



The Complete Boxer

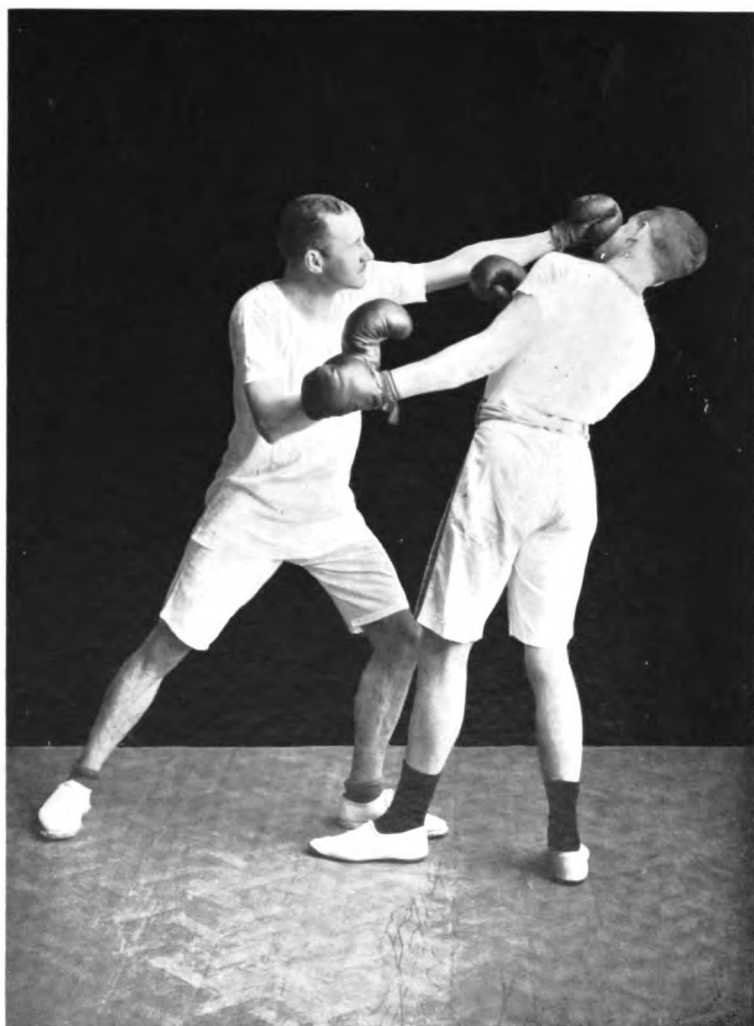
Bohun Lynch, J. H. W. Knight-Bruce



THE COMPLETE BOXER

Day of California

TO WIN CONQUER



"THE STRAIGHT LEFT AT THE HEAD IS THE BEST OF ALL BLOWS"

(see page 61)

THE COMPLETE BOXER

BY
J. G. BOHUN LYNCH

WITH A PREFACE BY
THE EARL OF LONSDALE
AND
WITH TWO CHAPTERS ON ARMY BOXING BY
J. H. W. KNIGHT-BRUCE

WITH SEVENTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS

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TO THE
ANNALS OF

PREFATORY LETTER BY LORD LONSDALE

“LOWTHER, PENRITH.

“MY DEAR MR. LYNCH,

“I have read with the greatest interest what to me is the finest description of the origin of Boxing that I have ever heard or read, and I offer you my humble compliments on the most thorough and historic résumé I imagine has ever been produced.

“Your description of the origin and purposes of Boxing is of itself interesting and instructive, and accurate to a degree. Coming to the General Hints, I have read and re-read them, and I am not master enough of the English language to find a word that could convey a high enough estimate of the whole of the practical advice, and they show a masterly knowledge of all that happens in the ring.

“The Cardinal Blows and Counter Blows are most accurately described, and anyone who follows your instructions accurately must derive the greatest possible advantage, not to say instruction. I also entirely agree with what you say about ‘Knock-Out Blows,’ but to my mind there is no such thing as a ‘knock-out blow,’ except the blow that ‘knocks out,’—a very Irish statement, but what I mean is

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that any blow that causes concussion of the jaw-bone, from whatever punch — causes vibration of the brain, and that no matter if the blow is on the neck or chin or chest, or with a dropping head, or whatever means, becomes a 'knock-out blow.' But to describe any particular blow as a certain 'knock-out blow' is to me (in my ignorance) an impossibility. I have often heard of and seen a boxer in a competition going on the off chance of a 'knock-out blow,' and nine times out of ten it has never come off, because the position of the adversary prevented it taking effect.

"Your Training remarks are valuable and absolutely correct in my humble judgment. And I think it would be impertinence on my part were I to in any way criticize so able a work—on an art that is healthy, honest, and in the best interests of daily life and exercise, and a game that helps young men to keep their head, know what a blow is, keep their temper under trying circumstances, and above all helps to educate them in the most valuable asset in life—Presence of Mind.

"I only hope that your book, which deserves the greatest praise, may be successful to a degree, and that it may help to bring about a continuance of a science of which Englishmen are proud, and which has done so much for those who have proved heroes for their country.

"Yours very truly,

"LONSDALE"

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THE COMPLETE AMATEUR BOXER

CHAPTER I

THE ORIGIN OF BOXING

"Sweet Science of Bruising! how often has man,
Twice as strong as his fellow, presumed just to lark it;
But deceived in his brutal and hectoring plan,
Has lain, "wanting wind," in Fleet Ditch or Fleet Market."

IT is perfectly impossible to treat Boxing merely as the Noble Art of Self-Defence. That is what it is habitually called; and before proceeding to describe the various lights in which it may be regarded nowadays, the reader should be reminded that in the first instance—in its genesis—boxing was a sport and a sport only.

If people wanted to hurt each other they resorted to weapons; and if there were no weapons handy we may be very sure that they tried to strangle each other, and learned the best and quickest way of doing that before ever they considered the advantages of temporary disablement from a hard blow with the clenched fist. For personal warfare, with bad blood in it, natural methods were resorted to: and boxing is not in the least natural. It is sheer artifice. Natural methods are animal methods—scratching and clawing and kicking. Mr. E. B.

Michell, writing in the *Badminton Library*, points out that children learn the means for strife from cats, dogs and horses; that even the closing of the hand for purposes of inflicting injury is itself unnatural.

The argument may be carried further than this, for it is safe to say that in human beings, in common with other animals, there is an instinct to use natural weapons: teeth and nails because they are sharp; feet, because the legs are strong; the head—for butting—because it is (or certainly was in the days of our remote ancestors) hard. Then, in the process of civilization, men learned the damage to be wrought with knuckles. But human life was little accounted of; and if a man attacked you or aggravated you in some way, a weapon—anything from a heavy bone to a fine steel blade—was what you took to him.

On occasions of lesser gravity, a slap with the open palm would be sufficient, as it is to-day: and it is certainly probable that two quarrelsome young Greeks, emulating some Olympic hero, may have battered each other with their bare knuckles. But there would be no system about the fight, and doubtless after a while it would have degenerated into a first-class scratching match. But the athletes of this early world—those who for honour and glory and display (and later on, it must be confessed, for material reward)¹—prodigiously exerted their muscles, called into account their utmost staying power—these learned fist-fighting as a recreation.

The earliest record we have of any strife, whether

¹ Solon decreed that five hundred drachmæ should be paid to each Olympic victor.

in self-defence, or for a wager, or for pure sport, which in the smallest degree resembles what we conceive by the word boxing, comes from the Greeks. "The literary accounts are either very early or very late," writes Mr. K. T. Frost in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies*,¹ "and most of the latter seem to be echoes of Homer." It is Homer indeed who tells us of *ἱμάντες*—leather thongs wound round the knuckles and the fore-arm, not so much to increase the deadliness of the blow as to protect the wearer. These were subsequently called *μειλίχαι*, lest they should be confounded with the more ferocious type of hand-covering² used in later days : which amounted to a weapon, and may be said to have culminated in the Roman cestus. In many cases these were considerably more barbarous than the modern knuckle-duster. They were not used in the Olympic games.

"Even the *μειλίχαι*," writes Mr. Frost, "make comparison with English boxing difficult, so we must be particularly thankful that Homer has described the fight with bare fists between Irus and Odysseus with a clearness and moderation very rare in the annals of the ring. The two competitors presented a very different appearance. Irus was much the taller and heavier and had also the advantage in age. Odysseus, on the other hand, was of medium height, but broad-shouldered, deep-chested and muscular : evidently a typical middle-weight : ten years earlier he had been one of the best runners and wrestlers in the Greek army, so that he had possessed that quick-

¹ *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, vol. xxvi.

² *σφαῖραι*, and *μήμηκες*.

ness on which a middle-weight must rely when pitted against a man heavier than himself.

"The tactics he adopted were exactly those which a modern professor would employ against a heavier but unskilled opponent, namely, drawing and countering. His success was complete. Irus was much dismayed when he saw how big his opponent stripped, and was probably more so when he met the eyes of the king. Anyhow he seems to have made a half-hearted lead off, more as a feeler than a blow, as beginners often do when starting a round with an opponent with whom they are afraid to close at once. This blow, contrary to the usual custom, must have been delivered with the left, for it hit the right shoulder of Odysseus. It may have merely fallen short, but when we remember the advantage in height and reach possessed by Irus, it is more likely that Odysseus saw the blow coming, ducked his head and raised his shoulder to guard the chin and then cross-counteried heavily with a hook-hit: otherwise it is difficult to understand the tremendous effect of this knock-out, especially as Odysseus purposely refrained from putting forth his full strength."

Theocritus¹ gives a fine account of a combat between Amycus and Polydeuces—"him that binding the ox-fell thongs on his knuckles fights with terrible fists." He comes to the land of Bebrycia and with Castor leaves his ship and wanders off away from his companions. Amongst the pine trees and tufted cypress they come upon Amycus—

¹ Theocritus, Idyll xxii. Translated into English verse by James Henry Hallard. (Rivingtons.)

" . . . gigantic and awful to look on.

Torn were his ears by the boxer's blows, and orb'd were his monstrous
Bosom and back with flesh as of iron ; like an enormous

Wrought-metal statue he showed. On his arms, right up to the
shoulder,

Firm stood his muscles like those stones that a mountain-torrent

Rolls in the winter time and rounds in the might of the eddies."

Amycus resents the trespass upon his land, and
will not give the strangers so much as a draught from
the spring.

"With silver or what guerdon can we move thee?"

"Only by putting hands up, man to man."

"Fists only, or with feet, and face to face?"

"Strive with thy fists. . . ." Amycus replies.

So he summons his friends, trumpeting with a
hollow sea shell ; and Castor, who seems to have
acted as Polydeuces' second, goes to fetch the rest
of the Argonauts.

"So, when their fists were weight'd with thongs of force-giving
leather,

Coiling the laces around each arm, they met in the mid-ring,

Breathing slaughter against each other, and fiercely they struggled

Whose back lay to the sun. By skill won'st thou, Polydeuces,

This from the giant, and all his face was smitten with sun-rays.

Sore was his wrath, and forward he lunged with blows at his rival.

Him Tyndarides hit on the chin as he charged, and his anger

Thereby fiercer was roused, and volleying random buffets

Onward he came, head down. The Bebrycians uttered a clamour ;

Yea, and in answer the heroes cheered on stout Polydeuces,

Fearing lest in so narrow a place that Tityan giant

Bore him down with his weight. But shifting hither and thither,

Yet close ever, the son of the Highest bruised him with both fists,

Thwarting the onset wild of the monstrous child of Poseidon.

