and their policy is never to let a house go dark.

About this time I married my first wife, which, instead of making me more conservative, curiously made me more daring. I suppose it was because I was only twenty-three and

wanted to make a good showing in her eyes. Many of my old acquaintances had prospered in the East. New York was the theatrical center of the Western Hemisphere. There's where the people were, and there's where the money was. I was something of a prophet—I saw a vast future for the theater of New York. There was no theatrical syndicate at the time. Charles Frohman was just an individual operator and Klaw and Erlanger had a little booking office on Fourteenth Street, near Broadway. As to the coast men, Al Hayman, who had got to be the manager of the Columbia Theater in Chicago, now controlled all the theaters of that city. David Belasco had come east as stage manager with James A. Hearn with whom he faked up an old play under the title of *Hearts of Oak*. Subsequently he had connected himself with the Mallory Brothers, had made two or three successful productions with them, and then renewed the sentimental alliance which he had formed with Charles and Daniel Frohman at the time the Callendar Minstrels were in San Francisco.

While I was having the row with Frohman in Minneapolis, Dion Boucicault advertised an auction sale of his plays at the Madison Square Theater, New York. I came on to attend that sale, determined, if possible, to buy the play, *After Dark*, which I'd been playing on lease in the West. I jumped in, began bidding and landed the play for eighteen hundred dollars. But with the play I also landed a lawsuit with Augustin Daly which cost us fifty thousand dollars apiece in legal fees before we got through with it, lasted thirteen years, went from the lowest to the highest federal court and twice reached the Supreme Court of the United States.

The story of this case would fill a volume. Daly finally got judgment for thirty-seven thousand six hundred dollars, of which he could only collect thirteen thousand dollars, for, during the course of litigation, part of the claim had become outlawed. In a word, the case was as follows: In 1865 Daly produced a play called *Under the Gas Light*, in which was a sensational railroad scene

that had never before been done in New York. Two years later, Dion Boucicault put on a play called *After Dark*, which contained a colorable imitation of Daly's railroad scene. Daly got after Boucicault on the ground of the similarity of the two railroad scenes and Judge Blatchford rendered a decision in favor of the plaintiff. That was in 1867. So, when I produced *After Dark* at the People's Theater on the Bowery about 1890, Mr. Daly served me with a temporary injunction. I had little faith in lawyers and having a theory that the papers had been illegally served on me when the hearing for the permanent injunction was called, I had the effrontery to walk into court with the papers and start to argue my own case. But the judge cut me very short.

"Where's your lawyer?" he demanded, frowning down upon me.

"I don't want any," said I with supreme effrontery—I was only twenty-three, remember.

"You must get one," said the judge.

I turned round and saw standing right back of me ex-Judge Dittenhoefer, who had been pointed out to me as a famous theatrical lawyer.

“Are you Judge Dittenhoefer?”

“Yes,” said he.

I shoved the papers into his hand. “Will you take this case?”

“I will represent you at this hearing.”

“How much?” said I.

“Two hundred and fifty dollars,” said he.

I handed him a check and he went to the front, got an adjournment, and one week later sprung a technicality on the court—Judge Wallace—which upset Judge Blatchford’s decision and led to thirteen years’ litigation. It was the simplest thing on earth. On the title page of *Under the Gas Light* was printed, “Under the Gas Light, a Story of Love and Life in New York.” That was the published book. But in the printed copy that had been filed for copyright the title page read, “Under the Gas Light, a Panorama of Lives and Homes in New York.” The difference in the

sub-title on the books which were being sold to the public and the sub-title registered in Washington furnished Judge Wallace with grounds for holding the copyright to be invalid. As I said, this cost me a lot of money and kept me in the papers almost continuously for thirteen years, but it established me in New York as a man who was not to be monkeyed with.

When I left Minneapolis to come to New York for the Boucicault sale, McGeachy was still in a cell, pondering the libel laws of Minnesota. But in a few days the court let him out on ten thousand dollars bail to await the action of the Grand Jury for criminal libel. Charles Frohman put up the amount in cash. Then McGeachy, on being released, went to New York, but had a row with Frohman and refused to go back and stand trial, which put the manager in the way of losing his ten thousand dollars. I had not been in town more than two days when I received a polite letter from Mr. Frohman asking me to call on him. He had no theater, was occupying a little office at Broadway and Thirtieth Street, and ten

thousand dollars looked pretty big to him just then.

While I was turning Frohman's letter over in my mind I met McGeachy on the street and told him about it.

"Don't you go up there," said he. "I had a row with him and I won't go back to Minneapolis. I'm going to make him forfeit the ten thousand." Then, after pondering a moment, "Why don't you make him give you five thousand?"

I turned on my heel and quit McGeachy, and went up to see Frohman. It was the first time in my life I'd ever met that gentleman. He didn't waste any time in coming to the point.

"Mr. Brady," said he, "you've got me in a box. McGeachy refuses to go back and stand trial. If he doesn't, I shall lose my ten thousand dollars, which I can't afford to do. I want you to compromise with me. Wire your attorney in St. Paul to cease his activity and with some local influence that I can bring to bear I can get the thing quashed."

"And what then?" said I, waiting for the most interesting part of the proposition.

"If you will do it, you may rest assured that if I can do anything for you in the future I will do it!"

"All right, Mr. Frohman," said I, "that goes!" We shook hands and I walked out of his office.

It was not that I was overawed by Mr. Frohman's personality or won by his cordiality that I so quickly acquiesced in his proposal. Nor was it sheer good nature. I was still pretty sore about what he'd sent McGeachy on to do to me in Minneapolis. But as I said, I was something of a prophet. I had watched Mr. Frohman and felt that he was destined to do big things in the theater world and I now thought it the part of wisdom to make a friend of him. I confess I felt pretty big, having Charles Frohman under such a debt to me, as I had no end of confidence in his word of honor as well as in his gratitude.

Three years later I had a production called *The New South*, which was booked with Mr.

Frohman at the Colonial Theater in Boston. The play was so successful in New York that I wanted to keep it there a while longer and I asked him to release me from the Boston engagement. But he claimed that he was powerless to do so as the theater was under the management of William Harris. I can almost imagine that he put his tongue in his cheek as he said this! I reminded him of the promise he made to me when I saved him the ten thousand dollars, but he simply reiterated that his hands were tied and he could do nothing. And so I walked out of his office, a very much disillusioned and disgusted man!

Not a great while later Mr. Frohman produced in New York a Chinese play called *The First Born*, which had been highly successful in San Francisco. At the same time Holbrook Blinn put on at Hammerstein's Olympic a play called *The Cat and the Cherub*. This piece was by Chester Fernald and was like the Frohman play in the respect that all the characters were Chinese.

Frohman made arrangements to send *The*

First Born to London, and as soon as I learned of this movement on his part I secured the English rights to *The Cat and the Cherub*. Then I got in touch with Mr. Blinn, sent him to England, and he secured a booking at The Prince of Wales Theater on a guarantee of two hundred and fifty pounds a week, which meant a profit to us of eighty pounds. And this I did without a soul on this side knowing anything about it. Then I quietly sneaked *The Cat and the Cherub* Company on board a boat, five days before Frohman proposed sailing with his company, and when my people were about half-way across the ocean announced that I was going to produce the piece in London. The news fell like a bomb in the Frohman camp. Mr. Frohman immediately closed his company here and raced across the ocean in order to beat me over there. But with the five days' start I had, I reached London, opened on a Saturday night, and made a big hit. *The Cat and the Cherub* continued on there for a year at a weekly profit of eighty pounds.

Mr. Frohman opened the following Monday. He had no guarantee. He had both the theater end of it and the play end of it and *The First Born*, although it was a far better play than *The Cat and the Cherub*, was a ghastly fizzle in London and closed at the end of seven days, with a loss of more than thirty thousand dollars expenses. *The Cat and the Cherub* was played by six people, whereas *The First Born* required sixty. Neither of the plays was attractive. But I got a guarantee and my fares were paid by the English people, while my rival had to take all the risk himself.

At any rate, that was the way I got even with Mr. Frohman for not keeping his word, and I assure you it did me no harm in the business world!

In a story like this it is necessary sometimes to digress apparently in order to follow a branch to its end, as I did in the matter of the lawsuit with Daly and the "misunderstanding" with Frohman, and then return to the trunk line of the narrative. Obviously, it would not be possible to thread or weave a branch like the

story of the Daly lawsuit through the fabric of this work.

To revert then to the main line of the story. After acquiring the play *After Dark* at the Boucicault sale, I traveled with it in the East and made a success of it. And *After Dark* brought out James J. Corbett, the pugilist, as I shall point out later on.

I had made money in the theater business and was very ambitious. But the advent of Corbett deflected me for the time being into the field of pugilism. And while I did not abandon my theatrical enterprises—on the contrary, I was producing plays right along while I was managing Corbett—I can now see that if I had never touched pugilism but had concentrated on my theater work, I would probably have been much farther along in that line than I am to-day. Unfortunately, I went in for pugilism at a formative period of my career. Before I had had time to lay a solid foundation for my reputation as a producer of plays, I became identified with the prize ring, and this fact was reflected in the box offices at

the theaters I managed. Please remember, it is not the sporting public, but the general public which consists largely of women and children who are patrons of the playhouse. Sporting people would go to any event that Brady might manage and the money would flow in. But there was always danger of the name Brady keeping the women and children away from the theater. And the theater was a much bigger proposition than the prize ring! Undiscriminating persons, either having no knowledge of my past as a manager or not stopping to consider it, didn't see how it was possible for a man who was interested in sports to know anything about the drama or the stage, and a good many of them, forgetting that I had trained under some of the best masters of the drama that the world has produced, thought I could be nothing but coarse in my tastes and pernicious in my influence.

About the time that I started out with *After Dark*, Corbett had electrified the sporting world. An amateur, known only in San Francisco, he did some brilliant work that brought



Jim Corbett and Gus Ruhlin



Weston, the walker

him into national prominence. He had been of the Olympic Club of San Francisco of which he finally became boxing instructor. He had met many obscure boxers, local celebrities and the like, and his experience with these had opened his eyes. Corbett was an observing, a progressive man. He saw the weak spots of the old-fashioned methods which the world, because of their antiquity, had accepted without question. He realized that pugilists are not inventive, that they are kangaroo-headed and sheeplike, that a bit of so-called "ring wisdom" might be handed down for generations without change. Any question of accepted ring tactics was regarded as the rankest heresy. But Corbett was an iconoclast. Whenever he saw an error he went about correcting it in his own way. Furthermore, he realized that a man trained in the old school would be more or less confused by any departure on the part of his opponent. So Corbett not only mastered the old methods, learned the old ring secrets, but invented methods of his own which the other fellow didn't know anything about. Further-

more, he was capable of changing his play, so to speak, with every new event.

When Corbett had attained some local notoriety, an Irish pugilist named Jack Burke came to San Francisco and boxed six rounds with him. Corbett did more than hold his own with Burke which compelled the leaders of the San Francisco sporting world to begin to take him seriously, and they presently conceived the idea of matching him against Peter Jackson, a black man, who had beaten everybody on the Pacific Coast. Jackson was born in the West Indies, but he had now come to the Pacific Coast from Australia.

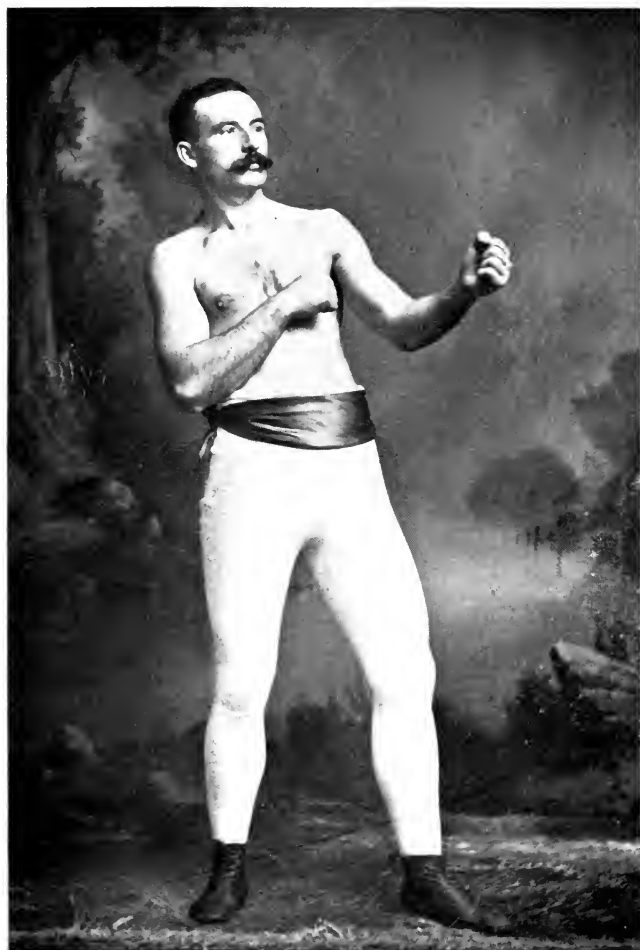
The match was arranged—an international event, since Jackson was a British subject. It was fought for sixty-one rounds, but the club declared it no contest and refused to pay the purse. The reason for this was that after the thirtieth round both men stopped fighting and did nothing but circle around the ring, striking no blows. Corbett claimed that as Jackson was a famous boxer he should have done the leading, forced the fight; and refused to carry the

fight to him. Corbett urged the negro to make the pace, but Jackson refused to do so, and the match was declared a farce. This contest added greatly to Corbett's reputation, owing to the fact that John L. Sullivan had drawn the color line against Jackson and flatly refused to meet him, although the negro had repeatedly challenged the big fellow. Sullivan boasted that he had never met a black man in the ring and never would, which was simply a pretense advanced to avoid a contest with Jackson. To my certain knowledge Sullivan had boxed with a negro at San Bernardino, California, during one of his exhibition tours. He had also thrown off his coat and jumped into the ring in Boston at one time to meet George Godfrey, who had taunted him with being afraid of him. Sullivan had offered to fight Godfrey for nothing, but the thing was stopped

The match with Jackson caused great excitement throughout the country, put Corbett in the lime-light, and he started out from California exhibiting with a minstrel show. At this time I was playing the leading part, "Old

Tom," in *After Dark*. I was making a great feature of the music-hall scene in the play and I wired Corbett, offering him an engagement to appear in that scene. After some negotiation, I got him to join my company, paying him one hundred seventy-five dollars a week.

No sooner had he become one of the company than he and I got to be pals and he told me all about all his ambitions and hopes. He wanted to become champion and was sure he could do it. This was some ambition, I reminded him, since to realize it he'd have to beat the great John L., the idol and ideal of the sporting fraternity, the champion of the world, the most famous if not the greatest prize-fighter of all times. I did not know then, but I know now, that Sullivan's record was all a foolish one. He never really earned the place he occupied in public esteem. He had won the championship by beating a man of fifty named Paddy Ryan, while he, Sullivan, was twenty-three or twenty-four. And he had fought another long bout with Jake Kilrain in Mississippi in which he violated all the rules of the



PERMISSION OF ROBERT COSTER

Jake Kilrain



John L. Sullivan

game—jumping on his opponent, using his knees, etc.—and should have been declared loser by a foul. Again, he had failed to defeat Mitchell in France. In fact, he had actually to bribe the Englishman in order to secure a draw. Sullivan had sat in his corner of the ring on that malodorous occasion and shouted to Mitchell, “How much will you take to make it a draw?”

“Twelve hundred dollars,” said Mitchell.

“Done,” said Sullivan, and he paid it.

I admired Corbett’s work and saw great possibilities in him, but I frankly urged him to keep out of the way of John L. But he wasn’t a bit discouraged by what I said. As usual, he had some inside information of his own. A year or so before he had met Sullivan at a benefit given at the Grand Opera House in San Francisco, he told me. They had boxed three friendly rounds, both wearing dress suits, since the church or other highly respectable institution for whose benefit they were sparring, would not stand for the regular garb of the ring. It was a light, trifling little match, ap-

parently. They wore gloves that looked like pillows and each simply tapped the other in a playful way. But this little match was of immense benefit to Corbett. In it he had discovered that Sullivan had *no free use of his left hand at all*, that he had to depend entirely on his right, and that he, Corbett, could hit him when, where and how he pleased.

When he had imparted this precious bit of information, Corbett sat and looked at me quizzically for a few moments and I realized that I had not only found a great boxer but a ring general and a psychologist as well. I also discovered another thing that applies in every walk of life where one man comes into conflict with another: that our strength lies largely in the knowledge of the weakness of the other fellow!

Corbett continued with *After Dark* almost a full season. About this time, another wonderful pugilist had flashed across the horizon and had won some wonderful battles in London. His name was Frank P. Slavin and he also hailed from Australia. Slavin had beaten

two or three Englishmen at the National Sporting Club in London, and all England, anxious that somebody should beat Sullivan, now hailed Slavin as the man to do it. Charles Mitchell, who styled himself England's boxing champion and who had kept himself in the lime-light for years by the fact that he had fought a "draw" with John L. Sullivan in Chantilly, in France, secured the management of Slavin and immediately brought him to the United States. Slavin met two or three inferior men around New York City in short bouts and proved himself to be a wonderfully hard hitter, and Mitchell began taunting Sullivan through the newspapers. A great verbal war began between Mitchell and Sullivan which filled the sporting pages of the papers and kept the public interested and eager for Sullivan to get into the ring and again demonstrate that he was the champion. Corbett was now dragged in as a possibility, which made a great general furor. The campaign of vilification grew more and more bitter, Mitchell, the Cockney, throwing mud at the big fellow one day, Sullivan

answering the next, and Corbett and Slavin joining in the *mêlée* of words. In a short time this row got the public boxing mad. New Orleans sporting men had successfully started and incorporated an athletic club down there and big purses were being given and great fights were being held between light and middle weights. The old prize-ring rules had gone out of vogue and there was a tremendous amount of interest in the new style of boxing under the Marquis of Queensbury rules. By the old rules, the moment a man was knocked down, the round was over and he was given a half minute's rest, but the Marquis of Queensbury rules compelled a man to fight for three minutes each round, and if he were knocked down, he had to get up within ten seconds or lose. Sullivan had won all of his contests under the old rules. He had never been tried out under the Queensbury rules in a championship contest, and the public was anxious that he should be, as they thought he could make any one of "those fighters" jump through a key-hole, as he put it. The big fellow's close ad-



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The Marquis of Queensberry



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Charlie Mitchell
(Ex-champion of the world)

herents had an idea that all that he had to do was to scowl at his opponents and frighten them to death. In fact, he had succeeded time and time again by these brow-beating tactics in the four-round bouts that were being given with enormous success at Madison Square Garden. On other occasions, when traveling from one end of the country to the other, and going into small towns, Sullivan had been in the habit of offering a hundred dollars to any local man who would stand before him for four rounds. If anybody had the hardihood to attempt this, the Boston gladiator would stand in his corner and glower and scowl at the stranger and frighten him so that he would go down and out the first time he was hit.

Sullivan did not have much money and the purses that were being offered down in New Orleans were very large and interesting to him. Up to that time he had never been able to engage in a championship battle for gate receipts. He used, in order to avoid the police, to go off to some lonely spot where there would be only one or two hundred persons to witness

the bout, and fight for purses of ten thousand dollars a side.