Dizzy with blows stood he spitting forth red blood, and the heroes

All roared loudly for joy when they saw weals grievous arising

Over his mouth and jowl. Half-closed were the eyes on the swollen

Face : Now with feints all round him the hero baffled and vexed him ;

Then, when he marked him a-weary and mazed, with a clenched
fist smote him

Just 'twixt forehead and nose, and cut him right to the skull-bone.
Stricken, he backward fell full length in the midst of the herbage.
Grimly the fight was renewed when he rose; each battered his rival,
Smiting with stubborn thongs. The Bebrycian leader assaulted
Breast and thigh and neck. Polydeuces, peerless in combat,
Mauled his foeman's face all over with horrible buffets.
Quickly the giant waned, his flesh quite melted with sweating,
Waxed still larger that other's limbs as he tackled his labour,
Haler his hue.

. . . . Amycus, wishing to work some wondrous deed, from position
Swerving aside, Polydeuces' left hand gripped with his left hand;
Then lunged forward sweeping his arm from his right thigh upward.
Had he but reached, he had maimed his foeman, the King of Amyclae;
But with a neck-jerk he escaped that blow, with his right hand
Driving at Amycus' head on the left straight out from the shoulder.
Swiftly the life-blood gushed from a gaping wound on the temple.
Smiting his mouth with the other, he rattled his ranges of tushes,
Bruising his rival's face with strokes ever swifter, and pounded
Both his cheeks, till a-swoon fell he at last on the meadow
All his length, and with outstretched hands sought truce from the
combat,
Being anigh unto death. Yet so, no vengeance upon him
Did'st thou conquering wreak, Polydeuces, peerless of boxers;
Natheless he solemnly sware by Poseidon, his ocean-father,
Never, never again to be churlish unto a stranger."

But for a certain sumptuousness of expression, this account might stand for a bare-knuckle fight of the early part of the nineteenth century: or even for a combat between two men with a quarrel to-day. To manœuvre your man so that the light falls in his eyes would be one of the first considerations in an out of doors encounter. And the latter might well for this reason deal buffets at random. The followers of Polydeuces are afraid lest the ponderous weight of Amycus should tell in—"so narrow a place." It is indeed likely that the smaller man would get the

worst of it in a corner. Then Polydeuces feints again and again—a procedure if well carried out calculated to baffle and vex any boxer. He puzzles his antagonist, and then when he sees that he has grown slow from weariness, and mazed—not knowing from which mighty fist to expect the next blow—Polydeuces gives him a terrific hit in the middle of the face. Amycus is probably standing square and is thus knocked down.

Of course, to make your man's eyes swell so that he could not see properly was one of the principal objects in English prize-fighting. The bare fist does this effectually enough after a time (unless, as in the case of Tom Cribb, the famous champion, he has a protruding bar of frontal bone with the eyes deep set beneath it)—so the effect of hard strips of ox-hide can well be imagined.

Amycus, it is to be noticed, attacked breast and thigh and neck. The last of these would be a most vulnerable spot for a naked fist or one closely protected by "stubborn thongs." The modern boxing glove is too bulky to do much damage as a rule to the throat, unless a man throws his head right back ; or to the neck, unless he exposes it by ducking his head to either side and not recovering with sufficient quickness. In the ordinary position the blow would be stopped between the shoulder and the ear in the latter case, and the chin and the top of the breast-bone in the former.

As to "assaulting the thigh," Amycus either committed what would of course be a foul nowadays in English fist-fighting, by striking below the belt ;

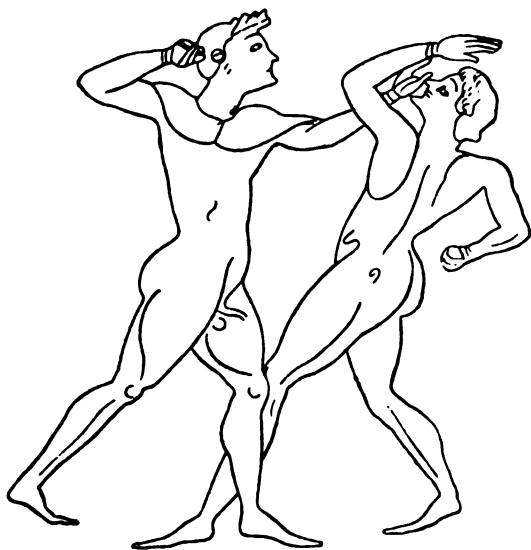
or else he seized his opponent's thigh in order to throw him. If the former is intended little purpose would be served, as it would require an heroic blow indeed to hurt a man much by punching his thigh : but perhaps Amycus was too blinded to know where he was hitting. On the other hand, wrestling was not allowed in genuine Greek boxing ; at all events it was prohibited, together with clinching, at Olympia.

Considered in every respect, the redoubtable Bebrycian was a bad loser. Believing that his only chance lies in a free blow, he seizes Polydeuces' left hand—with which he would guard—and attempts a mighty upper-cut. This holding transgressed the Olympic, just as surely as the Queensberry, rules. Lunging forward and sweeping his arm—or palm, as an earlier edition gives it—upward from his right thigh can only mean an upper-cut ; or to be strict, something between an upper-cut and a swing : for you do not “lunge forward” to deliver a true upper-cut. The knuckles of his fist would have been twenty times more effective than the palm : but we must remember the fact that he probably intended to take his adversary under the chin with the butt of the hand ; the thongs being tied so as to make such a blow extremely severe (*see* Illustration). Then Polydeuces ducks his head to one side, in quite the approved fashion of to-day, and hits “straight out from the shoulder.” The blow cuts a gaping wound in the temple—that would, of course, be the hard thongs again.

Mr. Frost, criticising another translation which gives this sense, prefers the literal meaning, which is

—"with the weight of the shoulder," but in any case the result is the same; and the fact that Amycus swore not to be churlish to strangers any more is scarcely to be wondered at.

Greek boxers, then, made a practice of standing still with their feet almost level; and hitting mainly



FROM A PANATHENAIC VASE (Stephani,
C. R. 1876, 109).—From the *Journal*
of *Hellenic Studies*.

with the right, which was well drawn back; and guarding with the left hand outstretched. They never learned the advantages of straight hitting, but were content with swinging and chopping blows—these latter coming down from above. This is the style commonly used even to-day by people utterly unacquainted with boxing, and which would thus

appear to be the natural style. It has, however, nothing at all to recommend it. The Greeks, moreover, never realized the importance of foot-work, swinging the weight of their bodies behind their blows from the hips only.

It is from the vases that we learn most about the methods of Hellenic boxing. At first sight, the distance between the legs in most of the drawings appears to show that the men stood more or less in the orthodox modern fashion, as in the accompanying illustration : but the authorities on the subject consider this to be a mere convention indicating that the feet are widely separated, but on the same level. This was the position assumed by the early English pugilists ; and the reader may call to mind how Champion Harrison, in *Rodney Stone*, stood with knees slightly bent, squarely to his man : so that he might lead off with either hand. This, Sir A. Conan Doyle tells us, was the style introduced by Humphries and Mendoza ; but by Jem Belcher's day it was quite obsolete and was superseded by a position, so far as feet are concerned, almost identical with that of the modern boxer.

Before fighting at Olympia, writes Mr. Frost, the competitors trained for nine months, a preparation fully needed in view of the fact (amongst other things) that they must battle in the glare of the noonday sun. The pairs and byes were decided by lot, just as they are to-day. There is nothing to tell us that the size of the ring was defined, and since there were certainly no ropes, all the fighting would be in the open, with no opportunity for

cornering a man. There were, moreover, only two championships, one for boys and one for men ; so that boxers of all weights had to compete together. From this it is to be inferred that the men were for the most part heavy-weights.

There was no evidence of good-will between the combatants, such as shaking hands : rather they glowered ferociously at each other. Each had his second who tied the thongs round his knuckles and fore-arms, but left the thumb free. And these seconds were allowed to shout advice or encouragement to their principals during the progress of the encounter—a practice which is strictly prohibited to-day.

Mr. Frost illustrates this point by a story of Glaucus the Carystian. It appears that when Glaucus was a boy, he re-set a loose ploughshare, using his fist as a hammer. And his father was so struck by the feat that he entered him at Olympia for the boys' boxing match. During a fight with a more skilful opponent, the father, who no doubt acted as Glaucus' second, saw that he was hard pressed and shouted to him, "Give him one like you did the plough, my lad," whereupon the boy made a prodigious effort and knocked his adversary down.

From the evidence at our disposal, we can only assume that Greek boxing was almost entirely devoid of science ; and that quickness, hard hitting and stoic endurance were the three qualities to be inculcated with a view to success. And it may as well be added here that these are, in modern boxing, the primary qualities still most carefully to be considered.

Between the annals of classical boxing and those

of the English prize ring, which was established in the early part of the eighteenth century, there is a gulf of darkness. Boxing of some kind may have been practised in mediæval England, but we have no record of it. Wrestling, of course, was always a popular sport—showing that the natural methods of clutching and clawing already referred to were tempered down to become a pastime. Jehoshaphat Aspin, writing in 1825 of the *Manners, Customs, Sports and Pastimes of the Inhabitants of England*, tells of a wrestling tournament (The City of London *versus* the City and Suburbs of Westminster) held at St. Giles' in the Fields in 1219. The work appears to be an exhaustive one, and the fact that no mention whatever is made of boxing is accounted for by the fact that whilst the period he treats of begins with the arrival of the Saxons, it comes down only to the eighteenth century.

In spite of its having been a sport, pure and simple and rather blood-thirsty, we may disregard classical boxing for any visible effect it has had upon the fighting of our own day, which, it is quite sufficient to know, is the outcome of the prize-ring.

CHAPTER II

THE PURPOSES OF BOXING

“Sports which can produce thoroughbred actions will outlive all the sneers of the fastidious, and cant of the hyper-critics.”

—PIERCE EGAN to CAPTAIN BARCLAY.

MODERN Boxing may be partly an Art of Self-Defence. Roughly, the man who cannot box is at the mercy of one who can. Other things being equal this is certainly the case: and it is a commonplace that small boxers have frequently thrashed big ruffians. And boxing is a sport: first and foremost as an amusement—good fun; then as a means of exercise and physical development. It is also a treatment to be prescribed for toughening the sensibilities, for teaching a mental and bodily agility, and the quickness and vigilance of eye and brain.

Boxing as a means of defence is admirable, and of offence. If somebody deserves hitting, it is better that he should be hit in the right way; on his account that the blow may hurt more, on the attacker's that he may justify his quarrel and not unduly expose himself to retaliation. True, that in these well-ordered days opportunities for this sort of thing are comparatively rare, but it is always well to rise to their occasion. Boxing in this way has its direct practical use.

Of all violent forms of exercise, boxing probably brings the greatest number of muscles into play. It is, or should be, a most vehement kind of exertion; and should not be attempted by people who are physically unfit, weak in the heart, or those rare and hyper-sensitive folk who are genuinely unable to endure a certain amount of ordinary and wholesome pain. But a steady course of boxing, beginning lightly and gradually increasing in severity, will give wide and deep chests to those who started with narrow ones. It will add enormously to the muscular power of the back and shoulders. It is the constant movement of the shoulders and arms backwards and forwards which expands the chest: and constant turning of the body from the hips develops the abdominal muscles.

Then, frequent boxing really hardens a man or boy to bear pain. He grows so accustomed to hard knocks that after a time he will scarcely be aware of a blow which would have sorely hurt him when he began to learn. And, of course, this happy result applies not only to sparring itself: the toughened boxer can, in any relation of life, endure more than one who has never been taught to take a certain amount of knocking about for granted.