John L. was known as a spendthrift. We used to read special stories in the papers of his making hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars and scattering it away broadcast. This was all nonsense. During all of his career, Sullivan never made any great amount of money. He was beaten by Corbett just at the time that money-making in pugilism began. Up to that time no such purses as twenty-five thousand dollars had ever been offered. That was what Corbett and Sullivan fought for and Sullivan, thinking that he had a soft snap in Corbett, insisted that the winner should take all. And the winner did take it all!

All of a sudden one morning Sullivan came out in the newspapers with a grand "defi" to the world, stating in his letter that he was ready to enter the ring again providing his opponent would bet ten thousand dollars on the side and the winner to take the whole purse. He stipulated that the ten thousand dollars should be put up in four payments, and stated his choice

as first, Charles Mitchell, second, Frank Slavin, and third, James J. Corbett.

Corbett and I were playing *After Dark* in Philadelphia when Sullivan's challenge appeared. The Boston man had announced in his letter that his financial representative would be at *The World* office the next morning at ten o'clock. So I took twenty-five hundred dollars of my own money, caught an early train to New York and was on hand at the appointed time.

I met the sporting editor of *The World*, Mr. Joe Eakins, and before either Mitchell or Slavin had got out of bed had covered Sullivan's money for Corbett, who by this means obtained first call. Mitchell, furious that he had overlooked the opportunity for Slavin—he had no idea of fighting Sullivan himself, as he firmly believed that his man could have whipped the big fellow in a couple of rounds—tried to bamboozle us out of the match, using the silly arguments that Corbett was nobody at all, an upstart, while Slavin had fought his way up through the world, had defeated men

in wonderfully short time, and was therefore entitled to the contest with Sullivan. Sullivan, evidently thinking Corbett was the easier of the two, was mightily pleased the way it came out.

The next thing was to get the seven thousand five hundred dollars that we had to put up to cover Sullivan's money. But Phil Dwyer, Edward Kearney, Jr., Colonel Fred MacLouie and Mattie Lewee Corbett chipped in and made up the amount.

When the news of the match became known, the whole country went wild with pugilistic excitement. The event was to be pulled off in New Orleans, September 9, 1892. In fact, so great was the interest in the coming fight that up to the middle of September even the presidential election was swamped by the stuff that was published in the papers about it. Page after page was devoted to the contest, and later every prominent newspaper in the land kept a special man at the training quarters of each pugilist.

III

As I said before, I was paying Corbett one hundred seventy-five dollars a week to box in the vaudeville scene in *After Dark*. Within twenty-four hours after the Corbett-Sullivan articles had been signed, we were flooded with telegrams from all parts of the United States, offering us fabulous terms for his appearance.

The first contract we signed, as I remember, was for fifteen hundred dollars a week at the Lyceum Theater, Philadelphia. The highest price of admission to this house was fifty cents. This contract provided that Corbett was to meet a new man every night and attempt to stop him or put him out in four rounds. Such a pastime was permitted at that time in Philadelphia, which was then known as the home of many athletic aspirants. The term "athletic aspirant" was applied to the fellows who had a punch and who probably could go one or two rounds with a champion and make a showing.

We went to Philadelphia to play the engagement, but in a very few nights found that this kind of game was not for Corbett. Now, if you're going to put a man out in a four-round bout, you can't do it by dancing about and sparring with him. You've got to do some very hard hitting. Corbett's hands were delicately framed and when he used them with full force in such a match, if he wanted to whip a man, he would have to take a chance of hitting him on the jaw, knocking him senseless with one blow. But by doing this there was always danger of his breaking his knuckles. After tackling two of these "all comers," as we used to call them, we found if we continued that course of making money our man would have no hands with which to fight Sullivan.

One of the toughest of the "all comers" at that time in Philadelphia was a man who worked in the gas house. His name was Mike Monahan, and he had succeeded in standing up for four rounds before every champion that had come to the City of Brotherly Love for years. On the first night of Corbett's engagement,

who should appear at the stage door but Mike Monahan, demanding a chance to go on with the man who thought he could beat Sullivan. Corbett looked Monahan over and made up his mind to keep him at a safe distance. That night Corbett boxed with another man who afterward played quite an important part in his history. This was Connie McVey, who up to this day is a well-known character along the Rialto in New York. Connie went on the first night, took Corbett's punching for a couple of rounds and then sought a safe spot on the stage, lay down and was counted out. He got twenty-five dollars for doing this, and at the same time the Corbett management came to realize that he was a very valuable man, and we put him on the salary list. Connie's great value lay in knowing how to be knocked out better than any man I had ever seen—as I shall show you later.

Every night Monahan reported at the stage door and every night Corbett side-stepped the issue. Monahan looked as if he had an iron jaw. It was as wide as his forehead and his

face was covered with scars. He was a tough proposition. We had some hope of escaping an encounter with this fellow. But toward the middle of the week the sporting editors of Philadelphia took up the matter and said that the challenger of John L. Sullivan was afraid to meet Mike Monahan, the terror of the gas house. These sneering comments became stronger and stronger and presently the Associated Press got busy and scattered it broadcast throughout the country. When Friday night came I said to Corbett, "Jim, it's no use! You've got to meet Monahan to-morrow night or go out of the town in disgrace!"

We told Mike that he was to have his chance Saturday night and he said, "If I do, that will be the end of Corbett!"

Nothing was left but that we should do something to put fear into the heart of Monahan. At last we hit on a scheme. We arranged that he was to put on his tights in the same room with Corbett and his sparring partner, Jim Daly, of Philadelphia. It was to be a third-degree process. We put him in a chair

between Corbett and Daly. After a time, Daly said to Corbett, "Say, Jim, you know that man whose jaw you broke in Hartford last week?"

Corbett nodded.

"He's no better."

"Isn't he out of the hospital yet?" said Corbett.

Monahan went on dressing.

Then Daly said, "Anybody that goes into the ring with you, Jim, ought to have his life insured."

Still not a word from Monahan.

Story after story they told about the men Corbett had sent to the hospital, but Monahan would simply say, "Is that so? That sounds good!" Nothing would feeze him.

At the end of the third-degree business we found that we would have to take a final long chance with him. It must be understood that Corbett was not in condition at this time. He was not in training and that is very essential to boxing. Ten-thirty was reached. I was the referee and the time keeper. The theater was simply jammed. The sporting community had

paid all kinds of prices to get in. Seats were sold on the sidewalk for ten dollars apiece. Philadelphia felt that at last Corbett was going to get a real test from the invincible gas-house giant.

Just before we went into the ring Corbett came to me and said, "Now, Bill, I will take one chance with this fellow and if I fail you will have to call time and make the rounds very short."

I believe that Corbett at this particular point feared Monahan more than he feared John L. Sullivan when he got into the ring with him later on.

Monahan came into the ring with the confidence of a Napoleon. The bell sounded, they went to the center. He made a speedy rush at Corbett and hit him a quick blow in the stomach, then grabbed him and tried to throw him off the stage. Instantly there was pandemonium in the house. Monahan rushed Corbett all over the place. But Corbett took no chances. He stood back and gritted his teeth. Monahan rushed for him. It looked bad for Corbett,

but he winked to me not to ring the bell. Another lunge from Monahan, another lunge, and then Corbett shot his right hand across on Monahan's jaw and knocked him stiff. It took a minute to bring him to.

We went back to the dressing-room and then discovered what it had cost us to knock out the gas-house giant and rescue Corbett's reputation. Two of his knuckles were knocked back into the middle of his hand. That was the end of Corbett's attempting to meet the "all comers," with one or two exceptions, up to the time he entered the ring with Sullivan.

We then planned a tour throughout the United States, making a single appearance in each city, carrying only about eight people, and recruiting in each place we visited with local boxers. We would go into a town with Corbett, his sparring partner, and one or two others. We would get all the ambitious boys in the town who wanted to fight, interested, and in that way provide the entertainment necessary before Corbett went on. We paid the boys from ten dollars to twenty dollars a bout.

The same thing is done now at Madison Square Garden. Of course, the moment the thing got brutal in any way we stopped it. That was the plan for our tour which was to include the whole country and we hoped to clean up not only enough to defray Corbett's training expenses, for his battle with Sullivan, but a tidy sum besides.

After we'd been doing this about a week, we discovered that it would be necessary, in order to engage great local interest, and secure fine receipts, to get somebody to stand before Corbett other than his sparring partner—because the public is apt to regard such things as cut-and-dried affairs. And as Corbett's hands were in bad condition, we did not propose again to take any chances with strangers or "all comers." So we hit upon the idea of sending Connie McVey ahead of the show a couple of weeks. McVey was the man we had discovered in Philadelphia—the man who "knew how to be knocked out." He was to go to the different places we were to play, "discover" that Corbett was to appear there, and immediately issue a

challenge to fight him on his arrival. In this way Connie fought Corbett all over the United States and under different titles. In Hartford he was known as Joe Nelson, the Maine terror; in Rochester he was Alex Conelli, the Canadian giant; in Columbus, Ohio, he fought Corbett as Jim Durand, the mountain terror from Kentucky. His aliases were always made appropriate to the section of the country in which he was operating. For instance, in Milwaukee he was John Olsen, the terror of the lumber camps; in Butte City he gave a battle that created intense enthusiasm under the title of the Walla Walla giant. In Los Angeles McVey took on a Mexican alias that appealed strongly to that portion of the population that had Spanish blood in its veins, and wanted to see one of their kind defeat the upstart from the North. In Tucson Corbett knocked McVey out in one round as the terror of Arizona, while in El Paso the many-titled man put up a very pretty match as the Texas Pet. In all these places Connie was received as a world-beater.

We would arrive in town and find him riding around in an open barouche with the mayor. The man who had the nerve to meet Corbett became the hero of every community he visited. For two weeks prior to the coming of our show Connie, under his different aliases, lived like a king, grew fat and prospered. He was wined and dined by the best men in town. He had presents made him. Needless to say, after Corbett appeared, Connie made tracks for the next place and with a brand-new alias.

McVey's personality lent itself beautifully to our scheme. He was a very big man, weighing about two hundred and forty pounds. That he looked like a real champion was demonstrated when Corbett visited Dublin years later, after defeating Charley Mitchell. There were twenty thousand Irishmen at the depot and in the streets to meet us on that occasion. Some of them found Corbett, carried him on their shoulders to his carriage, took the horses out of the rig and hauled it by hand to the Queen's Hotel on O'Connell Street. Others in the mob found Connie McVey and in spite

of his protests carried *him* on their shoulders to his carriage, unhitched the horses and pulled him up another street to the same hotel. So there were two Corbetts dragged through the streets of Dublin that day!

In the declining days of Corbett's reputation he was matched to box twenty rounds with Tom Sharkey at the Lexington Athletic Club in New York. Connie McVey was in the corner and when in the eighth round Sharkey had Corbett practically beaten and on the verge of a knock-out, McVey jumped into the ring and rushed between them and so lost the fight for Corbett by a foul. But he saved his beloved friend from the knock-out. McVey was one of the most faithful creatures I ever knew.

This trip through the country realized for us about thirty-five thousand dollars. The way we went at our training for the Sullivan event must have cost us ten thousand dollars. The rest of it went in different ways. As Corbett was quite certain that he was going to beat John L. money did not count. That kind of money never sticks to your fingers; there are

so many ways to spend it. You have to keep up your end, live at the best hotels—buy everything! None of the hangers-on must be allowed to spend a cent. Sullivan had set a so-called scale of liberality that the other fellow had to live up to.

The Olympic Athletic Club of New Orleans had been the highest bidder for the fight—twenty-five thousand dollars—and the match had been arranged to take place in that city on September ninth—the twenty-five thousand dollars to go to the winner. At the same time they had arranged a pugilistic carnival for three days. On the first night George Dickson was to fight Jack Skelly for the bantam championship and on the second night Jack McAuliff was to fight Billy Meyer, who was known as the Streator (Illinois) Cyclone, for the lightweight championship. On the final night of the contest Corbett was to fight Sullivan. The largest purse offered up to that time was for the third bout. McAuliff, who had never been beaten by any lightweight, was almost as popular in his way as Sullivan.

We started to train about the middle of May at Lock Arbor, New Jersey, just on the edge of Asbury Park. Corbett had new ideas about training, as well as about other things pertaining to pugilism. The usual custom had been for the pugilist to go out somewhere to a road-house with a convenient bar and innumerable spongers and hangers-on. But our man took a cottage and associated with none but decent people. William Delaney was principal trainer. Also there were sparring partners, wrestling partners—men with specialties—for Corbett had determined to learn every trick of the trade. He wanted these specialists by their unusual work to bring out everything that was in him, prepare him for every emergency. You see, you never can tell exactly how your opponent is training. He may have something up his sleeve with which to surprise you. The training quarters of the pugilist are managed diplomatically—managed so as to throw the other fellow off his guard, if possible. Everything is done to give him the idea that you are training along simple, accepted lines. When

a big event is to be pulled off, each camp has trusted scouts hanging around the headquarters of the enemy, frequenting the bars of the neighborhood, picking up bits of gossip that may prove available. The lightest word dropped by a half-drunken trainer is carefully reported and weighed in the councils of the camp for what it is worth. Needless to say, money is freely paid for reliable information, but this practise is apt to prove a boomerang in instigating hangers-on to add to or change what they hear before reporting it. All this comes under what might be called the diplomacy of the ring and is quite as ethical as the methods used in Wall Street or in the cabinets of nations.

We did things decently in our camp. We discouraged the presence of thugs who usually infest the training quarters of prize-fighters on Sunday—the “Jimmies” and the “Mickies” and the “Billies”—the blatant hot-air boys. This is the same class of men that infests the racing stables. They are always looking for points and never getting the real thing in in-

side information, since only the pugilist's most loyal adherents are permitted to know what is going on. The hanger-on is the foolish Johnny. He may be very rich or very poor, but he's always a nuisance. The pathetic thing about him is that he doesn't aspire to be known as the friend of Corbett or of Sullivan, but is amply satisfied with being pointed out as a friend of Jeffries' trainer and the like. The very poor hanger-on is not so much of a nuisance as the very rich one. You can make use of him, possibly as a messenger or a helper or dismiss him with a few drinks. But the other fellow always wants to treat you or do you favors. We were guyed for our swell way of doing things, but we didn't mind. We were determined to treat the whole thing as a business proposition, and we did it.

Corbett was a true progressive. He introduced numerous things that had never been heard of before. Shadow boxing—or boxing with your shadow—was his invention, and he used it now. All the old fighters used to do was to punch the bag and walk. Corbett in-

roduced pulley weights, the medicine ball, and all the things we are having now. He was not a strong man. In fact, his strength was all manufactured. Nor was he a hard hitter. But he was scientific, and as quick as a cat. He always tripped about on his toes—ready to get away. The other fellow used to fight with all the strength he could get, but Corbett introduced jabbing. He used his left hand. Up to that time, no pugilist ever had the free use of his left arm that Corbett had. This of itself was of immense value.

Corbett's backers frequently visited his training quarters. Phil Dwyer, the famous horseman, was one of these and he seemed to be worried that the fighter was reducing his weight too much. As a matter of fact, he was, but we had to reassure Dwyer. So we put some bits of railroad iron in Corbett's pockets just before he was weighed which brought his avoirdupois up to the required mark. A few pounds one way or the other really didn't matter, but we had to keep up Dwyer's courage.

The better class of people took a great interest in Corbett because he brought a certain spirit, a cleanness into the whole game that they had never seen before. They say he was like John C. Heenan in this respect. He even carried his new methods into the transportation end of it. Instead of the usual trainload of brawling rowdies and cringing sycophants, we had a train of our own with a special baggage car for the whole distance from Asbury Park to New Orleans. Corbett refused to make the trip at one continuous run. He claimed that besides practising in his car, it was necessary to get out once in a while and stretch his legs and limber up. So we stopped two or three times *en route* and he indulged in a cross-country run.

When we reached New Orleans they were betting five to one against Corbett. In fact, some persons were wagering that Sullivan would make our man jump out of the ring. I had three thousand dollars which I had brought down to bet on Sullivan. You see, if

Corbett won we would have everything. But there was always the gambler's chance of his not winning, which was why I sought to hedge on Sullivan. I hung around the town for twenty-four hours, trying to land a bet at more favorable odds. I didn't feel like putting up three thousand dollars in order to win six hundred or seven hundred dollars. But Corbett's confidence inspired me. I never saw a man who was so sure of himself. He knew his man, morally, mentally, physically and psychologically. He literally astounded me with his talk about Sullivan, and I found out afterward that he was correct in every detail. In fact, I was so braced up by this that I walked into the St. Charles Hotel and placed my money at four to one on Corbett. That was about two hours before the fight.

There never was such an audience assembled. New Orleans was packed with famous politicians, actors and business men. Priests and other clergymen were there, disguised as laymen, to see the match. Corbett spent the day before the fight in the gymnasium of the



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Tom Sharkey



PERMISSION OF ROBERT COSTER

John C. Heenan

Young Men's Christian Association while Sullivan went to the Athletic Club.

The fight was to take place in an outhouse back of the club building. Sullivan's room was on the second floor of this building and ours on the third. Not long before the fight, Johnson, Sullivan's manager, came into our room and suggested that we toss for the corner. Now, in this ring at that time there was what was known in New Orleans as the "lucky corner." Every pugilist who had sat in this corner, with very rare exceptions, had won the fight. So I went down with Johnson into Sullivan's room to toss for choice and I got a glimpse of the gladiator, who was stretched out on a table being rubbed down. I saw fear in his face. I knew he was not so confident as he pretended to be. I was only a kid at the time; I don't think I weighed over a hundred and twenty-six pounds. But I went in and we tossed the penny.

"Heads!" I cried.

It came heads. And here is where I put fear into Mr. Sullivan.

"What corner do you take?" said Johnson.

"Take, damn you!" I shouted, "I take the lucky corner!"

Then I turned and rushed up-stairs, shrieking at the top of my voice, "We've got the lucky corner! We've got the lucky corner!"

They thought I was mad with excitement, but there was a method in it. I did it purely for psychological purposes.

Now Sullivan knew Corbett's superstition about not wanting to go into the ring first, and they put up a job on him. Remember that most pugilists are superstitious, and in their extremely nervous and sensitive condition just before a match are apt to give undue weight to the merest trifle that might augur against them. I could tell many stories of men being unnerved in this way and losing fights, but all this is involved in what might be called "ring psychology" or "ring fear." They brought word to us that Sullivan was in the ring, so we started to walk down-stairs. To get to the outhouse we had to pass through a lane of people. When we had got where I

could see the ring I said, "They've lied to us—Sullivan's fooling us!" then I grabbed Corbett and forced him back into the mob, and turning to Sullivan, who was following close on our heels, cried, "You're the champion! It's your place to enter the ring first!"—and we made the big fellow do it.

Everybody expected to see Corbett trembling in his corner, for Sullivan was trying his glower trick again. But instead of seeing a man already half licked with fright by his hypnotic scowl, he saw one as cheery and bright as a grasshopper in an August wheat-field.

I had seen only one other fight in my life and I was sick with nervousness over this one. I had a habit of crumpling up my handkerchief and passing it from one palm to the other, but this time I actually ate it up. Primrose, the great minstrel, was in a box back of me. He had a palmleaf fan in his hand and such was my agitation that I took it from him, chewed it up and swallowed it. Cold sweat stood out all over me, and so dry was my mouth that I could not speak except after two or

three efforts. Nor was this condition due in the smallest degree to the money I'd staked on the fight. I had won and lost a greater amount many times on a single turn of a card. But Corbett's reputation was at stake. Our fortunes were identical, so to speak—we would rise or fall together by this event. But beyond it all was the wonderful pride of having discovered a champion. I hung suspended as it were between two great emotions—the joy of a mighty triumph and the grief of a great despair.

In preparation for this fight I had availed of every device of ring generalship. But I went the old-timers one better. I worked the psychological end of it in a way and to an extent they'd never dreamed of. I knew that Sullivan's most vulnerable point was the psychological—the superstitious side of him. In a play called *Honest Hearts and Willing Hands*, by Duncan B. Harrison, Sullivan had shown that a pugilist could make money by acting as well as by fighting. Now, long before the present fight was arranged for, I had

discovered that Corbett was not only a first-class pugilist, but a fairly good actor. So I had Charles T. Vincent write a play for him and we called it *Gentleman Jack*. During our tour in the summer with *After Dark*, and even when he had reached his training quarters, Corbett devoted his spare moments to rehearsing this play. We had it all ready to clap on the boards the minute the gong sounded in New Orleans in favor of the Californian.

So far, so good. And now, here is where the psychological part of it comes in! Three days before the fight was to take place, I billed Corbett all over New York City as "THE CHAMPION OF THE WORLD!" I even booked him and billed him in flaring lithographs at Birmingham and Atlanta, "JAMES J. CORBETT, CHAMPION OF THE WORLD, TO APPEAR IN 'GENTLEMAN JACK'!" This was extremely nervy, but I did it for the effect I knew it would have on Sullivan when he saw these posters.

To return to the match. Sullivan started in with a right-hand punch and Corbett ducked

and side-stepped. Then the crowd began to yell at the Californian, "Don't run away! Stand up and fight!" And Corbett did the coolest thing I have ever seen done anywhere. He paused in the center of the ring, held up his hands to that enormous audience and said almost patronizingly, "Wait a minute—wait a minute!"

Sullivan looked at him, paralyzed by the effrontery of the act. And then, with a nonchalance that was nothing short of pure impudence, Corbett repeated, "Wait a minute—it will be all right!"

Corbett then began to dance around the ring, using tactics the crowd had never seen before. At the end of the second round Corbett came to his corner and said to Delaney, "There's no use staying away from this fellow. I can finish him in another round!"

I said, "For God's sake, Jim, don't!—don't!—don't take any chances! Remember *Gentleman Jack!*"

At the very beginning of the third round Corbett cut loose in earnest and in less time

than it takes to tell it made Sullivan look as if he'd been through a sausage mill. From then on to the end of the match there was nothing to it but the shouting, and that was not so uproarious as it might have been, seeing that most of the money had been bet on Sullivan! That was the end of the professional career of the so-called invincible John L. It had taken Corbett twenty-one rounds to do the job. He could have done it in three. But he fought scientifically, played a safe game from start to finish, and followed the advice from his corner and took no chances!

When Corbett had gone to his room after the fight, a red head appeared over the transom and a shrieky voice cried, "Here's a telegram for you."

Jim hated that particular head and face, and he shouted with some profanity, "You get away from there!" which it did instanter. It was the head of Robert Fitzsimmons, who afterward beat Corbett for the championship—the very first one to appear after the Sullivan fight.

Corbett became a popular idol at once. He was Irish and a Catholic, and the Irish-Americans followed pugilism more closely at that time than any other race in the United States. Most of the fighters came from Ireland or England, and the better class of Irish people who had been shocked by many of the escapades of John L. welcomed the coming of a good-looking young type of Irishman. These people hoped that for the sake of the Green Isle, now that he had won the championship from Sullivan, Corbett could act decently and be a gentleman so far as it was possible for a pugilist to be.

Corbett had been known to Californians as "Gentleman Jim," a nickname which now spread all over the country. He was also called "Pompadour Jim," because he wore his hair brushed back like an Indian.

The Sullivan period had always appealed to saloon and dive keepers and the lower class of humanity generally. The decent element in the country, who believed that boxing should be taught to young boys and that it should

be classed as legitimate along with rowing, baseball and the like, welcomed the coming of Corbett. Even before the match he had been popular with decent people. He was clean, good-looking, bright, he did not drink or smoke much, was fairly well educated, and could hold his own in conversation on any ordinary topic. He was lovable. Women liked him. Everybody from a minister to a boot-black wanted to meet him. He had the glad hand, the "con," better than anybody I knew.

As we traveled thousands of people used to meet Corbett wherever we went. They surrounded the hotels at which he stopped. Business in any public house that entertained him would jump from three hundred to a thousand per cent. If we happened to lay over at a railroad junction for an hour or so in order to make connections, the news would spread like the wind and first thing you knew there would be a thousand people standing around, dead still, looking at the champion. Politicians were always eager to meet Corbett. Once when William McKinley was governor of

Ohio he and Corbett had a long chat in a parlor of the principal hotel in Columbus. As they walked down the steps into the office, a drummer standing near said, "There goes Corbett!" Instantly there was a furor, and another drummer standing near asked, "Who is the little man with him?"

If Corbett had availed of his chances at this time he would have become a very rich man. Money came to us from all directions. Apart from the profits of the show, newspapers and magazines paid him for signed articles. Shortly after the fight we happened to be in Toledo and one of the leading glass factories there figured out that it would be a great scheme to have a paper-weight made of Corbett's right hand and advertise it as the "hand that knocked Sullivan out." One of the concern's drummers interviewed Corbett and swelled him up a bit with hot air, and he agreed to let them make the plaster cast of his hand—for nothing. But I came into the room, found the plaster on his arm, asked him what he was doing and when he told me I broke

the thing off. Then we renewed negotiations and the glass people paid one thousand dollars for the privilege. Clothes, cigars and other articles were named after him. He would umpire a baseball game and get a thousand dollars. Later he made a tour of the country, playing first base with professional teams in regular minor league championship games, and got from five hundred dollars to one thousand dollars for each appearance. And it is a certain fact that throughout his entire tour as first baseman, with different teams, Corbett did not make more than three errors. He could not bat, but every time he played he would manage to get on the right side of the opposing pitcher and persuade him to let him make a couple of hits.

I should judge that during the twelvemonth following the event at New Orleans Corbett and I cleaned up at least three hundred thousand dollars. We got one thousand dollars to appear in New Orleans the night after the fight. Our share in Birmingham was one thousand two hundred dollars, and in Atlanta, one

thousand five hundred dollars. Madison Square Garden on Saturday night yielded us six thousand six hundred dollars, and in Boston we got five thousand dollars for a Monday night. We took one thousand five hundred dollars from Providence and three thousand two hundred dollars from Philadelphia for one-night appearances. These instances only go to show the way money flowed in on us. After the fight Corbett appeared gratis at the benefit given to Sullivan at Madison Square Garden, from which the ex-champion received thirteen thousand five hundred dollars.

IV

THE defeat of Sullivan, even more than the victory of Corbett, gave a new interest to pugilism the world over. The hypnotic spell which the Boston giant had cast over the people had been broken. The Goliath in him had been slain and, as usual, the David who did the job was little more than a stripling from California. And the mourners went about the streets; Sullivan was not invincible, after all. The man who could scare his opponents to death by scowling at them was not a god, but a creature of flesh and blood, subject to the things that flesh and blood are heir to. And now that the big dog had been licked, the other dogs began to come out of their holes and growl at him. If Corbett had remained champion as long as Sullivan did, there would probably have grown up in him the same hypnotic power over the aspirants of the pugilistic world

that John L. had so effectively exerted. We are too apt to think that these men come only "one in a box"—that they never had and never *will* have an equal. But those on the inside know that no man deteriorates more rapidly than the prize-fighter. He has many things to drag him down and small moral stamina with which to resist. The man who was invincible a few months ago might not to-day defeat a third-rate fighter. That's why the public loses so much money on its old favorites; it doesn't know conditions.

The New Orleans event, like all others, brought in its wake the usual line of dissension and rows. Few persons gave Corbett unqualified credit for his work. The Sullivan public claimed that the big fellow had been beaten because he was too old to fight; that he had "gone to the well" once too often. Sporting writers argued that anybody could have done the job twice as quickly as Corbett did it—Fitzsimmons, Slavin, Jim Hall, Peter Jackson—anybody, in fact!

Just then a man came from Ireland who had

a terrible punch. His name was Peter Maher, and he became troublesome to Corbett at once. Fitzsimmons, too, was coming to the front. Even at this early period, Corbett felt a fear of Fitzsimmons. He never had any use for a battle with him. He even went out of his way to avoid him. In fact, Corbett did not want to meet anybody with a punch. A clever boxer takes a chance when he goes into the ring with any man who has the power to deliver a knock-out blow, for cleverness in boxing has its limits. The scientific man always has a fear of going into the ring with a wild boxer, because there's no telling when such a fellow may, with his tremendous strength, break through his opponent's guard—no matter how skilful the latter may be—and land a punch that will put him out of business. Even Mike Monahan, the gas-house giant whom Corbett boxed in Philadelphia, was dangerous, because he might just close his eyes and go in, bing, bang, and hit you on the jaw. Now, Robert Fitzsimmons was that kind of a man. He would take one wild chance to

knock the other fellow out. He always had sense enough to get to his feet and fool around and finally come across, even in a haphazard way, with what later became famous as his "solar plexus" blow.

Robert Fitzsimmons was the most remarkable man of my time. He was ungainly in the last degree, resembling more than any other man I know the animal that has made Australia famous. He had pipe-stem legs, the waist and shoulders of a Hercules, and the neck and head of a kangaroo. He was the most remarkable boxer—the most remarkable fighter—of our time. He had strength, fighting sense and terrific power in his left arm as well as in his right. Corbett, being a careful observer of all things pertaining to pugilism, was well aware of Fitzsimmons' quality, and was careful to side-step the issue of a contest with him whenever it was raised.

Just then Charley Mitchell, who by this time had lost control of Slavin, came to America with Jim Hall, of Australia, and Squire Abingdon Baird. Baird was a typical Eng-



Bob Armstrong and Bob Fitzsimmons



Kid McCoy

lish sporting squire. He had all kinds of money and came to New York for the purpose of bringing about a match between Jim Hall and Fitzsimmons. This match was made. At the same time Mitchell was anxious to fight Corbett and he got his man Baird to go down to the *World* office and put fifty one-thousand-dollar bills on the table for a match with the new champion. I found out that he was going to do this, and with the assistance of Leander Richardson, I scoured the city and raised an equal amount. When Baird put his money down on the table, which was only intended as a bluff, I slammed fifty thousand dollars down on top of it and said, "The match is made!"

Mitchell, seeing Baird's money covered, but not wanting it to go that way, made so many impossible conditions that finally the side bet was cut down to five thousand dollars.

Just a word about Baird in passing. It was said that that gentleman had on his person when he came to America fifty thousand pounds. He went to New Orleans with

Mitchell and Hall. Hall fought Fitzsimmons. Fitzsimmons knocked Hall out in four rounds, and a week later Squire Baird was found dead in a back room of the St. Charles Hotel without a cent in his pocket!

After the Hall-Fitzsimmons event we arranged a match between Corbett and Mitchell which was to take place in Jacksonville, Florida. The purse was twenty-five thousand dollars, and was offered by the leading citizens of Jacksonville as an inducement for us to go to that city. Corbett went to Mayport to train and Mitchell to St. Augustine. There was no law on the statute books of Florida that prohibited a boxing contest, but Governor Mitchell decided that there should be no bout in that state. We fought the governor's decree in the Supreme Court, which decided that we were right and that the chief executive could not stop us. Meantime a rumor was started that we were going to hold the match just over the state line in Georgia. Then the governor of Georgia got busy and ordered out a thousand militiamen to patrol the border and not let

us in under any circumstances. Next, Governor Mitchell ordered his "mountain crackers" from all parts of Florida to Jacksonville to suppress the small bunch of terrible pugilists that had come on from New York.

The evening before the fight the Supreme Court granted an injunction restraining the governor from interfering with us. And strange to say, the first people who paid for their tickets to see the fight were the members of the militia who had been ordered to stop it. There was no law, no police to protect us in the arena, so we had to protect ourselves. Right back of Mitchell's corner, armed to the teeth and prepared for any action that might come up, were Bat Masterson and a man named Converse, who had been brought from Colorado to protect the interests of the Cockney. Back of our corner was a similar number of men who had been imported from New York City with the idea that Mitchell and Corbett were going to shoot up the place. Each man's second carried a six-shooter, but there was no more occasion for all this arma-

ment than there is for a policeman in a kindergarten.

The fight was very short; in fact, the audience did not have time to get seated. Mitchell never had any right to go into the ring. I doubt if he weighed over one hundred and sixty pounds, while Corbett weighed about one hundred and eighty-five. Apart from the purse of twenty-five thousand dollars, there was a side bet of ten thousand dollars—half of which had been put up by poor Baird, who was now dead. Mitchell could easily have demanded that the entire thing be split. In fact, we believed that he would. Thousands of dollars were bet that he would never go into the ring, and one of the greatest surprises of my life was when I saw this natty little Englishman, with his head stuck up in the air, wending his way to his corner.

The referee was honest John Kelley, and in our corner was Delaney, who had always seconded Corbett, a man named John Donaldson, and Jack Dempsey, the famous lightweight, who at that time was half mad and who

had been taken into Corbett's training camp more out of charity than anything else. But Dempsey happened to play a very important part before the event was finished.

The battle started. Mitchell, as certain as a little game cock, walked up to Corbett and struck the first blow. Corbett returned viciously. He took no chance, as it was always his rule to do nothing in the first round but size up the enemy's tactics and get rid of his ring fear. The second round Corbett went at Mitchell viciously and knocked him down. But no sooner was the Englishman on the ground than he began uttering disgusting and awful things about Corbett, with the idea of making "Pompadour Jim" lose his head. Corbett grew white with rage. On the count of nine, Mitchell was on his feet. Corbett landed on him and Mitchell promptly went down with a blow which practically lost him the fight. Corbett, stung to the point of madness by his opponent's vile epithets, lost his head, and it was evident to all that unless something were done he would strike or kick the prostrate man

and lose by a foul. At this moment, to the amazement of us all, crazy Jack Dempsey leaped over the ropes and ran over to Corbett and actually slapped him in the face. This brought the "Pompadour" to his senses.

If the referee had performed his duty properly, the mere fact of Dempsey having jumped into the ring would have lost us the battle, but he overlooked it. We received thirty-five thousand dollars for this bout.

Not long after this fight we headed for England. I went over about four weeks in advance and arranged with Sir Augustus Harris for Corbett's appearance at the Drury Lane Theater in *Gentleman Jack*. *Punch* had a big story about Harris taking Garrick's bust off the pedestal at the venerable playhouse and putting Corbett's in its place. The claim of a pugilist being an actor was a joke, but the idea of his appearing at Drury Lane was preposterous. Sir Augustus Harris began to weaken under the attacks by the press, but I had paid him a thousand pounds in advance as an evidence of good faith, and it was im-

possible for him to break his contract. However, the day before the opening, he ran away to Belgium, afraid to face the consequences on the first night.

As I had had a lot of experience in stage direction and was myself playing *Gentleman Jack's* father in the piece, I planned a little surprise for the first-night audience. I arranged to give the English public a view of an American athletic club on the night of a sparring contest. Over there they have nothing but the National Sporting Club, where they pull off their matches—a little building just across from Covent Garden with a seating capacity of about four hundred, and it is quite a task to get a seat or to *be* one of the four hundred. This club was fathered by the Earl of Lonsdale. It had been the habit of the National Sporting Club up to that time to treat pugilists like dogs. Fighting gentlemen had to go in and out the back way, while the gentlemen who promoted and bet on the fight went in the front way. They naturally expected to treat Corbett in the same manner,

but I took a stand against this attitude at once. When Corbett arrived they invited him in the usual way to come for a bout, and he replied that he was not in the habit of going to clubs unless he went there as a guest. The Englishmen treated this ultimatum in a very upstage manner, and Corbett practically told them all to go to the devil.

As I said before, Corbett had worked in the Bank of Nevada, which was practically controlled by John W. Mackay. Mackay's son, Clarence, was very proud of him, and when the champion arrived he and Lord Hay took him away from the sporting club and made a lion of him.

When I began to prepare the stage at Drury Lane for the production of *Gentleman Jack* I brought in a lot of carpenters and had circus seats built on the enormous stage for about one thousand people. Then I engaged sixty regular "supers," placed them around on these seats and started in to rehearse them. Arthur Collins, who was then stage manager and who is now producer and general director of all the

Drury Lane plays, came in during rehearsal, and seeing but sixty "supers" sparsely scattered about on the seats, said, "What are you going to do for the rest of your people?"

"Leave that to me," said I.

"Good," said he, and put on his hat and went home.

Then I circulated all over town a ticket bearing this inscription: "THIS WILL ADMIT YOU FREE TO THE DRURY LANE THEATER, AT THE STAGE DOOR, AT TEN MINUTES AFTER TEN EACH EVENING, IN TIME TO SEE THE SPARRING CONTEST BETWEEN J. J. CORBETT AND PROFESSOR J. J. DONALDSON."

I sent out about ten thousand of these for the first night, and when the time came they had to order out Scotland Yard to keep the people away from the stage door. Collins came rushing to me and exclaimed, "What are you going to do with the mob out there?"

"Just you wait and see," said I.

"All right," said he, and went about his business.

Then with Connie McVey and two other of

our heavy men I went to the stage door and we passed in about one thousand people and told them to occupy seats on the stage. Then I jumped into the center of the ring behind the great curtain, told all the people what was going to happen and what they were expected to do. Every time my hand went up—I was to be referee of the fight, remember—they were to yell. When it came down, they were to stop. They quickly “caught on” and it was a wonderful success, so wonderful that Clement Scott the next day in the *Daily Telegraph* devoted a whole column to a description of this particular scene, claiming that not even the big mob scene in the performance of *Julius Caesar*, which had just been given in London, had equaled it.

But almost immediately the critics, having found out how simply the “great scene” was accomplished, came out and gave Scott the laugh.

Corbett awakened me at five o'clock the next morning with the newspaper criticisms and we all thought we would run a year. But it hap-

pened to us as it has happened to many other Americans who have gone to London and apparently made a great hit. The public gave us a wide berth; we did no business; and at the end of six weeks closed at the Drury Lane about fifteen hundred pounds to the bad. I was anxious to see the country, however, and persuaded Corbett that it would be a bad scheme to go back to America without making our proposed tour. So we played all of the large cities of Great Britain, with the following results: In Edinburgh we took in eight hundred pounds in eight performances; in Glasgow, four hundred pounds in eight performances; in Newcastle, about three hundred pounds; and in Leeds, two hundred; in Liverpool, eight hundred pounds, the best on our trip; Islington, four hundred pounds; Manchester, four hundred pounds—and so on. In Birmingham, which was supposed to be the home of all fighters, we played to about eight hundred pounds for eight performances.

The falling off of receipts in Birmingham was due to the fact that on the first day of

our visit there, which happened to be the Fourth of July, Corbett was going down the main street with one of the ladies of the company who wore an American flag in her coat. A fellow insulted the woman and Corbett hit him on the jaw, which created a lot of talk. Another thing was, they wanted to entertain Corbett, and their idea was to take him to a rat pit and have a champion bulldog kill a thousand rats in a thousand seconds. Corbett was disgusted and horrified at the idea and would not go, and that settled him in Birmingham!

In England, Ireland and Scotland Corbett was regarded exactly as he was in the United States. He was looked upon as a curiosity. The people would stop and stare at him, but they would not pay any money to go into the theater and see him act. We lost on the British tour five thousand pounds, but we went right through with it—the tour, not the money. Beyond giving up their money to see a pugilist act, which they did not believe in, the English people were very kind to Corbett.