A good boxer is nimble on his feet and does not slouch about with relaxed muscles: he is always mentally alert, because in boxing thought and its consequent action must be well-nigh simultaneous. It trains quickness of eye to an extent which will be found uncommonly valuable in other sports of all descriptions. It unquestionably develops the faculty

of decision ; for there is never any time for making up your mind once you are facing an opponent. You have to decide what to do on the spur of many moments, to do it instantly.

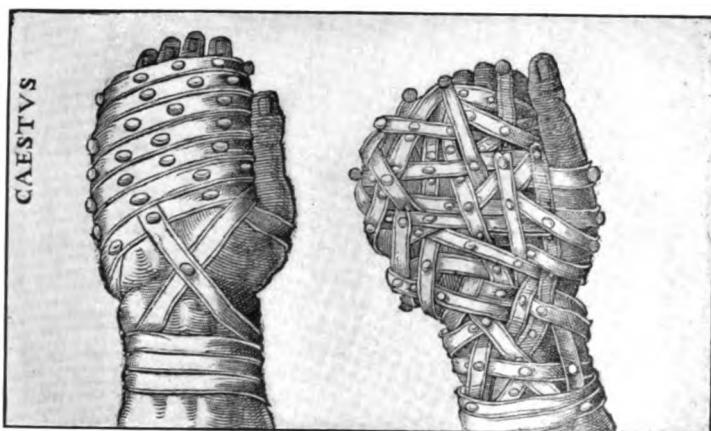
And—from the temperamental point of view—boxing certainly teaches self-control. It is nonsense, of course, to say that an angry man cannot fight well. He can, and often does. But the anger must be kept in hand. Once a man loses his temper and his head, it is generally all up with him. He becomes wild and reckless, and an antagonist who has kept his wits about him can do what he chooses. For certain dispositions a hard blow on the nose is very trying. A run of bad luck, a sharp rally during which you have been unable to land a single hit, is, if you are inexperienced, a severe test. But, unlike all other points in boxing, it is only a question of time. If you endure the first test, the next will be less severe : until you can take the worst possible hiding with a grin.

These are true and noble excuses for boxing, but the best excuse of all (where none is needed) remains ; namely, that it is such a grand sport. It is exciting and sometimes sensational, and it has a whole wealth of tradition to make it romantic. There is a man to beat and you have only yourself to rely on, and there are only three rounds,—if this is a competition—or if in an ordinary spar you keep to the amateur rules. A short time, you will say, in which to test your prowess.

But wait. Those three rounds are packed with incident, or should be. It is a desperate battle while

it lasts. And if you are fairly matched—howsoever fine your condition—the minutes will be hours. You have to try and hit your antagonist so that he cannot hit you ; but you will fail over and over again. Most likely you will get at least as good as you give. You will be driven round the ring by a hurricane of blows, straight lefts and rights and hook-hits and swings and paralyzing half-arm blows which pen you in a corner. You may be knocked down from a blow on the jaw, and rise shaking and feeble to your feet again : reeling forward in a supreme effort of retaliation. You are for the moment utterly worn. To be knocked out, so that the fight be over, would seem to be the most desirable occurrence you can imagine.

It is this moment in a fight that really finds you out. It is a great effort to keep struggling on, to stand up ; not only defending your battered self, but defending it more certainly by making your adversary believe there is a reserve of strength in you yet to be overcome. And maybe you cannot land a blow : and your man's gloves are ever about you still, beating the wind from you, bruising your face. And yet you must go on so long as your legs will carry you. "It is spirit which keeps the boxer on his legs," writes Pierce Egan, and spirit you must have. But at last your opportunity comes. It always does if you are brisk enough to see it. Your man grows careless or tired, and you land a light straight left. And that gives you courage for another, and the next is hard. And then he gives a pace and you are after him, sore spent, but eager to recover lost ground. And you try two hits quickly succeeding, and they drive back



ROMAN CASTUS
(FROM HIERONYMUS MERCURIALIS)



DRAWING ON A MODERN BOXING GLOVE

(see page 50)

your adversary just as his drove you but a moment or two before.

And then by chance you land the perfect blow : that which coming straight from your shoulder with all your weight behind it takes him upon the head and sends it back. And you have a delightful sensation at the moment of impact. It is only comparable to the "give" of a good cricket bat as you drive the ball from precisely the right place in the wood.

The amateur who has little time at his disposal will find boxing one of the most convenient forms of sport possible. It is, so to say, very portable. You can box almost anywhere, and a room cleared of furniture or a small patch of grass is within the reach of most people. The latter is infinitely preferable for those who are forced by their daily occupation to spend much time indoors.

One of the objections most frequently raised against the pastime is that it can only be practised in a room. This is quite wrong. Of course, if you want to go in for competitions, you must learn to box on a boarded floor. But a vast number of men like to box just for the sake of exercise, and never mean to enter for any regular match. For them, the grass and the fresh air are perfectly suited. Of course, also, the two can be combined, by means of a square stage raised six inches or more from the ground with posts and ropes. But it is a somewhat ungainly fixture for anyone who is proud of his garden and has no secluded corner for the purpose : and a much too considerable time would be taken up by fixing the ring and stage for each encounter.

For the busy man, then, boxing is an ideal pur-

suit, because ten minutes of hard sparring will, in point of exercise, be equivalent to an hour or so of most out of door games. You cannot box properly unless you are in good condition; and if you box regularly, you will keep in good condition. It is better to practise in the evening, as one of the disadvantages of the sport is the fact that it tends to make you sleepy. The constant buffeting in the face with the heavily padded gloves is most wearing, and has often ensured for an ordinarily bad sleeper a good night's rest. So what would give a bad beginning to a day may be highly beneficial at its close.

The noble art has done an immense amount of good, both for weak people and for indecisive people; it is not, however, to be claimed as a cure for all ills. That seems to have been the idea of one of George Borrow's friends. "—— wishes me to give his son lessons in boxing," says a character in *The Romany Rye*, "which he considers a fine, manly, English art, and a great defence against Popery."

Of course, boxing is essentially a young man's sport: and in a match between two men very unequal in age, the old adage "Youth will be served" is usually justified. The experience of a veteran who has grown stiff, and whose wind is not what it once was, is unlikely to avail ultimately against the lustiness, agility, and spring of a youngster—even one who has yet to learn much of the ring-craft that his antagonist has forgotten.

Youth should be a succession of joyous moments when the desire to shout and run and do something which requires prodigious muscular effort is para-

mount and necessary in order to work off high animal spirits. These moments come without any particular reason, willy-nilly, and the brimming vitality must have its outlet. A hard encounter is then the very height of physical pleasure. Your entire body is set vigorously to work. A smashing blow received brushes away the cobwebs of the mind, and there are few athletic triumphs to compare with a fine hit given.

It is this spirit of joyous irresponsibility that makes amateur boxing so well worth watching ; less perhaps from a purely scientific point of view, than from one that is perhaps rather primitively sporting, and which might be called the romantic aspect. Hardihood and pluck—guts, to use a word that has come to be expressive—are more conspicuous in the amateur than sheer science.

The genuine amateur cannot, as a rule, find time to be superlatively clever, as that entails a prodigious amount of practice, and there are so many other things to do. I say "genuine amateur," because there are many technical amateurs professionally minded, who start their boxing career without hope of immediate payment in order to test their powers : and a few who regard the sport in that indefinable manner which suggests the professional, and, on the whole, suggests him unjustly. These are men who use the crafty tricks just within the letter of the rule, to whom winning is everything, and boxing a mere means of winning something.

The amateur, then, whilst not for a moment despising science, cannot devote his whole attention to boxing, and therefore lacks the finesse and those

ultimate refinements which make perfection. From a spectacular standpoint he gives a very fine show. He is nimble enough and has sufficient knowledge of the science to make his movements neat, his hitting clean. For nothing is more tedious to watch than two complete novices hugging and embracing each other, and chopping at each other's heads, using their fists as axes. Two windmills in conflict would give better sport.

No. The average amateur boxes with average science and a sheer delight in fighting for its own sake. Watching such an encounter, you see that it is a test of manhood rather than of ingenuity; of endurance rather than of system. And the mere fact that two men are fighting because they like fighting, and not because of what they may get from fighting, adds hugely to the attractiveness of the scene. The very lack of absolute science often makes the encounter more sensational, more exciting to watch—provided that lack is not too emphasized. Even the expert cannot resist a thrill, and be he ever so *blasé* he will admit that it is a fine sight; at the least that it is a pleasant change.

It may be very wrong to want sensationalism, but it is very human, and humanity in this respect will generally triumph over an emotion that is entirely artificial. A cricketer lifts the ball out of the ground, and another plays it with perfection of technical skill back to the bowler. Ask the onlooker which he prefers to see. The human being without any knowledge of cricket will choose the former; the human being in every learned expert, will, like as not, struggle to be free.

But the unfortunate thing is that some men insist on translating humanity as brutality.

"What I likes to see is two blokes, same weight and size and one a bit better'n t'other, 'avin' a good scrap for ten or fifteen round, say—with nothink much in it either way : and then for one of 'em to get tired and t'other bloke to walk into 'im and smash 'im up for a round or two ; and then bring 'is right acrorst and stretch 'im so's he 'as to be carried out."

This, or words very much to this effect, was the opinion expressed to the writer on one occasion by a London cabman : a member of a profession keenly addicted to boxing. The old man in question had been an ardent bruiser in his day, and a connoisseur of the sport from the ring-side. So his was no mere arm-chair declamation : he was talking of what he himself had dared to do and risk. He was quite human.

I suppose that what he ought to have said (in this enlightened age) would have been :—

"I likes to see a nice pair of lads evenly matched, go the full twenty rounds, showing reel cleverness and brain work and not 'itting too hard ; 'im as wins, to do it narrow—on points : and then for 'em to shake 'ands with a nice smile, and to leave the ring with their arms round each other's necks, and without a mark to show."

And certainly an exhibition of that sort, exaggerated in its gentleness, can be seen almost any week from October to April in most large towns in this country.

Light hitting coupled with an intensely developed

knowledge of science forms a pleasant enough show sometimes. So does the turn upon the music-hall stage of a dexterous swinger of Indian clubs, or Cinquevalli's astounding sense of balance. But it does not thrill. You admire it with your brain, but not with your heart. And in the process of ultra-refinement a sport is apt to become emasculated, to lose its efficacy for the purpose from which it is sprung.

This cultivation is a two-edged sword. The sport without a significant origin, which is and always has been purely a game, tends by the elaboration of its science to become a business; golf, for example. And the valuable athletic pursuit which in a modified form makes a fine amusement becomes a meaningless show.

But the people who would kill boxing because of its so-called brutality go further than this. It is not enough for them that boxing, with nice, warm, padded gloves, should be gentle and affectionate; it must cease to exist. It is wicked. It is unchristian. In fact, there is a risk of being hurt in boxing. Men have been known to have suffered the irreparable damage of a broken nose. There has been, and is, rascality connected with the sport, ruffianism of the blackest dye.

Boxing has a peculiar effect on a certain type of mind. It is a mind that may have, but generally has not, some theoretical knowledge to back its arguments, within a body which has never practised it. Put flippantly, but quite equitably, the inside of the head rejects what its outside cannot endure.

No doubt the reason why boxing especially engenders this antipathy is that it throws up personal combativeness into relief. Boxing is so obviously meant to hurt. Football never excites such a storm of hate : and far more serious injuries have been caused in football than in boxing—even relatively more ; for of course there are many more footballers than there are boxers. And there is just as much rascality connected with football as with boxing, comparatively as many ruffians who kick a ball as those who punch one. Even the smallest injury is not an integral part of the game, and to win a boxing match, you must, as a rule, hurt your man. As for ruffianism, there is no sport safe from it, no sport that can be ultimately ruined by it.