This was due no less perhaps to a certain hostility they felt toward their own defeated warrior than to the exceeding wholesomeness of the American champion. They didn't resent Mitchell so much because he had been beaten at Jacksonville, but because of certain performances of his which were deemed outré, even in a prize-fighter. He had beaten a policeman in Piccadilly once and served time for doing it. In fact, the decent people over there regarded Corbett as a great relief after men like John L. and their own "Charley."

After we got through with England, we went to Paris, where Corbett appeared at the Folies Bergere for ten days. We cleaned up ten thousand dollars in the gay city, which made up part of the losses we had accumulated on the other side of the Channel.

In Ireland Corbett's uncle, the Reverend John Corbett, had been one of the fighting men of the Land League. I met him in London—a plain, modest Irish priest. His parish was in Tuam, County Galway, on the west coast of Ireland, and Corbett, before returning to

America, wanted to go there and give a benefit for a new church which his uncle was building in that town. And Tuam, Galway, you should have seen it! We and all our company paid our fares across to Ireland and to a place that American tourists rarely go through. I dare say they don't get one stranger a year. Seventy-five per cent. of the natives could not speak English. They spoke in Irish. They had no telephones, no electricity and the like.

To show you how unsophisticated these people were, the week before we appeared in Tuam, Dion Boucicault's *Con, the Shaughraun*, a play depicting Ireland and its peasantry, had been performed there by a company headed by Dan Lewis, an American negro, who played "Con"!—and they stood for it! This, by the way, was the first time the *Shaughraun* had been played in Tuam. One would, therefore, not be surprised that in visiting this little town in the west of Ireland we created more of a sensation that we would have created in a little town in America or Canada. There were great crowds to welcome

us, and our man Corbett, the prize-fighter, nephew of the priest, raised enough money in one performance to build a church in Tuam.

John Redmond, speaking in the British Parliament a short time after, said that the action of this "low-down pugilist" was one of the finest things he'd ever heard of.

I went back to America on the *Majestic*, a week ahead of the others, and to show you how the interest in pugilism had grown, when we cast anchor in the bay, the steamer was surrounded by reporters from all the New York papers, trying to get an interview. They shouted for Brady and I was interviewed from the side of the boat, we shouting questions back and forth across the strip of water that separated their tiny craft from the liner. The one particular thing they wanted to know was whether Corbett would fight Fitzsimmons, Maher or somebody else. It is almost impossible to describe the interest that was taken by the public in pugilism at that time.

It was a stormy time when Corbett got back to America. Pugilism had gone forward by

leaps and bounds. There were twenty men eager for an opportunity to meet the champion.

While we'd been in Europe the Fitzsimmons prestige had developed wonderfully in this country. He was now the acknowledged middleweight champion. Besides this, he had boxed with heavyweights and had won several remarkable matches by clean-cut knock-outs, and he stood ready and willing to meet Corbett for the heavyweight championship, notwithstanding the fact that he claimed to tip the scales at about one hundred and sixty-five pounds. To be sure, Corbett weighed very little more than this—not more than one hundred and eighty-five pounds at his best. But, although Fitzsimmons was light in the legs, he was a heavyweight above the waist.

Furthermore, Corbett about this time had got ring fear. Naturally, every man hates to risk the crown he has won. It is a one-sided affair at best. He has everything to lose and nothing to gain. Corbett was earning anywhere from seventy-five thousand dollars to

one hundred thousand dollars a year, he was living on the fat of the land, it all looked mighty good to him, and he hated to take a chance of losing it. We were all in clover, for that matter; everything was going swimmingly. But victory has its worries no less than defeat. Every triumph brings its apprehensions. And we began to realize that if the public once got it into their heads that Corbett was afraid of Fitzsimmons, this revenue would immediately disappear.

And that which we feared came upon us. On our arrival in New York from Europe, and on Corbett exhibiting a reluctance to accept the challenges that Fitzsimmons had repeatedly hurled at him, our audiences began to melt away. Something had to be done!

About this time an Irish sailor loomed above the pugilistic horizon on the Pacific Coast. The name of this newcomer was Tom Sharkey. Also Peter Maher, on account of his wonderful knock-out punch—although he knew little or nothing about boxing—was rapidly becoming an idol. Charles (“Kid”) McCoy, another

great boxer, had come to the front during our tour in Europe. McCoy weighed about one hundred and sixty pounds and had a remarkable blow—a short snappy blow, like the snap of a whip. He hit Sharkey at the Lenox Athletic Club with this blow and knocked him at least six or eight feet. In fact, Sharkey went into the air, described a short curve and hit the floor with the back of his head.

With all these aspirants after his crown, Corbett lived a very unhappy life just about this time. Each of the would-be champions had friends who bragged about their idol and who sneered at Corbett's reticence. It was impossible to treat their taunting with dignified silence, since the sporting writers in the newspapers first began to hint at a curious reluctance on Corbett's part and then came out openly and charged him with cowardice. And so we realized that something must be done, and done quickly.

Understand, Corbett was not physically afraid of anybody. It was ring fear that possessed him. There was more than the danger

of a mere drubbing in the ring; there was the danger of losing prestige. So we cast about for a means to avoid this. We sought a way by which to interest the public mind with any kind of a match. This was only a way of temporizing, I admit, but it was better than nothing. Peter Jackson had remained in the game and was constantly after Corbett, and the latter was perfectly willing to meet him because he knew that he "had him safe." But somehow or other they could not agree on terms and all attempts to arrange a match were fruitless. In the midst of our plight a strapping fellow from Australia named Steve O'Donnell loomed up. O'Donnell was a wonderfully clever boxer, but lacked stamina and ring wisdom.

So Corbett and myself hit upon a scheme of staving off the aspirants by shoving O'Donnell into the champion's place, as it were. We tried to force Fitzsimmons to make a match with the newcomer from Australia, and to bring this about went so far as to put up ten thousand dollars with the *New York Herald*.

But Fitzsimmons was too wary. He wanted Corbett or nothing! You see, all this time Fitzsimmons was gaining more and more reputation by meeting everybody and defeating them. We felt that he was contemptuous of O'Donnell's prowess, that he considered that that worthy had not made good sufficiently in the ring to entitle him to such a match as we were trying to force on Fitzsimmons, and that, in consequence, lanky Bob would gain nothing in reputation from a contest with O'Donnell.

So, to bolster up O'Donnell's prestige and in a way to bring him within the challenge zone, we very foolishly arranged for him to meet Jake Kilrain in Boston in an eight-round contest.

O'Donnell made a miserable exhibition and failed to beat Kilrain, who was an old man, and that settled O'Donnell then and there. I never saw a more remarkable example of the operation of ring psychology than during this match. It will be remembered that Kilrain had fought Sullivan a marvelously long-drawn-out battle away back in '89. After



PERMISSION OF ROBERT COSTER

Jem Mace
Prize-fighter and sporting man



PERMISSION OF ROBERT COSTER

John Morrissey
A champion prize-fighter

that he had lain dormant, so far as we know, and had but now been resurrected for this contest with O'Donnell. It was like bringing back a race-horse that had passed the period of his usefulness and had been relegated to the pedlar's cart, to race a two-year-old. O'Donnell was only twenty-two years old and was a perfect specimen of an athlete. It was almost an insult to put him up against such a man as Kilrain. But even men who possess ring wisdom and coolness in the last degree are apt to have their heads turned by taunting as did "Pompadour Jim" in his fight with Charley Mitchell at Jacksonville. I imagine the Australian youngster was not used to the cruel guying that is part of ring tactics.

Be that as it may, John L. Sullivan squatted himself back of Kilrain's corner and Corbett occupied the same position in O'Donnell's corner. Sullivan raved and roasted O'Donnell all through the bout and threw taunting and tantalizing remarks across the ring to Corbett, the new champion. All the retorts that Corbett or any one else made had no more effect

on the stolid Kilrain than a corn-stalk gad would have on a plow horse. But there is no doubt that Sullivan's behavior and remarks were the means of causing O'Donnell's pitiable exhibition more than any other thing.

After the bout Sullivan was in Reynolds' Hotel in Boston as O'Donnell, Delaney and myself passed through to catch the midnight train. No sooner did he catch sight of us than he rushed over, grabbed O'Donnell by the arm and started to repeat some of the insulting bally-ragging language he had used during the match. Notwithstanding the fact that Sullivan was an old man, O'Donnell stood like a chump and took it all, but when, as I thought, the Bostonian had gone far enough, I pushed O'Donnell aside, faced Sullivan and handed him the same kind of abuse he'd given to O'Donnell. This was all a case of bluff on my part, since Sullivan could have crushed me with a blow. But it goes to show that when those fellows got up against anybody with a little nerve they were no good.

The only prize-fighter who had great pluck outside the ring as well as in it was Charles Mitchell. Mitchell was game and was a fighter in the full sense of the word. He was cruel, but he was the nerviest one I ever knew. As an instance of his pluck, when he was in New York, trying to get Corbett to meet Slavin, the former was playing at Miner's Theater on the Bowery. One night he was in the bar room next door to the theater, surrounded with the cream of East Side fighting men, who were his friends, when in came Mitchell and Sullivan. After a little, Mitchell went over to Corbett, had a few words with him and invited him to go down into the cellar and fight him then and there, and this in spite of the fact that Corbett was surrounded by his adherents.

The farce between O'Donnell and Kilrain, instead of helping us out of our dilemma by appeasing the public clamor for a match, only served to stir up new rancor. The press went at us with renewed energy and vigor. We

stood the lambasting that they gave us as long as we could, and at last realized that it was absolutely necessary that Corbett meet Fitzsimmons.

IV

THE general demand for a match between Corbett and Fitzsimmons became at last a public clamor, and notwithstanding Corbett's aversion to meeting "lanky Bob," we found it impossible to avoid the issue. And right here we were confronted with a paradoxical situation. Although we had made the match because of public insistence and for no other reason, there wasn't a state in the Union that would let us pull off the contest in its territory. No sooner were the articles signed than we received wonderful offers from all parts of the world. Dawson, in the Klondike, offered us one hundred thousand dollars to go up there and fight. But that was out of the question. Presently came Dan Stewart, from Dallas, Texas, a very persuasive gentleman with a good front and plenty of money. He convinced us that it was possible to have the fight in his state and

offered us forty thousand dollars to go down there and pull it off. To allay our doubts, he deposited five thousand dollars to cover training expenses. So we went to Texas and started in on a race track at San Antonio to get ready for the contest. Fitzsimmons established training quarters at some place near Dallas, I think.

Almost as soon as we got there Governor Culbertson warned us not to fight. We retorted that there was nothing on the statute books of Texas to prevent the contest. The governor replied that even so, he would not allow it to take place in the state, and he asked us in a very nice way to refrain and leave. Stewart, who was a political power in Texas at that time, assured us that the governor would not interfere, that he—Stewart—had the advice of high-priced lawyers to that effect. The governor and Stewart engaged in a battle of words in the newspapers and finally the governor called a special session of the legislature, which cost the state about twenty-five thousand dollars. The law-makers were

summoned from all parts of that vast state to meet in Austin on a week's notice. They met, the governor sent in a message demanding the enactment of a law prohibiting pugilism or boxing of any kind in the state. The law was promptly passed and all our hopes of contesting in Texas were over!

Let me say right here that when this match was made moving pictures were just coming into vogue. There were no moving-picture theaters. But I foresaw the value of such a thing and when the match was made demanded that as a bonus to me for bringing it about I should have the picture privilege. But very soon Fitzsimmons found out that I had this and Stewart realized what a plum he had given away. The picture privilege for the Corbett-Fitzsimmons contest eventually realized for its owners more than seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

Disgusted with the treatment he had received in Texas, Stewart jumped to Arkansas, where, also, there was no law on the statute books to prevent a boxing contest. At his re-

quest, the Corbett party went on to Hot Springs in that state and installed themselves in training quarters in the suburbs of the town. Fitzsimmons refused to leave Texas. I firmly believe that at this point Fitzsimmons was afraid of Corbett and did not want to meet him, or that he wanted to break off the present match and make an entirely new one and by so doing deprive me of the moving-picture rights.

Upon our advent Governor Clark rose up on his hind haunches and declared there should be no pugilism in Arkansas if he could help it. The citizens of Hot Springs replied that there *would* be a fight in Hot Springs even if they had to surround the town with volunteer militia and prevent the invasion by the governor if he attempted to interfere.

The sheriff of Hot Springs at that time was a man named Reb Houpt, and he stood in with the citizens of the town. The governor knew this and so summoned Houpt to Little Rock and told him that if he did not produce Corbett within a week he would remove him. This left

us in a very dubious position. The citizens of Hot Springs urged us to pay no attention to the governor's talk. And then, as things were getting very warm indeed, to the amazement of everybody, Mr. Lanky Bob Fitzsimmons crossed the Arkansas state line at Texarkana and deliberately gave himself up to two officers who had been sent by Governor Clark to meet him. Right there it looked as if Fitzsimmons did not want to fight!

Corbett by this time had got himself into magnificent condition. We were all very sanguine that he would win and I honestly believe to this day that if we had not been stopped in Arkansas, Corbett would have beaten the Cornishman easily.

After the arrest of Fitzsimmons, who was promptly taken to Little Rock, we realized that Corbett could not fight the battle by himself, and so accepted a very polite invitation from the governor to visit him at the capital. When we got there we found that the governor had put Fitzsimmons in charge of a sheriff called Jesse Hurd, who was the most villain-

ous-looking man I had ever seen and who had the proud distinction of having killed seventeen men. Hurd and Houpt were exceedingly jealous of each other as man-killers. Hurd felt keenly that his rival was after the laurels which patience no less than enterprise had placed on his brow and that he would avail of any provocation, however slight, that did not put him beyond the pale of the law, to bring his own line of achievements up to that of his enemy. The margin was a small one. Houpt had killed sixteen men. The influx of boxers and their adherents not only gave Houpt a chance to cut another notch in his gun stock, but made it incumbent for Hurd to maintain his superiority. So, you see, *we* were in the position of being compelled to "pay the freight" should the ambition or caprice of either of these gentlemen prompt him to act on any so-called "provocation." In consequence it behooved us to walk very "thin" indeed.

It was unfortunate, under the circumstances,

that the night before we were to meet the governor one of our party named O'Farrell had run into Jesse Hurd somewhere in the town and had made some injudicious remarks about the attitude of the state toward this contest. Hurd promptly grabbed O'Farrell by the back of the neck and took him to the town jail. I learned of the affair about midnight and called the governor up on the telephone—we were then in Little Rock. I told him what Hurd had done and reminded him of the fact that he'd guaranteed us protection if we would come to the capital, and demanded the release of O'Farrell. At the same time I made some pretty strong remarks about Hurd to the governor. While I was at breakfast next morning I saw Hurd enter the room. From his looks, I judged that the governor had told him what I said about him and had reprimanded him for what he had done. He walked over to where Fitzsimmons was sitting and I knew from the way he looked around the room as he spoke to that gentleman that he was asking

where that man Brady was. Fitzsimmons pointed to me and Hurd promptly rose and walked over to my table.

“Is this Brady?” he demanded.

“Yes,” said I.

My two hands were on the table and I was shivering in my shoes. It was lucky I had the presence of mind to put my hands where he could see them. If I had not done so, there is no question, he would have killed me then and there and then reported that he did it in self-defense. He saw that I had outwitted him and stood looking me through and through for a few moments, then snarled something and turned on his heel and walked back to Fitzsimmons. That was the narrowest escape I ever had in my pugilistic experience. I've often thought that if I had been less conspicuous at the time, that if I'd been some in-offensive citizen who had been rash enough to comment on any act of this arrogant gentleman, he would have assassinated me, even if I'd held my hands high in the air as a token of my utter defenselessness. But feeling was

running so high that Hurd knew that any act of his would have subjected him to a rigid investigation, so he chose the part of wisdom over that of "valor"!

We met the governor in the state house on noon of that day. At one side of the table was Fitzsimmons in charge of Hurd and at the other sat Corbett in charge of Houpt. The room was filled with newspaper men and followers of pugilism. The governor sat back, chewed a cigar deliberately for some moments, which added impressiveness to the pronouncement of which he was about to deliver himself, and said:

"Gentlemen, I have a few words to say to you. I do not propose to do as my brother governor of Texas has done. I shall not put this state to an expense of twenty or thirty thousand dollars by convening the legislature just to pass a law to keep you gentlemen from boxing within our borders. I've a simpler way."

He turned to the pugilists.

"I want to tell you this. You, Mr. Fitz-

simmons, are in charge of our estimable citizen, Mr. Jesse Hurd, who has the reputation of having killed seventeen men, and you, Mr. Corbett, are in charge of our equally estimable citizen, Mr. Reb Houpt, who has only killed sixteen men. Remember, there is a keen rivalry between these gentlemen. It is Mr. Houpt's ambition to catch up with Mr. Hurd—and it is Mr. Hurd's ambition to keep ahead of Mr. Houpt. Now, I instruct both of these officers that if you, Corbett and Fitzsimmons, as much as bat an eye at each other in this state while I am governor of it, you will go back home in a box!"

Turning to Hurd, His Excellency said, "You understand?"

"Yep," said Hurd.

Then the governor looked significantly at Houpt.

"Yep," said Houpt.

And then we were politely ushered out of the governor's room, and I never saw a crowd make dust to get out of any state as we did to get out of Arkansas. In fact, we slunk

down a side street to find the train to take us to the Tennessee line! Governor Clark had found a way to stop prize-fighting in Arkansas without the help of the legislature.

This practically settled that contract between Fitzsimmons and Corbett. In fact, we declared the match off ourselves. But it did not discourage Stewart. For a time things remained *in statu quo*. Corbett went back to showing in the theater and Fitzsimmons went about his own business. The report of our experience in Texas and Arkansas, instead of serving to quiet the public, seemed only to whet its impatience, and it clamored all the more loudly for a battle.

There was no law on the statute books of Nevada against boxing, but experience had taught us that this meant nothing. However, Stewart, no whit discouraged, went to Carson and in some clever way got next to the governor—who was a big fat Dutchman—and persuaded him to ask us to come to that state for the contest. This was about eight months after the Hot Springs fiasco. We entered into

another agreement, but this time I did not get the moving-picture rights. Stewart, by the new contract, was to build an arena at Carson with a seating capacity of twenty thousand and to arrange for the pictures. He was to get fifty per cent. of the profits on all privileges and contests and the remainder was to go to Corbett and Fitzsimmons—share and share alike.

Corbett, his trainer Delaney and the rest of his retinue started for Carson about a month before the event and began to train at a little hotel three miles out of town. Suddenly I began to notice a change in Corbett. He who had always been so intelligently receptive of the suggestion and wisdom of those in whose skill he had confidence became intractable. He became impatient of suggestion or opposition. He wanted to run things his own way. He refused to follow the advice of Delaney, who knew him so well, but instead acted on the advice of Judge Lawler, an old California friend, who had come to the training quarters and who knew about as much about boxing as

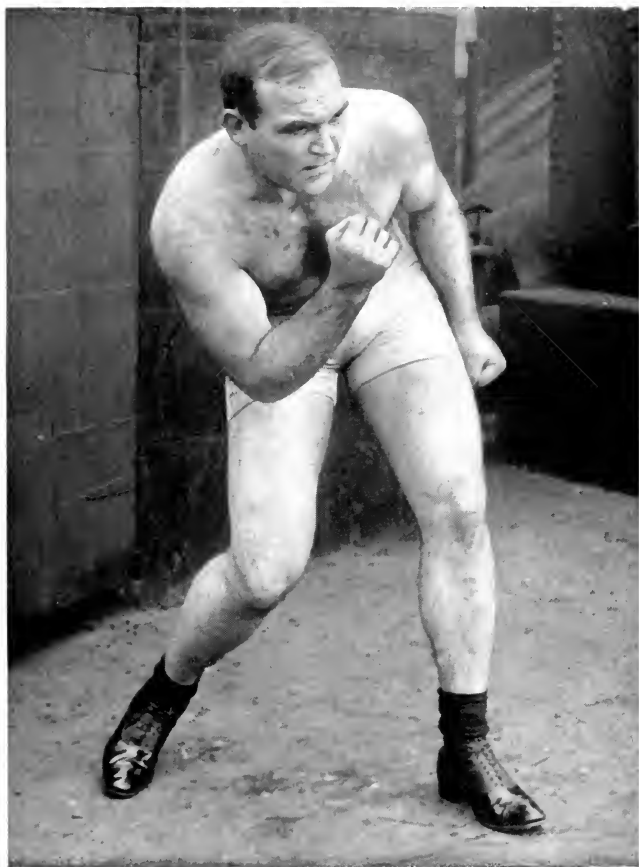
a child. During his training he shifted from the methods that he had found so serviceable but which to this genius of progress had become old. I honestly believe Corbett lost his chances by the way he prepared himself for battle.

If I were a superstitious man I might give undue weight to the following incident as a bad omen. Just before Corbett had met Sullivan and while he was in training, he bought a collie for ten dollars—a wonderfully pugnacious dog which would tackle anything. There was one thing on earth that Ned loved, and only one, and that was Corbett. And Jim loved the dog for his bravery. Ned always slept at the end of his master's bed and if anybody approached the room he would give a terrible growl. In a word, he was Corbett's protector. Ned was Corbett's constant companion during training for the Sullivan fight and went with him to New Orleans. Then he traveled everywhere with his victorious master and made his appearance on the stage with him in the training

scene in *Gentleman Jack*. It was Ned's growls that aroused the camp one night when Corbett was training for the Mitchell fight to the fact that some persons had climbed up next to Corbett's room. It looked as if they were there to maim or hurt Corbett. In fact, when they were discovered and shot at, they shot back. Of course, Ned was the hero of the affair.

When we went to Europe, Jim loaned Ned to John W. Norton and he remained with that gentleman until Norton died.

When Corbett went to Carson he forgot all about Ned, partly from the fact, I suppose, that his brother Harry had brought from San Francisco a beautiful full-blooded collie for whom Jim had now conceived a deep affection. Not knowing this, I thought it would be a good idea to take Ned with me when I should join Corbett at Carson. I paid Ned's expenses across the continent in the baggage car, took good care of him and anticipated great pleasure in introducing him to Corbett again. I found Jim sitting with the beautiful



Jim Jeffries



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Terry McGovern

Young Corbett

collie dog in his lap. Ned, furiously jealous, sprang at the throat of the dog who had supplanted him in his old master's affections, and they had a terrible row until Corbett savagely pulled them apart and kicked Ned out of the door into the deep snow. That night Corbett, who slept in a cottage opposite the little hotel where we were training, took the collie and went to bed, and the next morning, outside of Corbett's door, with his nose on the sill, was Ned—frozen stiff! And Corbett lost the fight!

It became necessary while we were at Carson to get some young fellow who could "rough" Corbett about. The men we had were stale and knew Corbett's tricks, and Delaney thought it advisable to get somebody to come up there and be a sort of punching bag for the champion—a man who could stand his punches. The trainer said he knew of a young man in San Francisco who would exactly suit the purpose. So he telegraphed on and two days later James J. Jeffries got off the train and became part of the camp. Jeffries and

Corbett used to fight viciously every day and the new arrival could take all that "Pompador Jim" could give him, which did not suit the older man at all. Yarns were published in the newspapers about Corbett knocking out Jeffries in practise, but no such thing ever occurred. There was something about this punching bag, Jeffries, that made me and Delaney observe him carefully. We saw that he was a "comer" and I at once made a proposition to take him east with me, but he did not want to go.

The preparation for the taking of moving pictures of this fight was next on the program. A great big rough house was built and four cameras installed, so that if one broke down the others could operate. This was the first time that machines were called in to take pictures of any great event—the beginning of it all—just an experiment—and nobody knew whether the cameras would work. In fact, in the last round the camera *did* break down at the most unfortunate moment and failed to get a picture of the blow with which Corbett was

finished—the one which Fitzsimmons made famous as the “solar plexus blow.”

At the time of the event the place was full of notables. Senator John J. Ingalls, of Kansas, was there as a special writer and it was very amusing to see this very distinguished man as he sat in a box with Mrs. Fitzsimmons, who was constantly loudly coaching her husband in terms of the ring.

At the sound of the bell Corbett began punching and jabbing with his left, which was very effective, and for six rounds made a fool of his opponent. In the sixth, Corbett landed on Fitzsimmons and knocked him down. Fitzsimmons took the count. After the fight was over we claimed that he was down longer than ten seconds and that William Muldoon, who was the referee, favored him at this point. But we did that for effect. The truth of the matter is, Fitzsimmons was not badly hurt in this round and simply did what all experienced boxers do: took the benefit of nine full seconds before getting up. Then Corbett in his endeavor to knock lanky Bob out fought

himself out and the men returned to their corners. Fitzsimmons recuperated very quickly and was himself again at the beginning of the seventh round. But Corbett never "came back." He grew weaker and weaker, while the enemy grew stronger and stronger until the thirteenth round, when the Cornishman delivered his famous solar plexus, and that was the end of Corbett as champion.

Corbett got up and tried to fight Bob after the bell had rung. I jumped into the ring and made a speech and claimed it was all a mistake and that he was not out—that he had a right to go on. But the verdict was against us; Corbett was taken to his room, broken-hearted, and I believe that he contemplated suicide.

After the battle Corbett seemed to lose heart in everything. He prepared to go back to San Francisco, declaring that he would never return to the East again. Not long after he had reached the coast a mutual friend in San Francisco wired me of "Pompadour Jim's" resolve and I promptly wired back that as

I had settled with Stewart I was going to San Francisco to bring Corbett east with me.

The receipts of this affair—forty-four thousand dollars—were very disappointing, but from other sources we got about twenty thousand dollars, which went to defray expenses. The pictures made between six hundred thousand and seven hundred thousand dollars. They were exhibited everywhere, the world over. Phenomenal prices were paid for state rights—this was the first time moving pictures were shown in high-class theaters. They played The Academy of Music, New York; the Grand Opera House, Chicago, and the Boston Theater to enormous receipts. One machine was sent around the world, operating in Australia, China, Japan, India, South Africa and Cairo. I believe that these pictures made more money than any others up to the present time and that it was they which proved the value of moving pictures for great events and for show purposes.

Notwithstanding the fact that we were to have fifty per cent. of the picture receipts, Mr.

Stewart took the films to New York, formed a corporation with himself as president and his brother as treasurer, took the entire management of the thing out of our hands, and left us helpless—thankful for what we could get. I think each man received about eighty thousand dollars.

After the settlement with Stewart, I jumped back to 'Frisco to find Corbett. He had no more ambition and was reluctant to go east. I told him that already a very strange thing had developed. It was this. Fitzsimmons, although having fought a wonderful fight, was distinctly unpopular with the public. I laid before Corbett a little scheme that I had conceived and worked out on my way west. We would take advantage of Fitzsimmons' unpopularity and by a little engineering and scheming persuade the public that "lanky Bob" had actually been knocked out in the sixth round at Carson City and that Corbett had been robbed of the match. The scheme was immediately to start east, oppose the new champion at every point, play against him, give him a

dose of his own medicine, nag and bait him in the way he used to nag and bait Corbett, turn the tables on him, make him the pursued instead of the pursuer—as he used to be—put Corbett in the position of the man clamoring for justice and Fitzsimmons in the hateful position of the man denying justice, and all this time we were frequently to keep demanding another fight and prove or try to prove to the public that Fitzsimmons was afraid to meet Corbett again.

Following out this project we played against Fitzsimmons in Denver and again in Kansas City. Remember, Fitzsimmons had had a play written for himself in which he was trying to act. We had so brought the capricious public around to our way of thinking that the Cornishman played to empty benches while Corbett packed the theaters.

In creating this sentiment I had hit on one idea: to use the moving pictures. These were to be shown in New York at The Academy of Music. The people at that time knew very little about this new form of entertainment.

The mechanical method of producing it had not been exploited in the Sunday supplements as yet. And this was what made it possible for me to use the pictures for my purpose. The people did not know that one could run the pictures fast or slow. When the pictures were presented in New York I insisted on being allowed to do the explanatory talking before the curtain. In the dark I described the fight. I had posted the operator that when he got to the sixth round of the contest, when Fitzsimmons was knocked down, he was to run his machine very slowly. Before the round started I called the attention of the audience to what was coming and suggested that when they came to that particular part they watch the referee's hand, hold a watch on him, and see how many seconds he counted. At the proper time I said, "Now, watch!" and then counted, "One—two—three—four—five—six—seven—eight—nine—ten—eleven—twelve—thirteen."

"He was down thirteen seconds, ladies and gentlemen!"

But just then one man in the audience stood

up and shouted, "You're a liar!" and I recognized the voice of William Muldoon. Muldoon, you will remember, was the referee at the Corbett-Fitzsimmons fight.

But it was no use! We could neither taunt nor lure Fitzsimmons into a battle. From the very moment he became champion, he seemed to be struck with ring fever. He was fearful of his laurels. He wanted to live on the show business and so he tried to avoid a battle with anybody. It became harder to get him into the ring than anybody else I'd ever known. He refused challenges from everywhere. But Corbett pursued him. He even pulled his nose in Green's Hotel in Philadelphia and told him that if he got him in the ring again he would "get his!" But Bob absolutely refused to meet him again.

Presently I began to realize that public interest in pugilism was on the wane, that there was very little left in it for me. Corbett was my friend and I had made plenty of money for him and for myself. I had swelled up when he was victorious and when he was

whipped I still stuck to him. But he could not draw money as he had done before. The game was getting poorer and poorer, and I realized that the parting of the ways had come.

I had kept active in theatricals during all of the period I have been telling you about, producing such plays as *Tribby*, *The New South*, *The Veteran*, *Nero*, *After Dark*, *The Bottom of the Sea*, *The Cotton King*, *Humanity* and numerous revivals of Shakespeare which were becoming popular in New York City at that time. But it was my connection with the prize ring that made me a famous character. Nor was this notoriety distasteful to me. On the contrary, the glamour of it all appealed to me. I dare say my name was mentioned in the newspapers at one time as often as Mr. Roosevelt's.

But this reputation did me no good as a theater man. It was too much Brady, the pugilist, Brady, the fight manager. And, mind you, only a very small part of my life had been spent in the field of pugilism as com-

pared with the time I had devoted to the theater.

And now that I had determined to cut out pugilism, I became more ambitious theatrically. But the ghost of my "ring" reputation followed me. I made a proposition to a very famous actress, Mrs. Pat Campbell, and to Forbes-Robertson. She had accepted my terms and an American run had been arranged for her when she sent for me and said, "There has been a little misunderstanding, Mr. Brady. I could not possibly go to America with you."

"Why not?" said I, astounded.

"Why, there is one thing you failed to tell me," she said. "You manage prize-fighters!"

About this time Corbett was crazy to start a saloon in the city of New York, and I had discovered *Way Down East*. Corbett had an interest in this play and I was to have an interest in his saloon. But we could not agree over certain matters and so decided to quit each other for good and all. I gave over all my interests in Corbett's plays and other projects

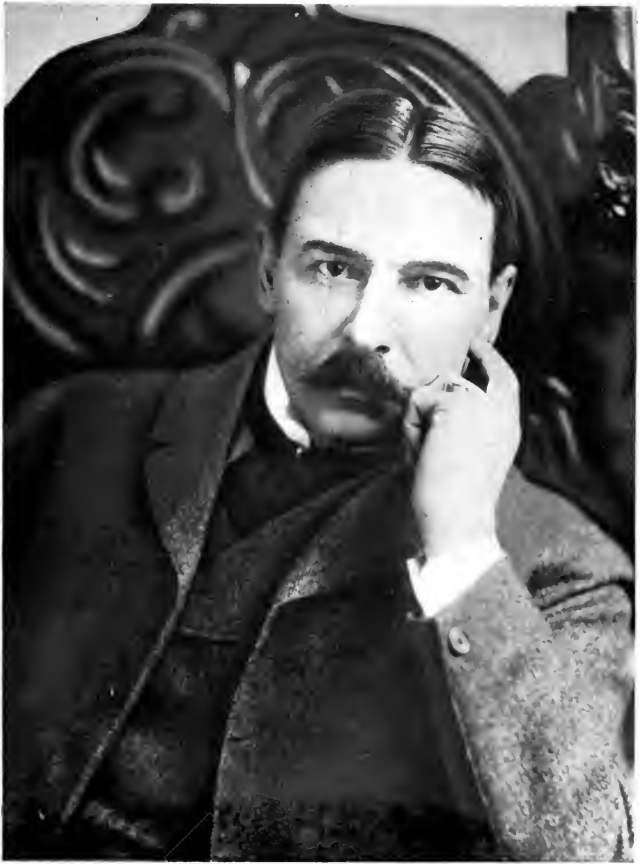
and he gave over all his interest in mine, which included a twenty-five per cent. share of *Way Down East*, a play that afterward netted a million dollars.

I now devoted myself to first-class theatricals and publicly announced that I had got through with pugilism. I refused to talk about prize-fighters. I would not be interviewed about great events, past, present or future. I asked the newspapers to keep my name out of pugilism. In short, I married Grace George and she made me promise to give up that particular department of enterprise.



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Grace George



J. R. Grismer

VI

Now that I was out of pugilism, I devoted all my time and energy to the business of the theater. I was producing plays on an increasing scale and realized that I must have a New York house of my own through which to exploit them. Not long after I had made up my mind to do this, I met J. M. Hill, who was anxious to get rid of his theater—the Manhattan.

“Will you take the lease of my theater?” said he.

“Yes, at my price,” said I.

He wanted something like thirty thousand dollars a year. I offered twenty thousand dollars and got it. At that time I was doing business with Florenz Zeigfield, managing the first tour of Anna Held through the country.

Zeigfield was present at the negotiations with Hill and declared himself in for a one-half interest in the theater.

Having at last got a theater of my own, I determined to try out *Way Down East*—a play in which I had supreme confidence. This play was written by Lottie Blair Parker at a time when her husband, Harry Doel Parker, was working in my office as booking agent. Mrs. Parker had submitted to me two or three bad plays before, and I had turned them down. Parker, who considered his wife an infallible dramatic genius, conceived the idea that somehow I had become prejudiced against her work, and they decided to submit her next effort anonymously. So one summer day Mrs. Fernandez, the agent—now dead—handed me three manuscripts.

“Who wrote them?” said I.

“Never mind,” said she.

One of them was called *Annie Laurie*. I started to read it. At the end of the first act I knew it was a great thing; at the end of the fourth, I knew it would make a fortune. Next

day I sent for Parker and said, "Find out who sent these plays here!"

He looked them over and replied, "My wife did."

"It will need a lot of fixing," said I. "Now, I'll give your wife a per cent. of the gross receipts until it reaches ten thousand dollars and you must let me do what I please with the play."

This Parker and his wife agreed to do. I got Joseph Grismer to fix up the play and gave him a third interest in it for his work. The play was afterward named *Way Down East* and made over a million dollars, of which Grismer's share was three hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Curiously, Mrs. Parker has never written a successful play since.

Way Down East is one of the great shining lights as a money maker. At first the public refused to take it very seriously. I kept it at the Manhattan Theater for seven months and during that whole time I did not have a winning week. But my confidence in the play had not waned one whit and I kept it going

just to make a Metropolitan reputation for it for road purposes. And results justified my confidence! The first time *Way Down East* went to St. Louis it played to one thousand nine hundred dollars in nine performances, then for a year it went on accumulating fame, and when it returned to St. Louis the following year did thirteen thousand dollars' worth of business in one week. On its return to New York this remarkable drama held the boards at The Academy of Music for nine months at average receipts of more than ten thousand dollars a week. *Way Down East* has played in the city of Chicago in the last fourteen or fifteen years an average of four weeks per year and has never taken in less than ten thousand dollars a week. In short, it cleaned up one hundred and twenty thousand dollars in Chicago alone. Boston has netted this play one hundred thousand dollars in fifteen years. To go back, its gross receipts in Chicago were about six hundred thousand dollars. It is the best-paying piece of theatrical property, with the exception of *Ben-Hur*

and *The Old Homestead*, that I know of. And think of it! Corbett sold his one-quarter interest in this great money maker for practically a mess of pottage!

Although I had abandoned pugilism, I did not wish to sever my connection with the sporting world wholly. So I went into the six-day bicycle racing business on the side. The race was held the first week in December of each year, and we took in something like one hundred thousand dollars gross. We had to pay the Garden people forty per cent. of the net profits for the use of the building.

Presently there arose a great hullabaloo against the individual six-day riding contest, claiming that it was brutal. A bill was introduced in Albany against any man riding longer than twelve hours a day in any kind of a game. Theodore Roosevelt signed the bill, much to my surprise, since there was no cruelty in the one-man effort at all. However, to circumvent the new law, I invented the idea of riding in teams. Two men would ride instead of one. One would relieve the other, and they

would count the combined scores. If one of the teammates was not holding his own, the other fellow was dragged out and put in his place. As a matter of fact, it was not a race at all—nothing more than a farce! These farces are pulled off on the New York public right along and it pays one hundred thousand dollars a week to see them. “Why is it farcical?” you ask. Just go to the Garden during the contest and carefully observe conditions. You will see that it is absolutely impossible as the match is conducted, especially when there are seven, eight or nine teams of expert riders, for one man to gain a lap. How, then, can it be a race? Think it over! It is actually a race for one mile stalled through a week.

The bicycle races in the Garden at that time created such excitement that they led to a boom in cycling. One of the greatest exponents of this sport was Jimmy Michael, a young Welchman, who had come over to the States. Michael was not five feet high, yet he could ride behind motor pace thirty-one miles an hour. There were many of these

riders, the principal ones besides Michael being Fred Titus, Edward McDuffee, Major Taylor and a number of Frenchmen. It was a dangerous pastime, and most of the men who followed it are now dead. But while the craze lasted it was so great that the organization which I conducted played to twenty-seven thousand dollars gate money at Coney Island in one day, fourteen thousand dollars in Boston and ten thousand dollars in Philadelphia.

With the decline of pugilism in New York, sport lovers looked around for another game to thrill them. Wrestling came into vogue and a gigantic Turk named Yousouf came here in charge of an old wrestler, one Anton Peiri. Peiri brought the Turk, who could not speak a word of English, around to see me, and after a good deal of discussion I signed a six-months' contract agreeing to pay Yousouf one thousand five hundred dollars a month and expenses, and he was to wrestle at any time and any place I directed. First I matched him against Roeber, the match to take place in Mad-

ison Square Garden. I made the mistake of not having any railing or rope around the ring, for after the wrestlers had been on the platform about ten minutes the Turk rushed Roeber, shoved him over into the audience and so lost the match. There were about nine thousand dollars in the house.