And what if boxing is brutal? "I belong to the National Sporting Club, because there's a beast in every man, thank God," says a character in one of Mr. Thurston's novels. The fellow was doing himself an injustice. There is manhood in every man (or most men), a spark of the primæval savage, without which mankind could not exist. If it is brutish for two men to beat each other with their fists,—for them to slander each other with their tongues is devilish. And, as has been sufficiently demonstrated, boxing is not only comparatively fine ; it is definitely admirable for what it teaches, what it makes possible.

Of course it happens now and again that a white man and a black man are matched, and there is an outcry against the "brutal exhibition." But that is a peculiar instance, and boxing has little to do with

the trouble. The feeling of a section of the public runs very high; not in the excitement of sport, but in the fever of racial antagonism. It is infinitely preferable that white and black men should not be pitted against one another. Apart from this racial feeling, it is unsuitable. Negroes are not physically built like us. But all the same, faddists use such an opportunity for decrying boxing itself, and not boxing in special circumstances. And in any case the man who hits his brother in anger is better than the man who preaches a sickly brotherhood of antipathetic races.

It is interesting to observe that the noble art makes an appeal to a type of mind utterly foreign to that of the usual sporting man. M. Maurice Maeterlinck, for example, is a great boxing enthusiast: the philosopher who wrote so tenderly of his little bull dog is able to comprehend the merits of this violent pursuit, to appraise the cold deliberation of a knock out blow.

"Look at two draymen," he writes,¹ "two peasants who come to blows: nothing could be more pitiable. After a copious and dilatory broadside of insults and threats, they seize each other by the throat and hair, make play with their feet, with their knees, at random, bite each other, scratch each other, get entangled in their motionless rage, dare not leave go, and if one of them succeeds in releasing an arm, he strikes out blindly and most often into space a series of hurried, stunted and sputtering little blows. . . . On the other hand, watch two pugilists: no useless words, no gropings, no anger;

¹ "In Praise of the Fist," from *Life and Flowers*.

the calmness of two certainties that know what lies before them. The athletic attitude of the guard, one of the finest of which the male body is capable, logically exhibits all the muscles of the organism to the best advantage. Every one of them has its pole in one or other of the two massive fists charged to the full with energy. And the noble simplicity of the attack! Three blows, no more, and the fruits of secular experience, mathematically exhaust the thousand useless possibilities hazarded by the uninitiated. Three synthetic, irresistible, unimprovable blows. As soon as one of them frankly touches the adversary, the fight is ended, to the complete satisfaction of the conqueror, who triumphs so incontestably and with no dangerous hurt to the conquered, who is simply reduced to impotence and unconsciousness during the time needed for all ill-will to evaporate. Soon after, the beaten man will rise to his feet with no lasting damage, because the resistance of his bones and his organs is strictly and naturally proportioned to the power of the human weapon that has struck him and brought him to the ground."

Although boxing will always find supporters, it will always have its revilers too. And it is a mistake to ignore them, for they are many; and there is danger in numbers. In 1860, when the cult of rather hypocritical refinement was at its worst, there was a precious outcry against the fight between Sayers and Heenan. A reference to *Punch* will show that.

"Ah me, that I have lived to hear
Such men as ruffians scorned,
Such deeds of valour brutal called,
Canted, preached down, and mourned!"

The writer is supposed to be recounting the famous mill for the benefit of his great-grandchildren in 1920. He continues a little further on—

“ . . . canting rogues, their mud to fling
On self-defence and on the Ring,
And fistic arts abuse!
And 'twas such varmint had the power
The Champion's fight to stay
And leave unsettled to this hour
The honours of the day!”

For owing to police interference, the battle was stopped, and so ended in a draw. And Sayers, despite his fractured arm, was winning; but the ring was broken—

“Just when ten minutes used aright
Had made the fight his own.”

That, however, was bare-knuckle milling—a bloodier affair; which gave more excuse to the sensitive.

But since then, the school of sentimentalists has increased by leaps and bounds. “Gladiatorial displays,” “brutalising effects” have become catchwords. If the onlooker is brutalised by the spectacle of two men standing up to each other and being brave, then he is brutalised and that's all about it. If he watches two men fighting in a ruffianly manner, or one cruelly taking advantage of his antagonist, he is either disgusted or remains the brute he always was. The sight cannot make him one.

It is, however, remarkable that boxing should find so little encouragement at the hands of our educational authorities. True we are a softer race

than we used to be: witness the outcry against the gallows for cold-blooded assassins; the "cat" as a punishment for the worst kind of criminal; and, in the elementary schools, the wholesome whipping for naughty little boys. We are flogged soundly enough at our public schools, thank Heaven; but we seldom settle our differences in the fine old way. It is the rarest occurrence for two boys to fight in an ordered and proper manner, with seconds and someone to see fair play, at an appointed time and in a special place. That is far too cold-blooded. A little skirmishing in a passage is commonly the fiercest discord.

Nevertheless it is difficult to understand the attitude of schoolmasters. Boxers respect each other, and in a school where boxing is compulsory, where disputes can be regulated with the gloves, by the consent of the master, a most salutary influence is felt. But these schools are unfortunately few and far between. I suppose it is partly that any individual athletic feat must suffer for those that are collective—or corporate, as the schoolmasters themselves would say. In boxing, whatever happens, a boy wins on his own merits: neither does he help others, nor is helped by them. Thus far it is a selfish sport. But it is a fine thing to fight for the honour of your school at Aldershot, and it is a pity that more boys are not allowed to do so.

Take the opinion of the majority of the schoolmasters in question, and you will find what it is they really object to; especially why it is that they dislike entering their boys for open competitions with the

other schools—a mysterious something which they call the knock-out blow. To people unacquainted with boxing, it is always singular—*the* knock-out blow. So it may as well be explained here shortly—the subject will be more fully dealt with in a later chapter—that there are many knock-out blows. Any blow which stops the combatant from continuing to box may be so called. But of course the most frequent is that which takes you on the side of the jaw, and this it is which is generally called the knock-out blow.

Put simply, this hit—if sufficiently hard—causes instant and very slight concussion of the brain. In a mild form, the boxer who receives it is slightly dazed, sees a thick mist before his eyes and goes weak in the knees. The effects pass off in a few moments. A more severe hit of the kind causes him to fall, but he may rise. A little more power behind the striking arm—particularly when the glove lands on precisely the right spot, and the man is knocked down and unable to rise for a considerable time.

In professional boxing ten seconds are allowed, and if the boxer cannot get up in that period, he is reckoned to have been knocked out and accordingly loses the fight. It occasionally happens when a man has been brought down by a particularly hard blow, that it is some minutes before he comes to. Usually he revives as soon as his seconds have picked him up and poured cold water on his head.

But the point is that the blow does not cause serious injury, and I am unable to discover any

case where it has caused a boxer's death. There have been innumerable occasions when one of the combatants has been knocked down by blows on the jaw again and again—as many as half a dozen times—in a single round, and yet have knocked out their opponents before that round closed. In these instances the blow has been either not a hard one or not rightly placed. The result of such punishment is seldom more than a bad headache, a very stiff jaw, and a disinclination to eat solid food on the following day.

Deaths have occurred in boxing, just as they have in steeple-chasing and other sports; but they are very rare. In an enormous preponderance of competitions and professional matches, the worst to be expected is the breaking of a nose, or the loss of a tooth or two. For the rest, an occasional black eye, which may last for some days; or a "thick ear" which is very common among boxers, and which (it is to be feared) they will carry to their graves, are the most usual disfigurements and penalties that have to be faced.

CHAPTER III

BARE KNUCKLES

"... Squabbles have, since the fall of the Ring, been settled more commonly in a brutal and cowardly way than when the ideal of Gully and Bendigo was before the eyes of the quarrelsome man."—E. B. MICHELL in *Boxing*—(*Badminton Library*).

THE principles of old time knuckle-fighting were more akin, more adapted to the purposes of self-defence than modern boxing. A man who is trained to fight with his fists for sport is more likely to be able to use them with effect in a street fight, more likely to endure blows from them. Then wrestling was allowed as well: and if you are faced by a man who is ready to do anything to disable you, you must be prepared to do next to everything to disable him; and a knowledge of wrestling, though not recommended for self-defence in a street fight, may nevertheless prove uncommonly useful.

The ring for all the big and important fights was pitched in the open air, and judging by some old prints it was occasionally much larger than the twenty-four foot square that eventually became the regulation size. The encounter was generally decided upon grass, though sometimes a boarded stage was used, as in the famous fight between Cribb and Molyneaux, and that between Humphries and Mendoza. The



A RIGHT HAND BODY-BLOW. IN THIS CASE EXTRA FORCE IS GIVEN
OWING TO THE RECIPIENT COMING FORWARD WITH A STRAIGHT RIGHT
(see page 25)

seconds remained in their respective corners within the ring, and there was generally an outer line of ropes beyond which the public was not allowed to trespass. The space in between was reserved for the officials and backers. Whippers out with long lashes beat back any of the spectators whose exuberance caused them to break bounds.

The principals, as you may see from any old print, were stripped to the waist, just as they are in all professional contests to-day, and wore tight breeches and stockings. A round ended with a man going down either from a blow or a throw; and might thus last almost any length of time, from half a minute to half an hour. Fights were to a finish—until one man gave in or was unable to come up to the scratch at the end of the half-minute rest. At one period seconds were allowed to carry their men to the scratch, so that utterly exhausted as they sometimes were, they might stand and push each other down. And sometimes his backers withdrew a man.

Owing to this half-minute for recovery on every occasion of a knock down, it required a terrific blow indeed to end a battle outright. More usually a man was first worn out by continuous falls, or blinded by the swelling of his eyes, and then given what would almost amount to a free blow before he was beaten. Some of these old prize-fights went on for three and four hours, a thing which would be practically impossible with gloves even under the same rules. The fact is that a fairly heavy glove does far more than protect the face of the man who is hit by it and the

knuckles of him who hits ; the constant buffeting has a soporific and dazing effect which bare fists never have. A hard blow from a man's knuckles hurts a good deal more ; but it is a quick, livening pain. It does not, so to say, send you to sleep but stings you on to greater efforts. Some men beat themselves by driving up their knuckles on their opponent's heads. Jem Belcher did this in his first fight with Cribb.

There is no gainsaying at all that a prize-fight must have been a gory and a horrible sight to sensitive folk. So is a battle. And the prize-ring fitted men to fight in battles. Joseph Haydn describes prize fighting as—"a favourite sport with the British, who possess strong arms, giving them superiority in battles decided with the bayonet."

Waterloo was won on Moulsey Hurst as well as on the playing fields of Eton.

To take one example literally — Shaw, the Nottinghamshire fighter, was found surrounded by the ten Frenchmen he had slain. Three of them, it is said, fell before one sweeping sabre cut.

That the ring was not without its detractors even in those early days is evidenced by the following passage from the dedication of *Boxiana*, vol. iii. (1821), to the Marquis of Worcester:—"It is of the very last importance to England as a nation," writes the editor, "that she still preserves her high character for True Courage, both at home and abroad, both by land and by sea : nay, more, that not one particle of this real greatness should ever be frittered away from squeamishness of Disposition or Effeminacy

of habit." But then, even as now, the mass of valuable opinion was on the side of anything which was likely to foster manliness.

Boxing has always been associated with fairs. To-day even, and perhaps to a greater extent ten or fifteen years ago, itinerant pugilists are and have been the delight and despair of country youths. There are no travelling circuses of any consideration to which a boxing booth does not form an indispensable adjunct. Two bruisers, generally of the second rank, move from place to place, giving exhibitions first, and then throwing down the gloves in challenge to any aspiring yokel, who fancies himself and cares to put them on.