We next planned a tour of the country. At that time, Evan Lewis, who was known as the "strangler," was the terror of all the wrestlers. I made a match for the Turk to go to Chicago and meet the strangler. Now Yousouf was a very remarkable athlete. He never trained at all. After each match, he would eat two or three big steaks. He never took a bath, believing that in his dirt was his strength. One of the American trainers spilled some alcohol on him one day and started to rub him, but Yousouf sprang away from him in superstitious terror. The Turk relied on his great weight to wear his opponent out and he was the wonder of every American athlete who came into contact with him. Like many men

of his calling and caliber, he was cunningly distrustful. He would not put any money in the bank and insisted on being paid in French louis, which he carried in a belt around his waist.

On one trip that he made through the West with me he wrestled in Rochester on Monday night with a very hard opponent and won easily; he repeated his success the following night in Buffalo under similar conditions; and on Wednesday went to Cleveland and met Tom Jenkins, who was considered the best catch-as-catch-can wrestler in the United States, and defeated him after a vicious and awful battle. The first fall took nearly an hour and three-quarters, but the Turk threw Jenkins the second time in about thirty minutes, and then went to a restaurant and ate three steaks. I mention these facts to show the wonderful recuperative power of the man. From Cleveland, we took a train to Chicago, arriving there Thursday morning, and Friday night Yousouf met Evan Lewis, the famous

strangler, in the ring before about twenty thousand people. The receipts were over fifteen thousand dollars.

The Turk had never shown in any way that he knew anything about the strangle hold and we feared that Lewis would defeat him by that. The Lewis people got us to accept some man from the stock-yards as referee and thousands of dollars were bet that the strangler would defeat the Turk, but the Turk just walked over to Lewis and got a strangle hold on him standing up—and inside of three minutes had his opponent screaming for help. The referee, who was crooked, and who was in the ring for no other purpose than to help the Lewis people, declared the Turk disqualified for fouling and denounced it as a put-up game. Instantly the audience was in a riot. But I put up my hand and when quiet was restored I shouted, "All right! We will give them that match! Now we will wrestle to satisfy the public and allow them to get something for their money!" After a long harangue, we got the Lewis people to agree to another referee and the

Turk threw the famous strangler twice inside of six minutes.

Within twenty-four hours we defeated Charles Whitman, another famous wrestler, in Cincinnati, and then went back to New York for a return match with Roeber. I succeeded in getting Frank Sanger to rent me the Metropolitan Opera House for the match. The place was packed. All the beautiful boxes and seats were occupied by the sports of the town. The match started and the Turk was rapidly wearing Roeber out, when the latter, who was something of a boxer, quit wrestling and smashed the Turk in the face with his clenched fist. Instantly pandemonium reigned; seats were broken; and the beautiful opera-house looked like the center of a cyclone. Everything was swirling and raging and roaring; a mass of humanity struggled and shrieked and anathematized. I jumped into the ring and Bob Fitzsimmons, who was acting as Roeber's second and adviser, jumped in after me. Fitzsimmons grabbed hold of me and I hit him in the jaw. Then he recovered

—from his surprise more than anything else, I imagine—and made a rush at me and I expected to be killed the next minute. But just then a big Irish policeman jumped into the mêlée and shouted, “Bob, if you lay a hand on that boy, I’ll kill you!”

Fitzsimmons did not lay a hand on me.

By this time the Turk had about four thousand dollars in French louis saved up and sailed on *La Borgoyne* for France. There was a collision at sea and the ship foundered. Yousouf’s body was recovered about a month afterward. The fish had eaten away the belt and all his gold was gone! That was the end of the “Terrible Turk.”

By this time Klaw and Erlanger, Alf Hayman, Charles Frohman, Nixon and Zimmerman, and Rich and Harris got together to corral all the theaters in the United States and form what was known as the “theatrical syndicate.” I fought them for about two years, but as one after another of their opponents gave in, I presently surrendered and joined them. Then there was a great slump in the



Marc Klaw



ROE KAY/300

Abraham L. Erlanger

theatrical business—just before the beginning of the great boom which culminated in 1907. Everybody felt the depression. I was lucky, however, because I had a good money maker in *Way Down East*.

During the depression in the theater business the Horton law, legalizing bouts, was passed at Albany, and pugilism again began to occupy the attention of the New York public. This law legalized twenty-round bouts and almost every night thousands of persons attended the various athletic clubs, and again the pugilist and his manager were rolling in money.

And now it was announced that James J. Jeffries, who had acted as punching bag for Corbett at Carson City, had won a number of contests in San Francisco and was looked on as a coming man out there. Jeffries was put under the tutorship of William Delaney, who had always been Corbett's trainer, and was brought to New York to spar at the Lenox Athletic Club. He undertook to stop two men in ten rounds in one night. One of these was

Bob Armstrong, the colored man, and the other was Steve O'Donnell. In the first bout—with Armstrong—Jeffries broke his hand and was unable to go on with the second match. It was so announced, but as Jeffries left the ring he was hooted by the audience, because they thought he was a "quitter." I noticed, however, in this bout that the California boy had strength, youth, a wonderful left hand, and that he had improved remarkably since the affair at Carson. I followed him to his dressing-room and said, "Let me look at your hand."

They had cut the glove off and I found that the man had broken his hand very badly.

"What are you going to do?" said I, after a moment.

"I'm going back to California," said he; "to hell with New York!"

You see, his heart was broken.

But I saw that he had the makings of a champion in him and urged him to stay east. But he was pig-headed and went back to the coast.

The boxing game went along beautifully in New York and I had so many inducements to go back into it that one day I said to my wife. "I know where there is a man that can be made champion of the world and I think I can get Fitzsimmons to fight him. I can make a lot of money. Will you let me go back into the business?"

You see, the theatrical business was not very good, and she thought a while, and then she said, "All right!"

So I pulled some wires and got control of an enormous building down at Coney Island—Bauer's Pavilion—which was afterward known as the Coney Island Athletic Club. I interested some local people, two of whom were friends of Fitzsimmons, gave them some stock, incorporated the club, had myself made president of it and started in to operate.

Immediately the crowds who were running the clubs in New York found it impossible to compete with us and started in to use their influence with the police commission—a four-headed anomaly at that time—to have us put

out of business. You see, these clubs were controlled by Tammany Hall politicians and they realized that if I succeeded in opening a building that could hold between ten and twelve thousand people Coney Island would get all the star contests. Besides myself, the principal stockholder in the Coney Island Athletic Club was a Brooklyn politician named Alexander Brown, which was important—as you shall see. The police board had a meeting and failed to grant us a license. They didn't refuse in so many words—they simply didn't act on our application. It looked like a "starving out" process. Another meeting of the board—and still no license! It looked as if we were to be tied up with this big building and fifteen thousand dollars rent to pay. After the third meeting of the police board, during which no action was taken, I was "tipped off" that certain New York politicians stood ready to take over our lease and rid us of all risk.

By this time Brown's fighting blood was up and so was mine! He took me over to see Hugh McLoughlin, the Brooklyn "boss." We

met him in the back room of a café where he made his headquarters, and Brown explained to the boss that he would never have gone into the scheme at all if it had not been on McLoughlin's assurance that the license would be granted. After a very short conversation the old man exclaimed, "The license will be granted at the next meeting of the police board or there will be a split in the Democratic party in the state of New York!"

At the next meeting of the board we got our license all right!

Jeffries had gone away into the mountains hunting bear, but I located him at Tachapaha, California, and wired him: "If you will come east under contract to me, I will agree to make you champion inside of one year. Am quite certain Fitzsimmons will agree to meet you!"

I also wired him money to pay his fare to New York, and he and Delaney consented to come.

I then began to work on Fitzsimmons. I had his friends at the club tell him that I was bringing a man named Jeffries on for him to

knock out, that the California boy was a big dub, and that Fitzsimmons would take no chances in going into the ring with him. By this time Fitzsimmons had got short of cash and, like myself, had noted the fact that a lot of money was being made at the boxing contests in and around New York. I dealt with Fitzsimmons through his brother-in-law, Martin Julian, who was a very obstinate and pig-headed customer. Finally, after weeks and weeks of conniving, scheming, consultations and meetings, I got lanky Bob to agree to meet Jeffries at the Coney Island Athletic Club for the championship of the world, provided I gave him sixty-five per cent. of the boxers' share of the receipts—win or lose. "After all," said he rather indulgently, "that fellow is only coming on here to get licked and get a little money, and will be satisfied with a few thousand dollars!"

Take notice of the fact that Fitzsimmons had never seen Jeffries!

They started in to train, but even then I was not sure Fitzsimmons would go into the ring,

because every once in a while we had reports about him playing with a baby lion and were afraid the beast might bite his hand off before the match was due. Again, he was constantly making new demands, but we satisfied them all and finally it came to the time for the contest.

This had been the first real championship match that had ever been held in New York City. In consequence there was an enormous amount of interest in the event and the sale of seats was somewhere in the neighborhood of seventy thousand dollars. It was a terribly rainy night and the trains were stopped or we would have taken in over one hundred thousand dollars.

As the date for the fight drew near, I began to get a line on Jeffries. He came from Pennsylvania Dutch stock, was very cautious, very suspicious, and in my opinion lacked the gameness of the other men of the same type with whom I had come in contact. Notwithstanding the fact that he had beaten quite a number of good men before he came east, he was still very young and inexperienced. I

was afraid that when he got in the ring, the coolness and experience of Fitzsimmons would count; that before Jeffries got through with his fright Bob would have him down and out. So I tried a little trick that Corbett had taught me.

At about five o'clock on the evening of the fight Delaney and myself had Jeffries dress up in a little hotel he was stopping at on Surf Avenue and we took him out on the Coney Island Boulevard and walked him up toward Brooklyn. He was as nervous as a cat, very surly and lacked all the assurance that I had been accustomed to seeing in Corbett. Nevertheless, he was a good pupil, and so I arranged this little scheme.

"Now," said I, "when you go to the clubhouse to-night you'll find that your dressing-room is in a little outhouse right across the hallway from the room that Fitzsimmons will dress in. When you get there, you are to strip and lie out on the table to be rubbed down. Then I will cross over into Fitzsimmons' room and will call Julian out into the

hallway and will start to argue loudly with him about the rules to be followed in the contest, principally as to whether you are to break clean or whether each man is to take care of himself in the breakaways."

There are two ways of doing this. When the men clinched, the referee would say, "Break!" and the men would step back themselves. The other way was that they would clinch and each man had to take care of himself. If a man could strike a quick blow in the clinch, it was all right. There was much dispute as to the Marquis of Queensbury rules in this respect. In the Corbett and Sullivan fight, the referee said, "Break!" and walked between them. As it is now, the men were compelled to care for themselves in breaking away, which was good for the man that was not clever, since he could hit here, there and everywhere while he was clinched.

I continued my instructions to Jeffries. "I will call Julian out in the hallway and loudly ask about these points. Fitzsimmons will hear me, the sound of my voice will set him on

edge and he will probably come out into the hallway and engage in the discussion. Then I will say to Fitzsimmons, 'What is the use of you and me arguing this; come in and talk it over with Jeffries.' And then I will usher him into your room. He will see you for the first time and your appearance will be a shock to him."

In fact, stripped and in his fighting costume, Jeffries was a dangerous-looking brute. He had long shaggy hair on his breast, big thick jaws and all the other attributes of the ideal prize-fighter.

"When I get Fitzsimmons into the room," I went on, "I will start to argue with him about the rules, and after I have got along a way, you jump off the table, grab him by the back of the neck, and show him the way you understand the fight will be conducted. Don't let him get a word in edgewise. Just shove him over against the wall—and that will be all that's necessary!"

Jeffries had been listening like a bulldog,

and when I finished speaking he said, "Do you think this can be done?"

"We'll try it," said I. "It will put fear into his heart and instead of your going into the ring scared, he will go in scared."

The whole thing worked out perfectly. Night came, and at the clubhouse Fitzsimmons came to his room just as I had expected. I called Julian out into the hallway and started to argue the rules with him, and, as I had predicted, Fitzsimmons came rushing out and butted in. I called him into Jeffries' room to argue the matter with my principal, and Jeffries did just as I had instructed him to do. He jumped off his perch, rushed over to Fitzsimmons, started in to show him how he understood the rules, grabbed him and literally tossed him over into a corner. And the Cornishman walked out a few minutes later, cowed, demoralized, whipped in the dressing-room before he entered the ring!

When the two men faced each other in the ring, Fitzsimmons was by far the more nerv-

ous man of the two. The episode of the dressing-room had not only scared him, but had put confidence into Jeffries. The battle was really held in the dressing-room.

The fight began, but not much was done in the first round. Jeffries sparred most of the time. At the beginning of the second, he did something that I had never seen done before—he hit Fitzsimmons with a straight left and knocked him out. It was all over then. Fitzsimmons got up with difficulty, realizing that he was up against a wonderful opponent. At the end of the sixth round Fitzsimmons landed what he'd been trying for all these rounds to land—his famous solar plexus punch. He hit Jeffries right in the proper spot, but it never feezed him a bit. Fitzsimmons was greatly surprised at this, but quite astounded when he saw Jeffries, apparently undisturbed, walk back to his corner at the end of the sixth round. His great blow had not worked. Fitzsimmons walked back to his corner greatly dejected. Much depended on him. At all of these contests there was a tremendous amount of money

bet, and now they were laying three or four to one on Fitzsimmons.

As I was passing through the audience earlier in the night, Jesse Lewisohn stopped me and told me that he had bet twenty thousand dollars on Fitzsimmons, and asked me what I thought of it. I told him that Fitzsimmons would be beaten that night, and Lewisohn hedged out twenty thousand dollars between that time and the time the men entered the ring!

Fitzsimmons was beaten, Jeffries was champion, and the same old story happened again. Jeffries, the victor, became unpopular, and Fitzsimmons, for the first time in his life, knew what popularity was. We put Jeffries in a play called *The Man from the West*, and, although he was a fairly good actor, the public would not go to see him. Presently we took him to England, but it was impossible to overcome the British prejudice against what they considered an anomaly, if not a paradox—a prize-fighter playing legitimate drama! They would have none of Jeffries. But he got re-

venge on the public over there by knocking out an Englishman every night. He knocked out thirty Englishmen in thirty nights.

Jeffries would say, "How much in the house to-night, Bill?" and I would say, "About five pounds."

Then he would say, "See if you can't get two or three more of these bluffers."

They were mixed-ale fighters and Jeffries certainly made short work of them.

On another occasion I saw Jeffries make short work of a man. It was in Detroit, and they had put a dangerous fellow up against him. We were getting one thousand two hundred dollars for the night. It was the only time I ever saw him do the knock-out business. The bell rang and he walked over to his man—just one shot, and it was over in a minute!

While the English people would not have Jeffries at all, the Parisians went wild over him. He appeared there and they paid him seven thousand five hundred francs for the week.

To switch back to the main line of the story,

Tom Sharkey, who had fought a draw with Jeffries in San Francisco, was now matched to fight him again. But Jeffries, like his predecessors, developed ring fear. In fact, so eager was he to avoid the fight that a week before it was to take place he claimed to have broken something in his elbow, and the thing had to be postponed. But it was no use; fighting was the only way he could make any money, and notwithstanding his efforts to sidestep the fight, we got him into the ring.

In this contest moving pictures were taken for the first time at night. The American Biograph Company undertook the job. Enormous lights were hung right down over the ring and the temperature while the match was going on—for twenty-five rounds—was a hundred and ten. No other two men in the world could have stood it. But these fighters were wonderful specimens of brawn and muscle. Sharkey was small and stocky and Jeffries was built just like a big Newfoundland dog.

We had attempted to take pictures of the Fitzsimmons-Jeffries contest at Coney Island.

We had paid a man five thousand dollars to make the experiment with the lights. But at the last moment the machine failed and we lost our money.

The Biograph Company, however, succeeded, but at a terrible cost to the men who had to fight under such conditions. It was the first time a motion picture had ever been taken by artificial light. Since then the use of such a light for this purpose has become very great. The invention of the Cooper-Hewitt light and the Kliegel light has made it possible to obtain perfect daylight in the darkest room. In fact sometimes better effects can be got by the use of this lighting than from sunlight. It is very hard on the actor to work under this artificial light. It is the cause of many operations on the eyes. In fact, many motion-picture actors lose their sight because of it. The light we used at the time of the fight contest was more of a white light. You can moderate the Cooper-Hewitt light. It gives a more natural light to the face than our

light did. And, strange to say, the camera went wrong at the most important time, during the last round of the contest. Jeffries' glove fell off in this round and he fought two or three minutes with a bare fist, which was claimed to be a violation of the rules.

It was a wonderful battle! There was no knock-out; not even a knock-down. The decision was given to Jeffries on points. Nobody could have complained much if the match had been declared a draw, as Sharkey put up a wonderful fight—so wonderful that after he was taken back to his dressing-room that night it was found that two of his ribs were broken. He traveled in a plaster cast for a year afterward.

After this match Corbett approached me and begged to be allowed to box Jeffries.

"I know I have not got a chance, Bill," said he, "but I'm in trouble and need the money. We will draw a big house, and the loser's end will be good enough for me."

So, for old times' sake, I made the match.

Jeffries resented it, however. He knew of my long friendship for Corbett, and feared some kind of a job. His suspicions were justified, in a way, although I was innocent. For it transpired in a month or so that my old friend Corbett had deceived me. For six months before this he had been working quietly in a gymnasium, restoring himself to condition. You see, through lack of exercise in the saloon business, he had become "run down," and everybody thought he was a physical wreck. When the match was made, Corbett promptly left for Lakewood and there he did the marvelous—he remade himself! He was thirty-six, I think.

Jeffries heard the rumors of Corbett's wonderful rejuvenation, and became more and more suspicious. He was training at my house at Allenhurst, and during the last week he refused to eat the food that was put before him until some one else had tasted it. Jeffries' attitude—in this and other matters—caused a decided coolness between us. His suspicion was so groundless, so unreasonable. He owed

everything to me and I owed nothing to him. But it was his nature to be suspicious—that's all.

By this time Jeffries had got an idea that he was a wonderful boxer. He proposed to beat Corbett, who was supposed to be the finest boxer in the ring, at his own game; that is, outbox him at long range. You see, Thomas Ryan, the middleweight champion, who had almost Corbett's renown as a boxer, had taught Jeffries how to spar, and had persuaded the big fellow that he was capable of going into the ring and defeating Corbett on a scientific proposition.

Strange to say, the receipts for this contest were the smallest of any big battle—of the kind—that had ever been pulled off in New York—some thirty-five thousand dollars. The rumor had got into the air that the whole thing was to be faked, and the public believed it. Furthermore, they could not see how Corbett had a chance. But to show how square the whole thing was, I made bets on the fight at the end of the first, second, fourth and tenth

rounds, and when the gong sounded finally, I stood to lose seven thousand five hundred dollars that I had bet on my man. In fact, I thought Jeffries would win in one round!

When the men got into the ring Corbett's condition amazed everybody. He looked as good, if not better, than when he first fought Sullivan. Jeffries, following the instructions of Ryan, started to spar, but Corbett made him look like a novice—made him look a bigger fool than he'd made Sullivan look some years before. He jabbed and punched him when and where he pleased, and about the end of the tenth round got himself together and hit Jeffries one on the point of the jaw. When he did that, the whole giant frame shook, and I was afraid that he was going down. But that was the end of Corbett's speed. He held his own up to the sixteenth round, and then he began to fail. It was youth against age. Along about the tenth round, when Jeffries had the worst of it, I spoke to him in his corner and told him to stop sparring. Ryan, Corbett's second, told me to get out of the corner.