The first record we have of anything of that nature is in a handbill distributed at fairs in 1740 by Figg: that is, twenty-one years after the date when that worthy was written down as the first champion of England.

This handbill, which is quoted from *Boxiana*, runs as follows :—

At
FIG'S Great Til'd Booth
on the Bowling Green, Southwark,
During the time of the Fair,
(which begins on Saturday, the 18th of September),
The Town will be entertained with the
MANLY ARTS OF
Foil-play, Back-sword, Cudgelling, and Boxing,
in which
The noted PARKS from Coventry, and the
celebrated gentleman prize-fighter, Mr. MILLAR,
will display their skill in a tilting-bout,
Showing the advantages of Time and Measure :
also
Mr. JOHNSON, the great Swordsman, superior to any man in the

World for his unrivalled display of the *hanging-guard*, in a grand attack of Self-defence, against the all-powerful arm of the renowned Sutton.

DELFORCE, the finished Cudgeller, will likewise exhibit his uncommon feats with the Single-stick ; and who challenges any man in the kingdom to enter the lists with him for a *broken head* or a *belly-full* !

BUCKHORSE, and several other Pugilists, will show the Art of Boxing.

To conclude

With a grand parade by the Valiant FIG, who will exhibit his knowledge in various combats—with the Foil, Back-Sword, Cudgel, and Fist.

To begin each day at Twelve o'clock, and close at Ten.

Vivat Rex.

N.B.—The Booth is fitted up in a most commodious manner, for the better reception of Gentlemen, etc. etc.

It was Jack Broughton, another early champion, whose backer was the then Duke of Cumberland, who first started a regular house of call for people interested in the noble art. This was known as the Amphitheatre, and was built in 1742. In the following year, he drew up and published the first boxing rules—"for the better regulation of the Amphitheatre, approved of by the Gentlemen, and agreed to by the Pugilists."

"1. That a square of a yard be chalked in the middle of the stage ; and every fresh set-to after a fall, or being parted from the rails, each second is to bring his man to the side of the square, and place him opposite to the other, and till they are fairly set-to at the lines, it shall not be lawful for the one to strike the other.

"2. That, in order to prevent any disputes, the time a man lies after a fall, if the second does not bring his man to the side of the square, within the space of half a minute, he shall be deemed a beaten man.

"3. That in every main battle, no person whatever shall be upon the stage, except the principals and their seconds ; the same rule to be observed in by-battles except that in the latter, Mr. Broughton is allowed to be upon the stage, to keep decorum, and to assist gentlemen to their places ; provided always that he does not interfere in the battle ; and whoever presumes to infringe these rules, to be turned immediately out

of the house. Everybody is to quit the stage as soon as the champions are stripped, before they set to.

"4. That no champion be deemed beaten, unless he fails coming up to the line in the limited time ; or that his own second declares him beaten. No second is to be allowed to ask his man's adversary any questions, or to advise him to give out.

"5. That in by-battles, the winning man to have two-thirds of the money given, which shall be publicly divided upon the stage, notwithstanding any private agreement to the contrary.

"6. That, to prevent disputes in every main battle, the principals shall, on the coming on the stage, chose from amongst the gentlemen present, two umpires, who shall absolutely decide all disputes that may arise about the battle ; and if the two umpires cannot agree, the said umpires to chose a third who is to determine it.

"7. That no person is to hit his adversary when he is down, or seize him by the ham, the breeches, or any part below the waist : a man on his knees to be reckoned down."

Would that such complete, if crude, simplicity were sufficient for the governance of modern boxing.

And yet regarding the essence of prize-fighting there is a thoroughly modern ring : so there is in number five of these particular rules. The same thing is often said of Sheridan's plays. And both instances go to prove the immutability of human nature. For a variety of insufficient reasons we of to-day expect ourselves, our dispositions and our inclinations, to be radically different to those of our great-grandsires. But we expect too much of Father Time. The public division of prize money according to a certain proportion and the hinted possibility of a private arrangement has a peculiarly exact counterpart in the pugilistic dealings of this century. But modern boxing is a much more complicated affair, and calls for more complicated regulations.

The self-advertisement of a boxer's prowess, also, was carried on then with a similar, though not quite

so vulgar, lack of diffidence as at the present day. Two bruisers—Patrick Henley and John Francis—have a quarrel. They have fought once before, to the discomfiture of the latter, who is anxious to get his own back. The challenge and acceptance found below have their basic idea in common with the page-long letters and denunciations and articles of self-approbation with which modern pugilists supply the sporting papers.

“WHEREAS I, John Francis, commonly known by the name of the *Jumping Soldier*, who have always had the reputation of a good fellow, and have fought several bruisers in the street, etc., nor am I ashamed to mount the stage when my manhood is called in question by an Irish braggadocio, whom I fought some time ago, in a by-battle, for twelve minutes, and though I had not the success due to my courage and ability in the art of boxing, I now invite him to fight me for TWO GUINEAS, at the time and place above mentioned, where, I doubt not, I shall give him the truth of a good beating.

“JOHN FRANCIS.”

“I, Patrick Henley, known to everyone for the truth of a good fellow, who never refused anyone, on or off the stage, and fight as often for the diversion of gentlemen as money, do accept the challenge of this *Jumping Jack*; and shall, if he don't take care, give him one of my bothering blows, which will convince him of his ignorance in the art of boxing.

“PATRICK HENLEY.”

Towards the end of the eighteenth century several schools were started for the teaching of boxing, amongst them Dan Mendoza's lyceum in the Strand. Then came the palmy days of Gentleman Jackson, the two Belchers—Jem and Tom, Pearce, Cribb, and Gully. The last named has always been held up to posterity as an example of what a good bruiser should be and could become: for John Gully, champion of England, was subsequently a Member of Parliament. And, by the way, if in years to come our children are able to look back upon the antithesis of this preferment, they ought to be congratulated.

In 1824, there were two battles between men whose names will always be synonymous for pluck and good sportmanship—Tom Spring (Winter was his real name) and Jack Langan, the Irishman. On both occasions the former won. Better fellows and finer men never graced the ring.

Of the former wrote some rhyming punster—

“For budding flower, or leafing tree,
I now don't care a splinter;
For Spring is a colder thought to me,
Than the bitterest day of Winter.”

Then there were Owen Swift, Jem Ward, Bendigo, and Caunt, and many other illustrious names spanning the nineteenth century till we come to old Jem Mace, the last of the famous bare-knuckle men, who answered the final call of Time within the last three or four years.

The view of prize-fighting taken by one section of polite society in mid-Victorian times can be gleaned

from Thackeray. "I can see old gentlemen now among us," he says, "of perfect good breeding . . . and look at them and wonder what they were once. . . . That gentleman of the grand old school when he was in the 10th Hussars and dined at the Prince's table, would fall under it night after night. . . . That gentleman would drive his friend Richmond, the black boxer, down to Moulsey, and hold his coat, and shout and swear and hurrah with delight, whilst the black man was beating Dutch Sam, the Jew. That gentleman would take a manly pleasure in pulling his own coat off and thrashing a bargeman in a street row."

But it was a long time before the portentous respectability of that era put an end to fighting. Many a good mill took place more or less in secret: there were many exciting evasions of the police. One magistrate would be dour and relentless, another would wink. As told in the previous chapter, the immortal combat in 1860 between Sayers and Heenan, the "Benicia Boy," was interrupted. Seven years later Jem Mace was arrested, and in the year following that the railways were prohibited by law from conveying people to prize-fights.

The length to which some of the most famous fights were drawn out was extraordinary. The terrible battle between Nat Langham and Harry Orme lasted nearly three hours, and Langham was beaten—for the only time in his life—in the hundred and seventeenth round. That was in 1851. Two years later Langham took more than two hours to beat Sayers, the only occasion on which that most doughty of all champions

was ever bested. Backers were most certainly to blame sometimes for allowing their men to continue fighting. In many of these long, hard-fought battles the principals tottered where they stood, one of them summoning just enough strength to shove the other down. Langham and Orme, in the fight referred to above, were both so weak as to be utterly past hitting. In the last round Langham tried to push his man over, not seeing that he was out of reach. He toppled over with the exertion, and being unable to rise again, lost the encounter.

Johnson, one of the earlier, and Sayers, about the last, champion of the English prize-ring, were comparatively little men. Both fought and thrashed giants. Johnson in sixty-two rounds decisively knocked out Isaac Perrins who stood six foot two, and weighed three stone more than his nimble antagonist. Sayers was only five foot eight, and he gave five inches, four stone and the soundest possible trouncing to Perry, the Tipton Slasher, in their fight for the championship. Sayers owed his success to his wonderful foot-work, and the terrific force of his hitting.

There was a side to prize-fighting which has been insufficiently ventilated. It brought out magnificent qualities in men not otherwise admirable. The ring did not make villains, but gave ready-made villains the chance of being something better. Of course, an opponent of the ring would call this the canonization of rascals, adding that popular accord made heroes of blackguards. A better view is that every man is a good fellow in some way ; and we may thus look on

the exploits of various rascals dispassionately. If it had not been for their fights there would have been less room for them to be anything but rascals. One fellow, by no means a saint in private life, was a genuinely heroic fighter: for no man had longer or harder battles, and he never enjoyed good health, suffering continually from weak lungs.

It is only fair that all fighters—as fighters—whether their moral characters were bad or eminently respectable, should share what esteem posterity may have to offer them.

A modern view too often seeks to vindicate the ring by presenting a list of all the notable people who encouraged it. Certainly, without their support prize-fighting could never have flourished. But it is a mistake to defend an institution by proclaiming the names of those who subscribe to it. That is an appeal to the gallery. Because it is excessively advertised that So and So (very well known) uses Such and Such (a patent commercial product), there is no doubt that a large number of other people will use it too, *because* So and So does. The patent does not stand upon its own merits. At this date, however, it is a pity that the prize-ring should be placed in an analogous category.

Nevertheless, it is interesting to note (as a sign of those times) that Lord Althorp, leader of the Commons at the time of the Reform Bill, seriously considered whether it was not a duty that he owed to the public to go and attend every prize-fight which took place, and thus to encourage the noble science to the extent of his power.

The history of knuckle-fighting forms an astonishing record of pluck. Speaking enthusiastically, courage should not be remarkable ; but to us such courage as was displayed in the ring undoubtedly is. Perhaps now that for half a century or so the practice has been illegal, the deprivation of a grand ideal and of opportunities has merely veiled our powers of endurance. Perhaps our heedlessness of pain is latent still. But we are a softer and more comfortable race. Civilization has its way with us : and the primal qualities of a man are not, we think, so needful as they used to be. Hence they come to be despised and neglected, and neglect brings atrophy.

It is whispered that bare-knuckle fights still take place in the early hours of summer Sunday mornings on Welsh mountains, and one of the most redoubtable army champions of recent years fought more than thirty rounds with his fists when he was a pit-boy of fifteen.

And there was another instance. . . .

In a small room (not in London), where boxing often goes on, and where a little throng of people might reasonably be expected to gather at night, a ring is pitched. There are no more than a score of men round it. Blinds are drawn before the windows—which only give upon a yard—and a lamp hangs high on each of the walls. Two men, well matched welter-weights, sit in their corners, talking to their seconds. Handy to each of them for the sake of appearances in an emergency, a pair of six-ounce gloves hangs from the ropes by its laces. They continue to hang there.

The terms on which the men are to box are as follows :—Rounds are limited to four minutes each, with a minute's rest between them : but if a man falls at any time the round ends then. The fight is to be to a finish, subject to the interference of the referee ; and no wrestling is allowed. It is a mixture, in fact, of old time prize-fighting and boxing. Apart from the conditions described, the modern rules prevail.