I did so, but quietly sent for a captain of police who was an old friend of mine and who came and sat behind me in the corner. The twentieth round came and Jeffries was still sparring. Then I got a well-grounded hint from the other side of the ring that if the contest went twenty-five rounds Referee White would declare it a draw. Such a thing would mean absolute ruin to Jeffries, so at the end of the twentieth round I jumped into the corner and said to him, "You will have to fight. Shut your eyes and hit him! You can see that he is stalling you!"

Ryan interfered again, but I indicated my police captain friend and told the trainer that if he didn't keep his mouth shut I would have him thrown out of the club.

In one more round it was over. Following my advice, Jeffries bored right in and licked Corbett—knocked him out cold! I was the first one to pick Corbett up! "Sorry, Jim," said I, "but it's business!"

About this time Governor Roosevelt signed a bill repealing the Horton law. He left it

open for three or four months, however, and during that period there was a great rush for contests. Some politicians got control of Madison Square Garden and for the first time that vast auditorium was used for pugilism. Enormous receipts were taken in. Corbett and McCoy fought what was said to be a fake fight, which drew sixty-six thousand dollars. The Fitzsimmons-Sharkey contest had realized something in the neighborhood of fifty thousand dollars, while the Fitzsimmons-Ruhlin match drew forty thousand dollars.

But Jeffries would not take on anybody else.

Once again professional pugilism went out of business in New York. The men who were promoting the fights, because of their greed, killed the goose that laid the golden egg. The Corbett-McCoy farce was an awful blow to the sport. The nerve of these two fighters doing nothing but a friendly sparring bout for sixty-six thousand dollars was more than the public would stand for. Night after night fake fights were pulled off all over the city, and would probably be going on now if Governor Roose-

velt had not signed the bill. I have no doubt that the governor's act was due entirely to the way the sport had degenerated, for he himself was an enthusiastic athlete and boxer.

Through all my experience with Jeffries I did not travel with him at all. Therefore it did not interfere with my business. I was making six or eight productions a year on Broadway. It was not an uncommon thing for me to manage a championship contest at Coney Island one night and make a first-class production on Broadway the next. And so my reputation as a theater man was growing, in spite of my connection with sporting events.

The next man that got after Jeffries was Gus Ruhlin, who also had fought a draw with the champion in the early days at San Francisco. The new match was brought about in a curious way and served to show how high-brow art is not above letting low-brow art pull it out of a hole—financially. It seems that the public-spirited citizens of Cincinnati had decided to give an immense musical festival, and that they had lost about fifty thousand dol-

lars on the enterprise. The Sangerfest Building, which had been especially put up for this affair, was a large circular structure, admirably suited to a boxing contest. So one of the aforesaid public-spirited citizens of Cincinnati conceived that it would be a wonderful idea for them to recoup their losses by bringing Jeffries and Ruhlin to Cincinnati for a twenty-round battle. Julius Fleischman, the mayor, and prominent among the *sangerfest* people, gave the leading citizens his word that he would permit just this one boxing contest in order for them to get even. You see, there was a law out there that prohibited a prize-fight, but not a boxing match.

However, when they came to me about the contest I said, "You will have to give us five thousand dollars in cash to cover lost time and training expenses."

They agreed to my terms, deposited the money and we went there. But no sooner did the thing get out than there was a great hulla-baloo. The aforesaid public-spirited men had reckoned without the governor. Nash was

chief executive at the time and he declared that the contest should not take place in the state of Ohio. The *sangerfest* people insisted that it should, and engaged the finest counsel in town. We were arrested and tried for aiding, abetting or promoting a boxing bout in violation of the state law. Governor Harmon appeared for the prosecution. We had a perfectly good-natured trial, the whole thing hinging on what was the difference between a boxing contest and a prize-fight. Jeffries and Ruhlin stood up and gave the learned gentlemen of the law all kinds of exhibitions of passes and blows and counters and breakaways. I was the last witness, and it seems that the question had resolved itself down to this—that in a prize-fight, the men hit hard and with malicious intent, willing to disable, and even taking the chance of killing their opponent, while a boxing contest was a scientific exhibition, with no intent on either side to maim or hurt. Madden, who was representing Ruhlin, had claimed that the men were to go into the ring good-naturedly, and he told, in a perfectly ri-

diculous and suave way, that it was a friendly affair. But when I got on the stand the judge turned to me and said, "I want you to answer me as man to man. If Jeffries goes into the ring to meet Ruhlin, will his blows be friendly or will he hit as hard as he can?"

I said, "He is going into the ring to do just as much damage as he can, and he is going to try to hurt Mr. Ruhlin just as much as he can!"

On that the judge decided that it was a prize-fight and not a boxing contest; the *sangerfest* committee handed us five thousand dollars; we shook the dust of Cincinnati from our feet; a few months later I dropped out of the game!

After the stopping of boxing in New York City by the passage of the Horton Law, Jeffries went back to San Francisco, where ring contests had become immensely popular. There he came under the management of a young Californian named James Cofforth.

Jeffries met Fitzsimmons for a second time at San Francisco, July 25, 1902. For the first

six rounds it looked as if Jeffries had met his Waterloo, for instead of being outboxed by the big Californian, Fitzsimmons showed remarkable power and simply pounded Jeffries into a jelly in the early part of the contest. But at the end of eight rounds Jeffries knocked the old man out. Fitzsimmons at this time was about forty-three years old.

Then Corbett asked for another chance at Jeffries and the match was arranged to take place in San Francisco, August 14, 1903. In this match Jeffries really outboxed the "Pompadour" and won in ten rounds.

Tired of the ring, Jeffries announced his retirement and settled in Los Angeles. But about this time a Canadian named Thomas Burns challenged him and Jeffries waived the championship to him.

Burns then went to England and defeated everybody there, but he was afraid to meet a black man named Jack Johnson who had followed him to England. So Burns immediately jumped to Australia. Then Johnson accepted five thousand dollars and expenses to go to

Australia and meet Burns. The contract was made with an Australian named Hugh McIntosh. The bout took place in Australia. Johnson defeated Burns in thirteen rounds. Then Johnson returned to America and commenced to taunt Jeffries, who was living in affluence and peace in Los Angeles. He challenged him. The big Californian by this time had grown very stout; he weighed over three hundred pounds. But he could not stand for a black man's taunts.

Johnson was misbehaving himself and making a lot of enemies and the public wanted him to be beaten. They felt that Jeffries was the only one who could do it. I met Jeffries at the American Theater in New York where he was giving training exhibitions. I looked at him in astonishment. I said, "Do you really intend to meet Johnson?"

"Yes," said he.

"If you do, you'll regret it as long as you live, for Johnson will surely beat you," said I.

Jeffries never spoke to me after that.

Then came the battle between Jeffries and Johnson at Carson, July 4, 1910. It drew two

hundred and fifty thousand dollars in cash, the largest gate receipts ever drawn by a pugilistic contest. Jeffries should never have entered the ring. He was in no condition to do so. It is more than likely that Johnson promised to stand for defeat. If so, he broke his word; he double-crossed Jeffries. Johnson was as afraid as a snake in the first round, but when he found he was facing only a shadow of Jeffries' former self he played with him like a kitten for thirteen rounds.

Everybody remembers the bitter race feeling that followed the Johnson victory at Carson. The white people of the country were bitterly disappointed, the blacks were unwisely exultant. This feeling manifested itself throughout the whole country the night following the fight in innumerable individual encounters and small-sized riots.

As a result, many states passed laws prohibiting the meeting of a white man and a black man in the ring. And subsequently a national law was passed prohibiting even a motion-picture reproduction of any such a mixed-color contest in the United States. That explains

why the pictures of the Willard-Johnson fight at Havana were never shown in the United States.

Every one knows how Johnson's victory turned his head; how he married a white woman; how that unfortunate creature committed suicide; how he married another white woman; how he violated the white slave laws in Chicago and was arrested and held under thirty thousand dollars bail. Every one knows how the black champion jumped his bond and went to Europe. All of which brought upon his foolish head a storm of public abuse.

In both Paris and London Johnson carried on the same kind of wild orgies that had made him so disreputable here. He finally reached the end of his finances and in a vain attempt to recoup himself made the match with Frank Moran, who he thought would prove an easy mark. I was in Paris at the time and cabled the following account of the fight to the *New York American*:

“Paris, June 27, 1914.—It was a second-rate



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Jess Willard (on right) and his manager



UNDERWOOD & UNDERWOOD

Jack Johnson

exhibition between two mixed-ale fighters. That's my opinion.

"Johnson and Moran were misnamed fighters to-night.

"Had the affair been held in New York the spectators would have stopped the disgraceful bout in ten rounds. Not one effective blow was struck by either man during the entire contest.

"There was never the suspicion of a jar, much less a knock-down.

"The spectacle of a world's champion, superior in weight, science, experience and strength, clinging to a smaller antagonist, expressing in every move and appealing glance his yearning for the final tap of the gong—this was Johnson in the last three rounds.

"Moran did his best in the eighteenth and nineteenth rounds to gain at least a draw, but his very exertions so tired him as to make his appearance in the twentieth round pitiful.

"Moran was gone, staggering about the ring like a drunken man swinging blindly at thin air.

“Johnson was in even worse condition, his sole efforts were to lean on the groping white man. Had either of them been even good second-raters, a knock-out would have been inevitable.

“Johnson was so tired that he completely forgot even his ideas of defense, and it was only Moran’s exhaustion that saved the negro from being knocked out.

“Johnson has literally defended the title successfully—a feat never before accomplished by a man of his age in the history of the ring. But this is all he accomplished.

“Never once did he inflict punishment on Moran to make that worthy in the least disturbed.

“A straight left and the old-time right uppercut in clinches were all Johnson had to offer and the results of these blows were merely abrasions on the left eye and the bridge of the nose.

“Johnson entered Tod Sloan’s saloon this afternoon and announced he had \$10,000 to bet

at even money that he would knock out Moran in ten rounds.

“When I announced my willingness to take the bet, Johnson said he didn’t have the money with him but would go get it. He went, but he didn’t come back.

“My opinion is, the reason Johnson was able to break every tradition of the prize ring by staying twenty rounds to-night is that Johnson is the greatest defensive fighter the world has ever seen. . . Naturally it takes less out of a man to stand still and let the other man do the work than actually to fight. Even so, there are half a dozen white men and at least one black man who could have put this waiting champion to the floor for the count to-night.

“It must be remembered Moran inflicted not one telling blow, yet the negro could hardly stand up after the last round.

“Carpentier proved a very fair referee, but in my opinion could have called the bout a draw without doing Johnson the slightest injustice. Not so much that Johnson earned a

draw, but that Johnson most certainly earned nothing.

“This is what I base my opinion on for a ‘dishonorable draw.’

“This suits the fight better than any other term I can think of.

“Even Paris, fight mad as it is, has had its fill of Johnson as a result of to-night’s disgraceful showing.

“I want to go on record now as saying that the next man who meets the negro will either knock him out or suffer ignominy of the most humiliating kind. Johnson was in as good condition as a man of his age could hope to be, but ten rounds is as far as he can go well.

“Moran’s condition was all that I expected, but the poor boy doesn’t know what hands are for.

“The pictures will prove this the most disgraceful contest for a world’s championship ever held.”

Johnson owed so much money in Paris that the receipts that were taken in for the Johnson-

Moran fight were seized upon by the various French creditors and neither he nor Moran ever received a cent. That left him still in need of money and rendered it necessary for him to meet some other man. Numerous promoters in the United States commenced to figure on the possibility of bringing him back to this country, but the government would not allow it.

The promoters finally picked a big cowboy named Jesse Willard to meet Johnson. Willard was the biggest man who ever appeared in the prize ring. He was six feet five inches and weighed about two hundred and forty pounds. He was a clean liver, temperate, raised in the open air.

In arranging for the battle, Johnson insisted he was to receive thirty thousand dollars. Willard was willing to take whatever he could get. An attempt was made to bring the bout off at Juarez, Mexico. But the United States government threatened that if Johnson came to Juarez he would be seized and brought back here for trial, as the president of Mexico had agreed to give him up. Finally it was ar-

ranged that the contest was to take place in Havana.

We all know what happened.

I was at French Lick at the time of this event and sent the following wire to *The American*:

“French Lick, Ind., April 5, 1915.—‘Jack’ Johnson made the finest fight of his career at Havana to-day, when at the age of thirty-eight he met a giant ten years his junior, possessed of more strength and a sort of rugged science that was bound to tell in a long battle.

“Johnson, in forcing the fighting throughout and succeeding in staying twenty-six rounds at his age with a man of Willard’s size, proved his gameness and boxing ability and the right to have held the championship title, which he so loved. All talk of ‘fake’ is ridiculous and only lessens the credit of a fine victory by a clean, decent and honest athlete.

“I so surely predicted Johnson’s defeat: First, because youth must win over age in a contest where strength applies; second, I knew

that Willard was just the type of man to do the job.

"We had nothing but the bare result here at French Lick. I venture to state, however, that to-day's narrative shows that the uppercut served of little purpose against Willard. Frank Moran blocked it last summer in Paris. I saw that match, and Moran would have won if the contest had gone forty-five rounds.

"Willard at his best.

"Johnson in his whole career never met as good a man as Willard was to-day. Jeffries never should have met him, and would not have done so but for the great financial inducements offered. In his best days Jeffries would have made mincemeat of Johnson.

"Boxers at their best, like Fitzsimmons, Corbett, Slavin, Maher, Jim Hall and others, would have beaten him. Johnson was the greatest master of defense that the ring has known in my time, but he lacked attack.

"Johnson picked them carefully, and built up his record with fine ability, but this time he picked wrong. He was sadly in need of money,

driven from one country to another, constantly in fear of arrest. Never having seen Willard, and knowing that 'Gunboat' Smith, whom Carpentier had defeated in London, had obtained a decision over Willard, he marked him easy, and so went to his Waterloo.

"If Johnson had ever seen Willard perform in the ring, the championship title would still be in his hands, for he was proud of it, and I think he would die to keep it.

"Victory boost to game.

"I think Willard's victory a great art of self-defense. I have known him to be an honest, kindly, sincere fellow, and I can safely predict that while he holds his title he will be a credit to the game.

"Johnson was the peer of his race, and in defeating him Willard has ended a dangerous chapter in heavyweight pugilistic history that should never be rewritten.

"The fight to-day was the longest heavy championship fight under Marquis of Queensbury rules on record."

So passed Jack Johnson, a black man who might have done his race more good than Booker T. Washington or anybody else. If Johnson had had the executive ability, the mental caliber, the nature or the disposition of Corbett, he would have gone down in history as one of the greatest men the negro race has ever produced. A negro never could hope to be president, governor, or even mayor. But next to that, to be the best fighter in the world, the supreme physical organ of the world, was a great heritage to be handed to a black man. Johnson unquestionably had a good brain. If he had pursued the same course as Corbett and stuck to his own race, if he had not flown into the face of justice and made himself an out-cast from his own country, he might have had anything in the world from the whites and the blacks! But no! He failed to grasp his opportunity, and his race has been compelled to bear with him the burden of the obloquy he has incurred.

After the fight at Havana, Willard returned

to the United States. He was met with open arms. He traveled with a circus for a whole summer, earning from one to two thousand dollars a day, and finally arranged a contest with Frank Moran, who had fought Johnson in Paris, to take place at Madison Square Garden in ten rounds, this being the limit allowed by the laws of New York State.

I saw the contest. If it had been fought to a finish, Moran would have won. It was the tamest battle between two heavyweights that I have ever seen. Moran did all the fighting. Right after the event I prophesied that should Willard ever come into the ring again with a man anywhere near his class, he would surely be defeated. I argued that because of his enormous weight and the fact that he will probably take on more fat, which would bring him up to over three hundred pounds, it would be impossible for him to reduce himself to efficient fighting weight again.

Verily, it seems the way of the prize-fighter is not always a happy one. In few cases has its end justified the promise of its beginning.

Boxing men rarely die rich. On the contrary, most of them die paupers. The trouble is, most of them come of poor parents and, uneducated in the use of money, when prosperity comes it knocks them off their pins.

Sullivan made considerable money, although he went broke many times. Long after his pugilistic career was over he married a woman who has a frugal turn of mind. She keeps the big fellow working and saving. She has stopped his excesses, rejuvenated him, and he is now a good citizen and a fairly prosperous man. For a time he played around in small vaudeville houses, where he managed to make a very good living. He is now preaching temperance with great success on the Chautauqua Circuit.

Corbett is fairly well fixed. His mind turned to real estate, and with one or two exceptions his deals have been successful. Out of the profits of the Sullivan battle, on the advice of some of his influential New York friends, he bought a piece of property on Jerome Avenue and paid twenty-nine thou-

sand dollars for it. But after a while he got tired of waiting for the town to grow out to the roadhouse that he'd purchased, and sold the place for about seventeen thousand dollars. Since then there was a boom in the Bronx, and the same property is now valued at about one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars. Later on he purchased a piece of property at Bayside, Long Island, for ten thousand dollars. This property is now worth forty thousand dollars. Corbett still makes a handsome living in vaudeville.

Jeffries is the richest of them all. Before and after and in connection with his battle with Johnson he cleaned up at least two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. He married a German girl, and she takes good care of every dollar that he lays his hands on. He is one of the town curiosities of Los Angeles, where he lives and runs a saloon. Jeffries' father, who was a strolling hallelujah shouting preacher, and his mother live with the ex-champion, and are well cared for.

Fitzsimmons is broke—probably always will

he broke. It was easy come, easy go, with him. I saw him the other day in one of the up-town cafés, and it was very evident that he was short of this world's goods.

One of the saddest sights on Broadway these days is the broken-down, poverty-stricken condition of a wonderful boxer who came from Australia, met all comers in this country, and was simply a sensation. I refer to "Young Griffo." Those who remember him will admit that he was probably the most wonderful master of the art of self-defense that was ever born. With no strength, no punching ability, he would, week after week, meet men twice as strong and a great deal heavier than himself and get the verdict through his science alone. He is now a broken-down wreck—colorless and sometimes coatless, he walks up and down the Rialto, a frightful sight indeed!

Another one—not quite so bad—who is still in evidence along the "White Lights" is Young Corbett—no relation to "Jim"—whose sensational victory over Terry McGovern made him champion. He, too, has gone

down the sad road that leads to forgetfulness.

Jim Hall has gone away, and nobody knows whether he is alive or dead. He has nothing and is little better than a tramp. Charley Mitchell I saw at Brighton, England, last summer—a wreck. I doubt that he will live another year. He has gone through every dollar he ever made. Billy Delaney is dead, and Connie McVey has just now been made stage doorkeeper at one of my Forty-eighth Street theaters.

Frank Slavin is a rich man off in the Klondike. Billy Muldoon runs a famous health resort in Westchester. Charles Kid McCoy will always be able to take care of himself, as he is wise and a good business man.

VII

AFTER our experience with the *sangerfest* people in Cincinnati I quit pugilism for good and all. There was nothing in it for me. I verily believe, if I had never entered this field, I would have been much farther along in my theatrical career, since devotion to pugilism not only took up a vast deal of my time, but being identified with it impaired my prestige as a producer of high-class plays. As far as the money I made in pugilism is concerned, it was a matter of "quick come, quick go."

I determined to confine my efforts to the theatrical business proper, that is, the production of plays and the management of playhouses. But two things occurred which gave promise of so great profits as temporarily to divert me from this purpose.