Ready ? the men are asked. Time.

Tom and Dick, let us call them. Tom has slightly the best of it in height and reach ; Dick makes up for that in bulk : but both are sturdily-built fellows. They are well trained, and accustomed to hard work with their hands, which has the usual result—their bodies being developed at the expense of their legs. They are lumpy and ungainly to look at, and would have shocked the susceptibilities of a Greek sculptor. They shake hands and begin to manœuvre for an opening.

This wholly reprehensible affair originated—as it might well have done a hundred years before—in a bet. Tom had decisively beaten Dick after ten hard rounds with the gloves. Now Dick is backed to beat Tom without them. And they have consented to this arrangement after a little tactful persuasion.

The spectators sit, thrillingly silent. This is the sort of thing that they have longed—hopelessly longed, they always thought—to see. The time-keeper glances now and again at his watch. By his side the referee (who, it is said, has seen a like performance on another occasion) drums his fingers on his knees and stares.

There is a shuffling sound as the boxers move about the ring. They do not seem very enthusiastic at present. Then Tom leads with his long left. Dick guards it and they come together. There is a spasmodic effort at in-fighting, and they fall into a clinch.

“Break away,” says the referee.

In the next minute Dick sends a swing towards his man's body. Tom steps aside and has planted two resounding blows on Dick's cheek and ear. Dick turns, tries for the body, succeeds this time, and they are in holds again. The onlookers, who are accustomed to ordinary boxing, remark the strange sound of the blows, sharp and spanking. Not that the loudness of a blow means anything: it is the dull-sounding hit which generally does the most damage.

The first round goes the full four minutes. In the next after a sharp rally Dick slips down and falls half through the ropes—bad foot work. So that round ends. In the third it is seen that Dick is waiting for his man. He refuses to lead and Tom, with confidence born of his previous victory and his adversary's clumsy feet, goes for him left and right. Dick tries to retaliate with a cross-counter; Tom jumps aside, and sends in a beautiful right on the side of the jaw. Down goes Dick again, almost knocked out. So far the fight had been a repetition of the other. Tom is the better boxer and seems to be winning, hands down.

After the next call of time, Tom tries in-fighting because he cannot land as many blows as he would

like at long range, and he will not persevere. Then Dick wakes up suddenly, and there is fine scrapping. Blow for blow they are equal. It looks as though Tom was trying to hold, and Dick is beginning to use his feet. Blood flows. Tom's sharp knuckles have landed, not squarely, upon Dick's eye ; glancing away towards his ear, and ripping the loose skin. A fierce rally is in progress when time is called. And the next round is rather similar and the next. In each Tom has a slight advantage.

Really it is a very good fight, the onlookers think : though the more blood-thirsty amongst them would fancy harder hitting. But for that they have not to wait long. After a little sparring Tom suddenly gives back a pace before a straight left, feints with his right at the body, and sends a left hook whizzing in over his antagonist's guard. The blow lands on the side of Dick's rather prominent nose. The latter involuntarily puts up his hand to his face and Tom comes closer, gives him a hard drive on the mark with his left, following it with a still harder right on the already damaged eye. That is the best blow of the encounter so far—clean and straight. Dick falls back and grunts with pain as his seconds bend to lift him up.

"Will you give in ?" asks Tom from his corner, but is vouchsafed no reply.

"You wait a bit, my lad, he'll give in soon enough," says one of his friends, mopping his face with a sponge. "You've cracked his nose for him."

And from one side of the ring at least it is easy to see Dick's second manipulating the injured member

between finger and thumb, and then standing away with his head cocked on one side to make sure that it is straight.

Tom is very happy in this knowledge. He is certainly going to win, and says so to those about his corner. He springs from his chair exactly at the call of time, and fairly jumps across the ring towards Dick. He tries a furious swing, misses, and lands with the left upon the nose again. Dick steps aside, obviously hurt, but determined. He is weak, though his defence is still adequate. Tom lands again upon the broken nose, the torn eye. But even so Dick gets back now and again. Time, and there is applause for both of them.

Tom is desperately anxious to be done with it. He dashes in at the beginning of each round, pounding away at body and head, principally head. Dick is bleeding profusely. He fights on the retreat and makes Tom do most of the work. The latter, who is a good hand at a winning fight, is only too ready to accommodate him. At the end of the eleventh round he comes charging in, stops a hard right at his mark and tries for Dick's nose again ; only to his great surprise—Dick isn't there. He has nipped aside with remarkable speed for him, and before Tom knows it, a desperate fist has come and gone and come again upwards on his very mark. He gives back involuntarily, and loudly they cheer when a spanking left from Dick clips him on the side of the chin and sends him sprawling.

One or two tender-hearted people there had wondered whether the referee was going to stop the

fight. Now they acknowledge that he knows more about boxing than they do. Being a man of imagination he reckoned that Dick still had something up his sleeve. It is to be remarked henceforward that Tom is not a good hand at a losing fight. He hasn't been hurt, and Dick has—rather severely. He is really a pitiful sight, and might have sat as a model for Bungaree when Johnny Broome had done with him. And he is very weak; he cannot follow up his advantages properly. He means to, especially after a mighty body blow which all but knocks the wind out of Tom. But he really cannot. And yet it is Tom now who keeps out of the way of punishment, perpetually retreating.

A round or two later Dick all but falls from a hit on the forehead, but just holds up and guards the next blow, and sends his own right to his opponent's jaw. There is very little weight behind it, but it makes the latter think. That fellow Dick takes more beating than he supposed. A strong disinclination to fight comes over Tom, and at the next blow, which he partly stops, he deliberately tumbles down. At least, people on that side of the ring think so.

And there are two more rounds, during which Dick contrives to fend off serious damage and to land half a dozen body-blows scarce worthy of the name. He goes back to his corner at the end of the fifteenth round leaning heavily on his second. He wonders how much longer he can hold out. What has happened to Tom? Why is he playing like this? And he has scarcely sunk, shattered and limp, on to his chair, when someone speaks. Dick can scarcely understand it.



SIDE-STEPPING AWAY FROM A STRAIGHT LEFT

(see page 73)

"Tom," says that boxer's second to the assembly, "Tom retires. I am sorry to say he is not well."

Tom has had a nasty punch or two in the wind. He feels sick. It isn't worth while going on. What's the good of getting hurt for a few quid? And the next moment Dick is half carried across to the loser's corner to receive a sulky shake of the hand.

But that is only one instance.

CHAPTER IV

GENERAL HINTS

“The deficiency of strength may be greatly supplied with art ; but the want of art will have but heavy and unwieldy succour from strength.”—*Boxiana*.

BROADLY speaking no accessories are required for boxing, which fact makes it the simplest, the most universally attainable pursuit there is. Perhaps swimming may be excepted, for the necessary water may on an average be more easily found than a second pair of fists. Practically, of course, gloves are required, and suitable garments. And if you intend to go in for competitions you must box in a roped ring in order to learn the advantages and disadvantages of a corner.

But the art of self-defence and the sport of boxing should be separately regarded. For the former you should be able to fight encumbered by your ordinary clothes, on slippery grass, on rough and rutted ground, on greasy pavements, with no rope to confine your activities or to prevent you from being knocked against a wall. The latter—the sport—is but the dainty child of a stern parent. True that it bears a closer resemblance to, favours its prototype more than fencing, though curiously enough practice with padded gloves is a less valuable schooling for

genuine and necessary fisticuffs than play with the buttoned foil is for the duel.

In civilized boxing you require scientific aids to refinement : a level, boarded floor, that your feet may slide and glide and shift nimbly, swiftly, easily ; rubber-soled shoes that the sliding may not be too easy ; seconds to bathe you with cold water and flap towels before you between rounds ; as well as all the accoutrements of training, such as punching-balls and sacks, and skipping ropes.

The best kit for boxing consists of a thin vest with short sleeves, loose calico or linen drawers, cut well above the knee, socks and light shoes or boots. A scarf should be worn round the waist and tied at the back. Buckled belts, even when fastened in this manner, are liable to cause injury. A thick sweater can be used for sparring practice and punching the ball, but it will always be found better not to wear trousers as perfect freedom is required for the knees. In a stern set-to a boxer will naturally want the lightest possible covering.

The choice of gloves is extremely important. As in most relations of life the best that money can buy are the most economical, provided they are properly worn. Of late years, the most variously designed mittens have been invented and sold, from an awkward contrivance which consists of a spherical bag with a leather bar to hold inside it, to the ingenious sort which by protecting the wrist deprive the knuckles of their full share of padding. Certainly more comfortable gloves can now be procured than the usual old-fashioned type, and preference should be given to

those which have the horse-hair in the right place, which are laced and not merely fastened with a band of elastic, and which, most important of all, do not need to be worn a dozen times or more before they can be closed comfortably and without effort.

To box with new gloves which you cannot close without considerable muscular exertion is an obvious handicap. For amateur competitions each glove must weigh eight ounces, and generally it is better to practise with gloves of the regulation weight. When punching the ball it is a good thing to use an old pair, discarded for ordinary sparring, and in this case a lighter glove is more useful.

The importance of wearing your gloves properly cannot be exaggerated: and this must be insisted on because the old-fashioned type of glove (which is very stiff when new) is still the most generally used. The glove should be drawn on to its fullest extent, care being taken to put the fingers into their right stalls. It is the commonest occurrence to find boxing gloves that have been carelessly used in this respect, with the leather partitions muddled and torn and displaced. However uncomfortable a stiff glove may be at the outset, once properly worn for a few times, the difficulty of pushing the finger-tips to the extremity of their partitions will be over.

It is well enough to use gloves with elastic bands, provided the elastic is renewed from time to time. Otherwise supplementary tapes must be tied round the wrist and over the thumb. With laced gloves a bow should be tied on the front after the strings have been taken round the wrist.

Boxing gloves should be kept in a dry place, and should always be thoroughly washed if, after an encounter, there is any blood upon them. Apart from the question of cleanliness, blood dries hard upon the leather, and the rough surface may cut the skin with which subsequently it comes in contact. When, owing to a slip or a knock-down, your gloves have touched the floor, always dust them against your body. Particles of sawdust or—worse—resin, with which the ring is generally sprinkled, will stick to the gloves, and are liable to cause injury. Frequently, in these circumstances, a referee will order a boxer to wipe his gloves before continuing to spar. Some boxers—nearly all professionals—wear bandages under their gloves. These should be of soft lint. Bandages are particularly useful for protecting the thumb, especially in contests where lighter than eight-ounce gloves are worn.

In no sport is the temptation stronger than in boxing to run before you can walk. It is a temptation more strenuously than some others to be resisted. You must learn to stand in position before you begin to hit: to hit and guard simply and straightforwardly before you try the several kinds of fantastic blows to which various pugilists have given their names, or which are called after the particular internal organ they are calculated to harass. And it may as well be noted here that, having learned the elements of English upright boxing, and having subsequently tried all the new-fangled dodges, the chances are strongly in favour of your returning to the simplest and least sophisticated methods. I am speaking here for

amateur boxers, the majority of whom box for the sake of exercise; and who find the somewhat old-fashioned and purely English style greatly preferable to the eccentric postures and ultra-scientific forms of attack mainly imported from America.

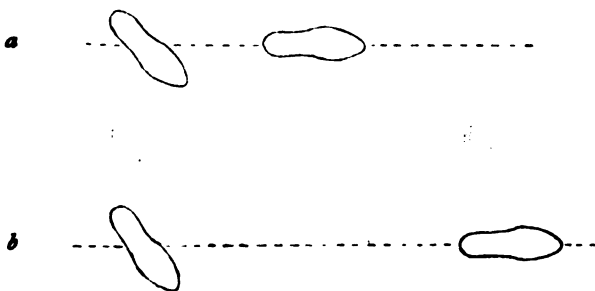
With regard to the head, body, and feet, it is safe to say that the regular English upright position is by far the best. Crouching and sprawling and attitudinizing may be well enough for the highly experienced boxer, but even for him they are liable to prove dangerous. Jim Driscoll, the most brilliant boxer of the present generation, is a perfect exponent of the upright and straight-hitting style. Crouching may help to protect the body, but it certainly exposes the head: and if your feet are far apart, advance and retreat must necessarily be both awkward and slow. Ease and comfort are best realized by the upright style. Not that it appears to be natural or comfortable at the outset: on the contrary you have to grow accustomed to a strange position. New muscles are brought into play, and you will find yourself stiff and cramped until they are more fully developed.

The head and body should be held straight; both knees should be slightly bent, the left foot pointing directly in front of you, the right about ten to fifteen inches (according to your height) behind it, at an angle of forty-five degrees or so. The left foot should rest entirely on the ground, the right heel should be very slightly raised. In this way your weight is equally distributed and balance maintained. Your body should always move from the hips.

The position of the left foot is extremely import-

ant. If it is not absolutely straight before you, your left hand will strike crookedly—in the same direction as that in which your toes point.

The left foot should in all circumstances be in front. Advancing or retreating this order should never be altered. The reason for this is plain. If, in attacking a man who retreats, you follow him and change the order of your feet, you will be in a strained and awkward position. Your left shoulder and arm will be forced forward whilst your left foot is behind.



Position of feet (*a*) when standing still, and (*b*) when advancing.

Should your opponent make a stand at that moment, a light blow will knock you over: or—what is worse—you will find yourself confused and flurried, leaving yourself open to a dangerous blow. Retreating, this muddling up of the feet is still more mischievous. Kept well apart and in their right order, your balance is secure. The left foot should always be moved first, and when it is in position the right foot should be drawn up to the corresponding place. In moving the feet backwards and forwards, you should never lift them from the ground, but slide them along the

floor. That is why, as observed above, a level boarded floor is essential to boxing regarded as a scientific sport.

When beginning to learn it is excellent practice to advance and retreat across a room before a long looking-glass. You can then see if you are making mistakes, and correct them. And in a little while the right placing of your feet will become perfectly natural and spontaneous. A looking-glass is useful in many other branches of boxing, as will be shown later on.

The body should be held slightly edgeways, with the left shoulder well advanced, so as to leave as little target as possible for your adversary's blows. The left arm should be half extended, straight before you : the right held diagonally across your chest, the elbow well in to the side, the knuckles uppermost. The reason for this last is that the fleshy part of the under forearm should be thrust forward to guard. Very severe bruises are likely to be caused by the constant impact of the bone of the forearm with your opponent's wrist. The left shoulder should be raised always to protect the chin. [This position will be found very cramping at first, and a considerable time will elapse before you become completely accustomed to it. But it is highly important and should not be neglected.]

To lay down a hard and fast rule for the position of the left hand is impracticable : though drill sergeants and other people who do things by numbers naturally believe that the same rule must suit everyone. At the public schools championships you can tell nearly always what school has an old soldier for its instructor, by the methods of its representatives ; especially if

one school sends up two or more boys. Whatever their natural characteristics may have been, they are taught to box in a precisely similar way. To be in any way unique would seem to be a grievous breach of *esprit de corps*.¹

For the position of your left hand you should follow your natural movements as far as possible, moulding them to the requirements of science. You should let your arm hang loosely at your side, and raise it, slightly bent and with the fist clenched, in the way that first occurs to you: or rather without thinking of it at all. Some people will find their palm uppermost, whilst the majority hold their knuckles sideways. But it makes no difference to the subsequent blow, which must always be given with the knuckles.

When you are in position it is well to keep moving constantly—sparring for an opening, moving in and out with short, gliding steps, keeping your left arm working gently like a slow piston. Move your right arm too, but not to the same extent. This constant movement serves two purposes:—your opponent can never tell from which side to expect danger; and you will be keeping your muscles free and easy, ready on the instant to respond to any call that may be made upon them.

The careful direction of a natural position is usually better than a revolutionary upheaval of all preconceived ideas. Of course, there are those who have no preconceived ideas, or those whose natural position

¹ This is only to be said of old soldiers; for Service boxing during the last ten years has improved out of recognition.

is such that it is best completely forgotten. There is the natural fighter who is always a good man with his fists, a dangerous antagonist, hard to be beat. No amount of teaching or practice will ever make him a thoroughly scientific boxer. He generally has considerable strength and will often thrash a weaker man and a better boxer. Other things being equal the more scientific boxer will win. But the natural fighter is not to be despised. He lacks polish—his attitude is uncouth, his movements are clumsy. His blow will be dangerous when it lands, for he hits terrifically hard : but much of his power is wasted. His attack is better than his defence, though that is not to say he cannot fight a losing battle. He can and will—with indomitable courage and occasional surprising rallies.

By a natural fighter is not meant the man who charges at you head down, using his arms like flails, but the man in whom certain essentials of real boxing are born. One of these is straight hitting and straight standing, but he cannot manage his feet, and he is a poor hand at guarding. However he is a glutton for punishment, and he has won many a hard-fought encounter.

As must be universally known, every boxing encounter, whether it be a twenty round contest for the Championship of the World or the lightest of practice spars, is preceded and concluded by the two opponents shaking hands. Sneers have been levelled at this ancient and symbolic rite by people who believe boxing to be a very wicked business indeed. The fact is either that they take the handshake too

literally or else are unable to recognize the true spirit of sport. It is sheer hypocrisy, say these folk, that two men who are bent on causing each other's downfall, on bruising and battering and making to bleed and drop from exhaustion each man his fellow, should make an ostentation of goodwill at the outset.

Certainly in a serious fight, with bad blood in it, between—say—two schoolboys, there is no call for the preliminary shaking of hands. Whilst at the end the emotional qualities of the sternest and most reticent will, from fatigue and relief and the fact that a difference has for the moment been settled, in most cases make the simple act perfectly genuine in inspiration. In the case of a competition, however, or a mere impromptu bout with the gloves, it is a dastardly imputation upon sportsmen to deny their goodwill. Those who find themselves too squeamish to hurt their best friends, or be hurt by them as much as possible and in the fairest and most cold-blooded way, had better remain ignorant of the various methods in which this may be done.

Quite apart from this serious and careful aspect of the point in question, it is only fit that a certain punctilio should be observed in fisticuffs as in sword-play : the more so as it is traditional. At the call of Time, the two combatants rise from the chairs or stools in their corners and meet in the middle of the ring. For the sake of convenience, then, they should occupy opposite corners. They shake hands and fall into position. Sometimes this is elaborated—generally in the case of professionals—by the two men walking past each other after shaking hands. Some-

times this manœuvre looks like a silly affectation, and it is not altogether that. It is done in order to show that no sudden blow is intended immediately after the handshake, that the fight shall start fair and square.

However, it does sometimes happen that a man will hit you the moment he has released your hand : and when sparring with anyone of whose ideals of honour you are uncertain it is wise to step back instantly. To do this so as to take up the proper position at once, shake hands with your right foot foremost ; then draw it back, at the same time raising your left arm into the attitude already described.

Before detailing the various methods of attack and defence, a few general points should be noticed. Always keep your eyes wide open and fixed upon those of your opponent. The natural inclination of a beginner very often prompts him to watch his man's gloves. By doing that he will be most surely deceived. What the gloves do preparatory to striking is only the concern of him who wears them. A boxer, seeing that his antagonist has his eyes upon his hands, will feint, moving them this way and that, puzzling his man ; who will first think that his head is the point aimed for, then his body ; until finally he is thoroughly muddled and will try to guard every point at once. That leaves him open to a blow given at leisure and exactly as required. It is only by keeping your eyes on your opponent's that you can guess what he will do. If, in turn, you see him look away take immediate advantage of the fact and press your assault.

Another important thing to remember is that the

teeth should be closed and the jaw firmly (though this should not be exaggerated) set. If you receive even a light blow under the chin when your tongue is between your teeth the result is obvious, and extremely painful at that. Moreover, if your teeth are not closed, you will far more easily be knocked out or dazed by a blow on the side of the chin. Firmly set, the jaw can successfully resist ten times the impact that will almost dislocate it when loose. It is a question of leverage, which will be more fully dealt with when we come to knock-out blows.

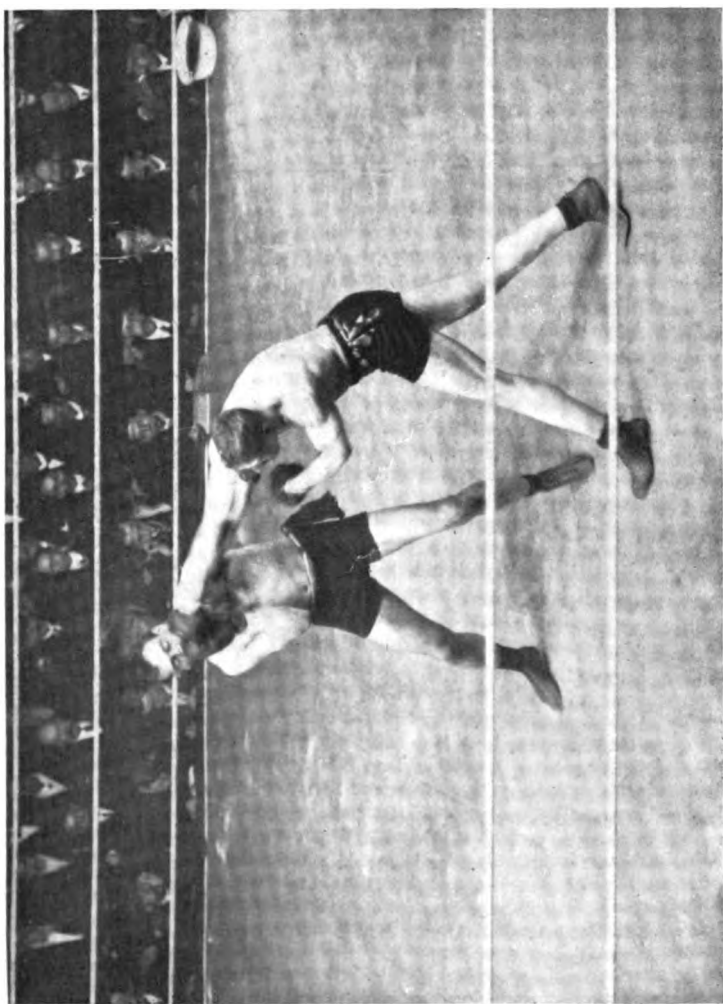
And, when hitting, always keep your hand tightly clenched. A blow with the open glove has no power behind it to speak of, is not counted by the judges as a point gained, and in some cases may cause a considerable injury to the wrist. Even an experienced boxer is occasionally tempted to hit with the tips of his fingers, because it gives him a longer reach. But the practice is one to avoid. Also remember that hitting with the "heel" of the hand—that is to say the lower part of the inside of the glove where there is no padding—is reckoned a foul blow. And this too may recoil upon the striker, to the extent of breaking his wrist. And, of course, the same applies to a hit with the wrist itself, or the elbow; or to butting with head or shoulders.

Always hit with the knuckles of either hand. Not only does this give greater power, but in the event of swinging (*q.v.*) saves injury to the thumb. It naturally follows that when men are boxing, they should, broadly speaking, move round in circles. Always move towards your opponents left: other-

wise you will invite a smashing blow from his right hand.

Hit your opponent where you please above the belt, bearing in mind that blows high on the chest or on the shoulder are unlikely to have damaging effects.