When the St. Louis World's Fair was being projected by Governor Francis and other

prominent citizens, they were approached by Captain A. N. Lewis, a British officer, who suggested to them that a reproduction of the battles of the Boer War, which had just ended, would make a big feature of the Fair. And the captain offered, provided they capitalize him, to go to South Africa, collect the war heroes from both sides—Dutch and English—and bring them to St. Louis and make a show out of them. This sounded good, and a number of St. Louis business men, headed by a Mr. Wall, of the Meyer drug concern, got together and delegated Lewis to go to South Africa and carry out his idea.

Lewis was a man of wonderful imagination, but little executive ability. He hired a ship at Cape Town, put his four or five hundred heroes on board and then found that, through some misunderstanding with his principals, he had run short of money. However, the captain of the ship, believing Lewis' story, took pity on him and brought the entire outfit to the United States in pawn. When they arrived the St. Louis people paid the pawn

money, released them from captivity and brought them on to the Fair Grounds.

Among the heroes that Lewis succeeded in bringing over here for this show purpose was General Cronje, who was unquestionably the great hero of the Boer War. Also he brought General Viljoen, who is at present figuring in the troubles in Mexico, and who, in fact, was one of the mainstays of the late President Madero. Another was Captain Jack Hendon, who had been charged by Lord Roberts with dynamiting English hospital trains. There were at least two hundred Boers and two hundred Englishmen in the outfit, but beyond Captain Lewis and Major Danby the historical celebrities were all furnished by the Dutch.

As Lewis had predicted, this outfit became at once the great, big, original feature of the Exposition. It even surpassed in interest the Philippine exhibit where hundreds of American men and women used to assemble each day to watch the natives burn a dog alive and eat it. Almost immediately, however, the government put a stop to this practise.

So great was the success of the miniature Boer War that it became the talk of the country, and my attention was called to it by Mr. Orlando Harriman, brother of the late E. H. Harriman. Mr. Harriman had an option on all of the then swamp land that lay between the Brighton Beach Hotel and the Manhattan Beach Hotel at Coney Island. He told me that if I would help him get control of the "Boer War" he would buy the land and we would install it there as a summer attraction. I told him that if I went into any scheme like that I would have to have a half interest in the land as well as in the show. To this he agreed. So we did fill in the marsh and we did install the "Boer War." And the way of our doing it was as follows:

We paid four hundred and fifty thousand dollars for the property. On this we left a mortgage of two hundred thousand dollars and borrowed two hundred thousand dollars more on a second mortgage. Harriman's commission for selling the land—he was the agent—was fifty thousand dollars. The difference

between the sum of the two mortgages and the amount paid for the land was represented in Harriman's commission. To make the transaction technically correct I borrowed a certified check of fifty thousand dollars from my bank, which made up the amount to be paid. Then we were handed back Harriman's commission—fifty thousand dollars—and I re-deposited it in the bank that had loaned me the certified check. So we came into possession of this land without putting up a nickel!

But when, after putting through the real estate deal, I went to St. Louis to carry out the Boer War end of the transaction, I found that Mr. Wall—the head of the great drug firm—had developed mighty ambitions as a showman. He figured out that if the Boer War was such a great success in St. Louis, he could take it through the South and West—a la Buffalo Bill and the Barnum circus—during the following winter and summer, and reap a rich harvest of shekels. This, of course, put a damper on my scheme. But I reconnoitered a bit and found out two very

important things. First, that Mr. Wall and Captain Lewis were at loggerheads; and second, that Lewis had made a contract with General Cronje that was to begin immediately the Fair was over. Now, Cronje was the star of the whole proposition. He appeared daily in the show, rode around the track and over to a miniature Lord Roberts and surrendered as he did in the real war. Without this great man as a figurehead, it was clear that the show would have no value at all. Lewis was to pay the old gentleman one thousand five hundred dollars a month and his wife twenty dollars a week. So I made a combination with Lewis and then approached Wall with the scheme that he should bring the Boer War to Brighton Beach the following summer. But the idea of taking the outfit through the South had become an obsession with this very excellent drug man, and I found that I could make no deal with him at all. My experience as a showman told me that such a move on Wall's part meant nothing but ruin and that if I waited until he had tried his scheme out I



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General Cronje
(seated with his wife)



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General Viljoen

could make my own terms—which ultimately came true.

Meantime Lewis had got hold of Viljoen also, and the whole affair was left in a most chaotic condition. Everything was up in the air. To make matters worse, there was constant danger of a row between the Boers and the English. They had to keep the two enemies apart. Any night there was apt to be a real war and ten or fifteen killed. The principal objection the English soldiers had to the whole arrangement under which they were working was that Captain Hendon, who had been brought over without their knowledge, was employed around the show in a business capacity. Hendon, they claimed, had been the means of killing hundreds of Englishmen, and they strenuously kicked about having him around the place at all.

Finding Wall obdurate, we told him that unless he would make some sort of terms with us, we would organize a new Boer War, headed by Cronje, who was under contract to Lewis. This would have been easy enough, as there

were plenty of available men in the states who could ride and shoot just as the real Boers and English did in St. Louis. Of course, he could not retaliate by saying that he would have an imitation Cronje.

When September came business at the Fair dropped off very sharply, and the fixing up for the road tour did not look quite so rosy. I knew this would happen and I anticipated the effect it would have on Wall, so when I approached him to renew negotiations, I found the amateur showman quite amenable to reason. In brief, I secured a contract with Wall to bring his entire outfit to Coney Island the next spring on a basis of seventy per cent. of the gross receipts to him and thirty per cent. to us—"us" being the Brighton Beach Development Company, which, in the meantime, had been incorporated. The drug man was to pay the people, also Cronje, whom we still held under contract as a means of forcing Wall to keep his part of the agreement.

The Boer War started through the South as per schedule and met one disaster after an-

other. It was a hard, hard winter for them. The show business was not so rosy as it looked and Wall lost money like water.

Meantime, we had filled in the marsh land at Brighton Beach and had built an enormous arena capable of seating twenty-six thousand five hundred persons.

Along about the middle of May the Boer and the English warriors arrived at Brighton Beach in a train of freight cars. They had made one jump from a little town somewhere in Tennessee. The cars were fixed up with hammocks stretched across and were occupied by from fifteen to twenty men each. A more disorganized, miserable lot of creatures never traveled anywhere, and when they disembarked Brighton Beach looked like Heaven to them. They had had one-night stands all winter long, without any pay, and when they saw the Atlantic Ocean, where they could bathe, and places where they could get something good to eat, and the prospect of staying in a place more than a day at a time—they were indeed a happy lot of warriors!

But a new danger arose: all had it in for Lewis. Lewis, being a soldier, I had delegated him as managing director of the entire outfit while it stayed at Brighton Beach. He had established a regular camp with a cook-house, hospital tent and everything else to make the men comfortable. But somehow, they blamed him for all the misfortunes that had befallen them during the winter, and they were out for his life!

On their arrival, Boer and Englishman alike made a bee line for the little bar in the Inn at Brighton Beach. Up to that night nothing had opened at the Island. Luna Park, Dreamland and all the rest of the show places were dark. There was only a stray electric light here and there on the Island, and it was a bit stormy at that. So, with four hundred Boers and Englishmen half drunk with bad Coney Island whisky, we all looked forward to a lively night. The cock of the walk in the outfit was a tall Boer, who had been a wrestler in South Africa, and who had acted as the official announcer in the show. I realized that

if this ringleader could be squelched that night we could bring some order out of the chaos that prevailed. I was in the little bar, that could hold twenty people if they all stood up, and into which some fifty were now crowded. The wrestling Boer, half-mad with drink, was leaning against Captain Lewis and bragging about what he was going to do to Brady when he met him. In the midst of a most derogatory characterization which he applied to me, I stepped up to him and said, "My name's Brady."

Without a word he hauled off and hit me on the jaw, and I knew I was in for it. I struck back, then placed my back against the wall, and as he rushed at me I just kicked out and he went in a heap on the floor. From that moment on I was the master of the generals and the colonels and the majors, and they saluted every time I passed.

Our friend Wall, the St. Louis drug man, attempted to recover his winter's losses from his summer receipts, but, while these were extraordinarily good, they were not good enough

to pay the back salaries of the men. So things went from bad to worse until about the middle of August, when a general break-up occurred. Wall retired and Captain Lewis ran the thing along on the cooperative plan for a fortnight, and then the whole proposition went to pieces. The horses, cannons and gatling guns were sold and I had to pay old Cronje some two thousand five hundred dollars that was still due on his contract, and out of my own pocket send himself and his wife to Holland, where he afterward died. Most of the Englishmen and Boers connected with the outfit made a bee line for Central America, looking for other wars, as they were all soldiers of fortune, and many of them have taken part in the petty rebellions that have been going on in that part of the world ever since.

The cause of my second digression from the theater game referred to at the beginning of this chapter was Mat Henson.

Doctor Cook was supposed to have discovered the North Pole. And there was great excitement, as you all know, at that time. The



Mat Henson
(Who accompanied Peary to the North Pole?)



UNDERWOOD & UNDERWOOD

Frank Moran training for a bout

doctor made a lecture tour through the United States, "playing" to fabulous receipts. He got four thousand dollars for one lecture in Brooklyn, three thousand eight hundred dollars for one in Philadelphia, six thousand two hundred dollars for one in St. Louis, two thousand three hundred dollars and two thousand five hundred dollars, respectively, for Cleveland and Pittsburg. In fact, he must have cleaned up something like one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars in one month.

Suddenly one morning the news flashed across the country that Peary had discovered the North Pole and that Cook was a faker. Of course, there was a sensation; the whole world shook with the news! Yet, curious to state, although most everybody had lost confidence in Cook, he still remained more popular with the American public than Peary. This was wholly a matter of personality, since Cook, the faker, was drawing big houses and Peary's appearances were meeting with disastrous failures.

Peary brought with him from the North a

colored man named Mat Henson, who had been the explorer's valet for years and who had made several trips with him to the Arctic regions. Henson was a very intelligent fellow and no doubt could tell some very interesting things about Peary's trip to the Pole that the public does not know of. I hit upon the idea of taking Henson on a lecture tour. I offered him three hundred dollars a week; we signed a contract to that effect, and he started in at Middletown, Connecticut. But, strange as it may seem, nobody up there seemed to have any interest in Henson, Peary or the North Pole either. I had arranged a grand reception for my man and had paid for a brass band, which, together with the mayor of the city, was to meet us at the depot. But when we got there we found nobody but the brass band and the chief executive, and in state Henson and the mayor and the band rode up the main street. But nobody paid any more attention to them than if they had been sausages!

Henson went to the theater and opened that

afternoon and took in thirteen dollars and eighty cents. That night there were twenty-three dollars in the house!

Henson had secured most of the pictures taken by Peary on his polar expedition, including one taken at the Pole itself. And Peary's attempt to prevent his ex-valet from using these made Henson a bit angry and he told some things about the explorer and his journey to the Pole that might be of interest if they ever got into print. In short, Henson intimated that Peary did not know whether he got to the Pole or not, and also that he could have gone to the spot he finally attained the very first time he made the attempt. Henson asserted that Peary's expeditions were nothing but hunting trips, that he used to bring back valuable skins that he sold for his own profit. He claimed that every time Peary went north he made a little greater progress, just to keep interest alive and encourage some other "backer" to fit out a ship and send him up there again.

Henson particularly resented Peary's not

taking another white man with him to the Pole, but instead, taking a black man, because he knew the black man could not and would not get anything out of it. And the black man never *did* get anything out of it!

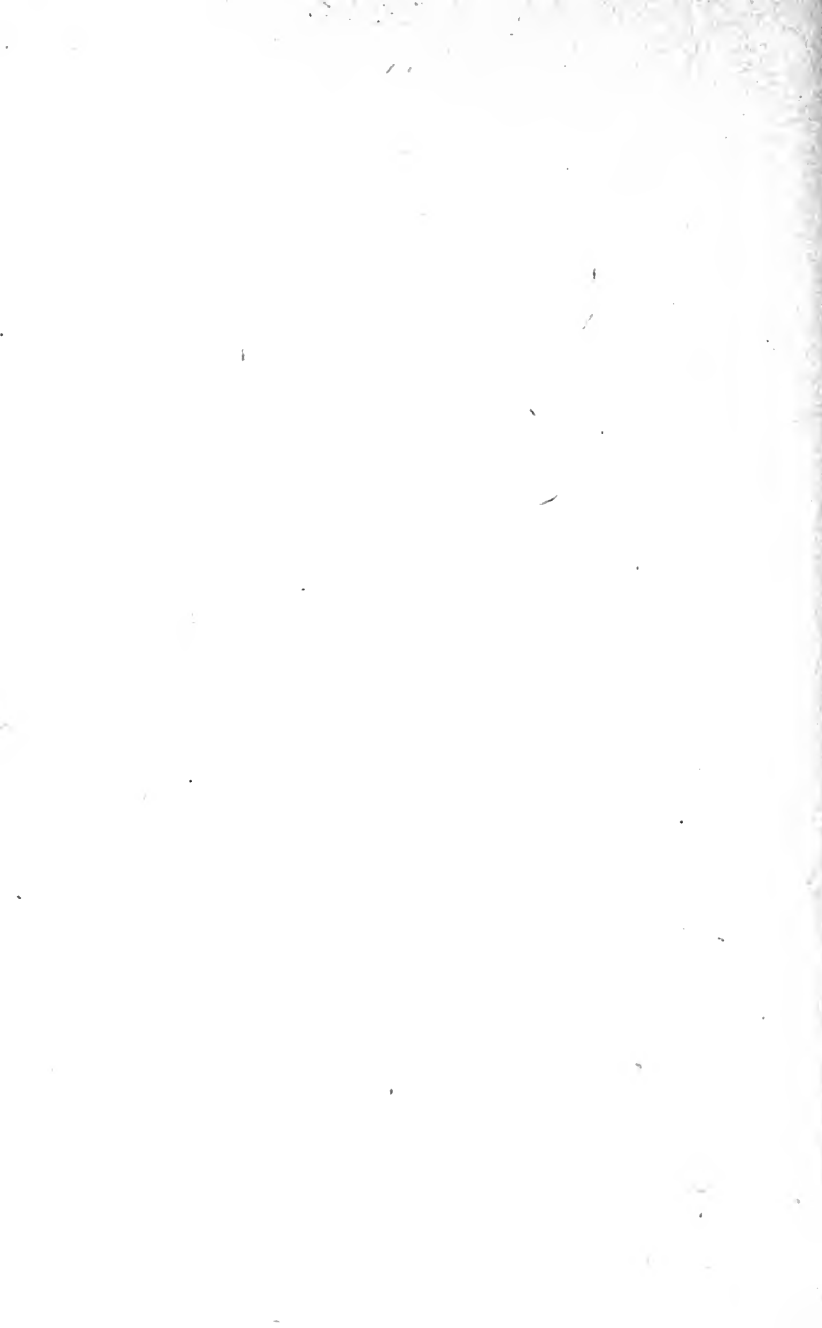
Is it not strange when you think of all the glory that England lavished on Scott and his heroes and Denmark poured out on Amundsen, that the one human being who ever went to the North Pole and never got anything out of it was Mat Henson—a black man? He received no reward from his government, no recognition of his services in any way! Nor did he go as a servant, either. Even by Peary's own account, he was the most valuable member of the company. Strange to relate, although a negro, he could stand more cold than anybody else. His knowledge of the handling of dogs and the caring for provisions was invaluable, and he actually saved Peary's life twice during that one trip to the Pole!

Two nights after the Middletown failure Henson appeared at the Hippodrome in New York. We paid one thousand dollars for the

building, put seven hundred and fifty dollars into advertising, and took in six hundred dollars

The same thing occurred everywhere. We made appeals to the colored people, but Henson's own race would not support him. Within ten days I realized that this remarkable man, notwithstanding the fact that he was rapidly becoming a good talker and was giving an interesting show, was a lost hope and a failure. So I compromised with him, the contract was canceled and Henson dropped out of sight!

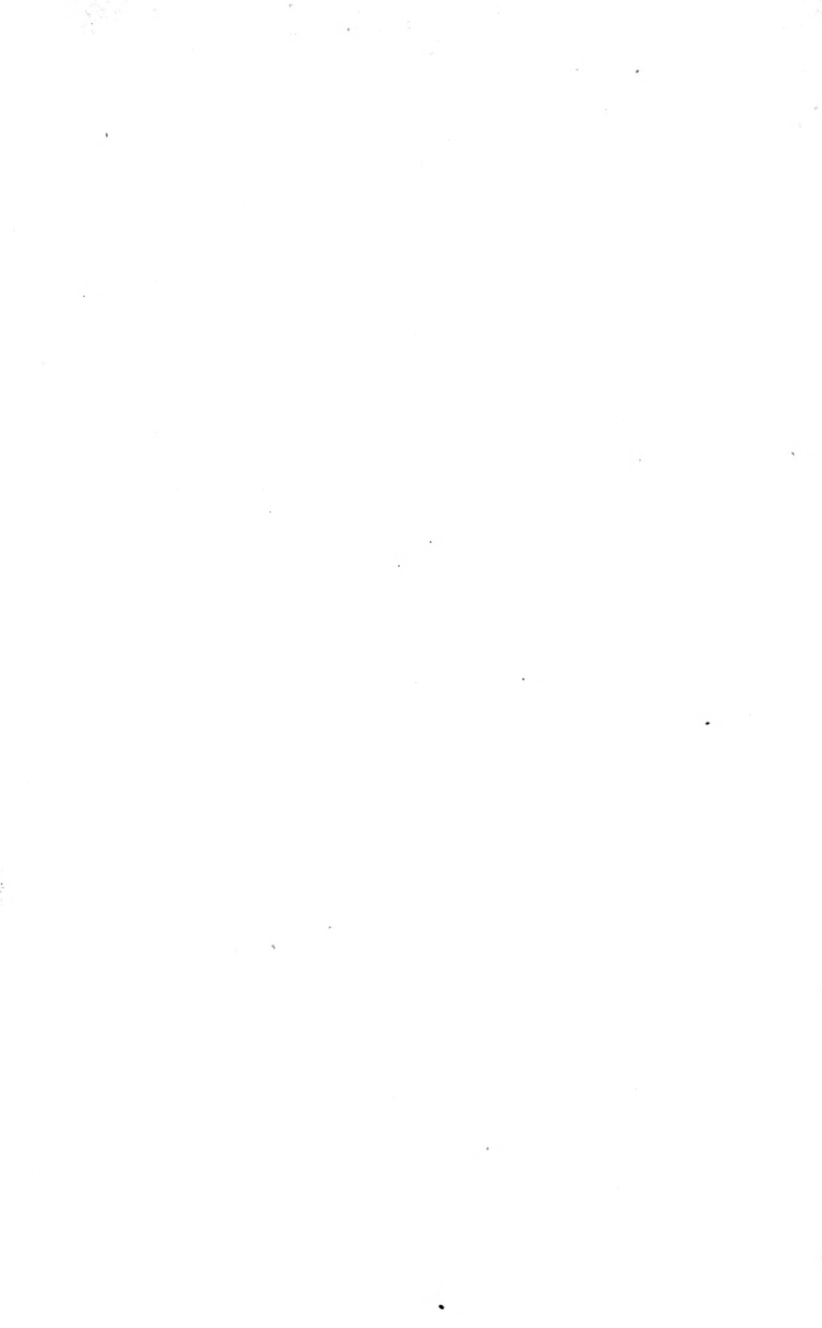
THE END











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