Never let your antagonist see that he has hurt you. Of course it is almost impossible to disguise the fact when you receive a severe blow in the wind. Then you will gasp involuntarily. But when you receive a hard blow on the face—even on the jaw—you need not give the fact away. If you do your antagonist will naturally take advantage of it. If, on the other hand, there is no apparent effect, he will be just as cautious as before, believing that his blow landed not quite so hard as he had supposed, or not upon the vulnerable spot he had aimed for.



WELLS AND FLYNN. FLYNN GUARDS A RIGHT SWING, AND COUNTERS WITH A STRAIGHT LEFT UNDER HIS ANTAGONIST'S ARM. WELLS' LEFT FOOT POINTS AWAY FROM HIS MAN, WHICH FACT CONTRIBUTES TO THE ILL SUCCESS OF THE BLOW

(see pages 53 and 82)

CHAPTER V

THE CARDINAL BLOWS

"The muscles are as springs and levers, which execute the different motions of the body ; but by art a man may give additional force to them."—PIERCE EGAN.

THE straight left lead at the head is the best of all blows. It is that first attempted in ninety-nine contests or sparring matches out of a hundred, and is therefore the first taught of the instructor. It is the simplest, perhaps the most elementary. To the beginner it is not a very easy blow to make perfect, because unless he is naturally left-handed or ambidextrous, he will find himself stiff and awkward in the constant employment of unaccustomed muscles.

But a good straight left will repay months of attention and the assiduous drudgery of practice. After a time it becomes the least difficult blow to deliver and should be regarded from every aspect as the cardinal method of attack. It is the safest blow there is, for the reason that it leaves less of a target for your opponent than any other. A left hand blow straight from the shoulder, repeated over and over again, is the most wearing to an opponent, and it goes from one point to another direct and therefore by the quickest route.

As in learning the preliminary stages of foot-work, much good practice can be got in front of a looking-glass. But of course it is impossible to tell except with an opponent facing you to what an extent your theoretical knowledge has made you proficient. To deliver the straight left at the head, take up your position and push your arm forward straight at your man's face. Do not, as you will want to, draw it back. The beginner generally believes that added power will be given thus. It will not.

The strength of a man's arm alone is insufficient to do much damage. [The arm should be regarded merely as a padded buffer with a heavy engine behind it. It is the weight of the body thrown behind a blow which tells. In order best to bring it into play the left foot should be advanced and the right heel not moved, but lifted. This brings your weight upwards and forwards. The left arm should be just straightened, as you strike. The movements of arm and foot respectively should be together; or if you have lifted your left foot a little, the hand (if anything) should strike its objective a trifle before the foot touches the floor. Also as you hit you should swing the body a little to the left. By these several simultaneous movements, the greater part of your weight will drive your arm before it, making its impact of the most violent kind.

Some little added force is given to the blow by twisting the hand over as you strike, but this is an elaboration better neglected until the ordinary method is thoroughly mastered.

As you lead, raise the right hand with the palm

outwards to guard the face. But at the same time you should be ready instantly to drop your elbow to stop a counter on the body.

It is commonly found that beginners aim solely for the head. Whether this is done from some savage instinct to mark the enemy where that mark may best be observed, it is not to be said off-hand; but to make for the face alone is a first-rate mistake. Generally speaking, a persistent and vigorous attack upon a man's body will usually wear him out sooner than repeated blows upon the head—always excepting the angle of the jaw.]

By "body" is meant in the first and most important instance, the wind: that is, the point where the ribs curve away from the breast bone. Any hard sudden blow upon this spot is fraught with overwhelming effect. The man who receives it, whether from a cricket or football, or from the fist of a boxer, tends to double up and gasp. There is a most nauseating and actually painful sensation, and frequently one who has been severely winded collapses upon the floor, frequently is unable to rise before ten seconds are counted. But apart from the wind, almost any hard blow upon the body is calculated to weaken a man. Repeated attacks on the ribs having the effect of tiring him: and a shrewd body blow, if it does naught else, is liable to make your opponent tuck in his stomach and so thrust his head forward.

Where body blows are most obviously valuable is in the case of the small man pitted against another much taller. A long reach is of inestimable advantage in boxing: a specially long reach is like fighting

a swordsman with a longer rapier than your own ; and the tall man naturally has this advantage over the small one. He can prop him off with his straight left so persistently and with such certainty that the small man can hardly ever reach his head. But what he can do, if he is of any use at all as a boxer, is to slip past or duck that long left arm and attack his tall opponent's body. And he will find ample compensation in this for his littleness of stature.

In usual boxing, men are paired off to spar who are within one of the recognized limits of weight : so that two men of eleven stone will have a similar power behind their respective blows. But one of them may be a lanky giant and the other a broad-shouldered, deep-chested fellow. The latter is likely to have much greater physical strength than the other : who in his turn is probably weedy. So that a heavy body blow from the stout little man will, at the least estimation, do as much harm as the long arm attack upon the latter's head.

Later on when mention is made of in-fighting, it will be shown how a short boxer may make the best of his shortness, and how easily accessible to him his antagonist's " mark " may be.

[The straight left and right at the body are both comparatively easy to deliver successfully, particularly the latter. In the former case, the position is in every respect the same as the left lead for the head, but with the glove striking downwards. In body blows the weight can be even more emphatically brought to bear than in a blow at the head, but—especially with the left hand—great care should be taken lest the glove

strike too low. For body blows it is better to bend the arm a little more, to come rather closer to your antagonist than for head blows; and the left foot should come forward considerably more than with a blow at the head. A left hand body blow is exclusively concerned with the wind or "mark": the right hand naturally comes more conveniently under the region of the heart.

In order to deliver a left hand body blow it is necessary to learn to duck. As your opponent leads off with his left, instead of guarding the blow, merely avoid it by inclining your head to the right and allowing his arm to pass safely over your shoulder. When doing this the feet should not be moved. At the same time bring the left foot forward and strike. For the right hand body blow, you should bend your head to the left as your opponent leads off, and it is well to come a little closer than in the case of the left hand blow. Your feet should be nearer together, and the body should swing round heavily behind your right arm. The unaccustomed boxer usually likes to use his right as much as possible, and this is the best opportunity for him. The blow is one of the easiest to bring off and is extremely effective. Every ounce of weight can be brought to bear.]

Always, if you can, be first. The first really good blow in an encounter is often decisive. When you are boxing with a man whose powers and skilfulness are unknown quantities, and who is similarly ignorant about you, do your utmost to land the first blow and make it a telling one. A man is often discouraged at the outset in this way. He may be led to think that

you are a much better boxer than is actually the case, and will fight on the defensive accordingly.

And press your attack and follow up an advantage. By this it is not meant that, having delivered a blow, you should remain in the same position. You will be punished for it if you do. But having struck a good blow, get away, come in again at once, and strike another. If your man breaks ground before you, follow him: not carelessly or with rushing, heedless steps: but quickly following left foot with right, left foot with right, until you can pen him in a corner. Nothing is more demoralizing than the persistent assault, if at the outset it has been successful. At the same time, so long as a man holds his ground, you should retire out of harm's way after each blow; until, that is, you have learned to give double blows—right instantly following left, or *vice versa*.

Having led off with the left (whether you have landed the blow or not) step back. The right foot should slide back first, then draw the left after it, all the while being ready to ward off a sudden attack on your opponent's part. Retreat out of reach of his blows but no further; then come in again. Of course when your man gives before you there is no question of retiring. Then you should crowd in your blows as quickly as possible, moving your feet continually forward in the proper manner—left—right—left—right. But, save in the case of a man you know for certain to be your better—(and even then, judicially)—try to be first: do your utmost to begin the fight with a really hard straight blow.

The best way in which to learn straight blows in

the first instance is to go in for regular exercises, provided always that you do not allow your movements to become wooden. A good instructor generally follows this method; but it can be practised equally well with a fellow pupil, so long as you know how to deal the several blows properly.

In a club it is a good plan to be doing this while the ring—if you have only one—is occupied by another pair. This exercising for particular blows takes up little space in a small room, where every square foot is of importance: and it can be, both for beginners and adepts alike, quite as useful as sparring with a punching ball.

Each man should take it in turn to be a chopping-block. First of all, we will say, your opponent stands on guard, and you lead with your left at his head with your left. Then you retire, then lead again. He will have a rigid guard all the time, so you need not be afraid of taking him unawares. In fact, it is better to hit as hard as you can, so as to learn the art of putting weight behind your blow, of transferring every atom of your power to the impact of your glove upon its objective. Then it is your turn to guard, standing still, neither ducking nor countering. You should take your man's blow on your glove, pressing it outwards just before it would land. When it is your business to hit again, try a left at the body, and then a double lead-off: left at the head and right at the body, and so on.

It is a great mistake, if you are teaching a beginner, to be the chopping-block only. In the first place, the pupil does not have his fair share of guarding; and in

the second, you tend to become slow and stiff. A professional who has taught boxing for a number of years can never return to the ring with any reasonable hope of success. For, considered from all points of view, teaching is the worst possible practice.

But, of course, ordinary sparring should never be neglected. And even when two beginners get into the ring and go for each other hammer and tongs they will learn a good deal. Their mistakes must be corrected, of course; and now and again they should be pulled up short by the instructor who is watching them. And they should never be allowed to repeat a mistake without a caution. But for all that a good, hard bout will find out what a man is worth, so long as he is well grounded in the rudiments of the science. At the same time, a beginner should not be prepared to take on all comers promiscuously. If he does, he may get a perfectly unnecessary thrashing from someone who likes an easy foe, and in this way he may be discouraged from continuing a promising career.

The exercises above referred to are of genuine value, and they are the only means by which a beginner can acquire a perfect straight left. Nevertheless it is easy, by overdoing these exercises, to become mechanical. If you learn your lesson by numbers—(1) straight left at the head, followed by (2) a right at the body, with no variation—your opponent in a competition will very soon take the measure of you. But even if you do that, so long as the straight left is a really good one, you will readily beat many a more showy boxer. For such is the power of the best of all possible blows.

CHAPTER VI

DEFENCE

"There is nothing that interests me like good boxing," said Sir Robert Peel, "it asks more steadiness, self-control, ay, and manly courage, than any other exercise. You must take as well as give,—eye to eye, toe to toe, and arm to arm."

IN boxing quickness is more than half the battle. Three or four movements, at first learned separately and laboriously, merge—when perfected—imperceptibly into one another. After a time the right placing of hands and feet, the turnings of the head, all become second nature. Save in specific methods of attack, the accustomed boxer's actions are quite spontaneous and inevitable. He does not have to think, but moves unconsciously. Of course when he wants to land a particular blow or to manœuvre his man into a certain position, he must think and plan and do it with extraordinary alertness, so that agility of brain is quite as necessary as suppleness of muscle.

It is always better to avoid a blow than to stop it. By ducking or slipping, or side stepping, not only do you save yourself from your antagonist's intentions, but you can at the same time put yourself into a good position for a return. And the best way of avoiding any straight blow, but particularly the

left at the head, depends entirely upon quickness. You see the straight left arriving. You time it. And at the moment when your opponent means it to land, you step back just out of reach. All you have to do is to plant your right foot back six or eight inches, at the same time throwing your head and shoulders back. The blow is then expended upon empty air; and it should be mentioned incidentally that the man who violently strikes—nothing, is liable, besides over-reaching himself and putting himself into a slightly top-heavy position, to jar his arm severely. But do not lean back more than is absolutely necessary, or you will be in a perfectly hopeless attitude from which it is extremely difficult to recover.]

On the other hand, if you have just got out of distance, you are in a perfect position for an instantaneous return. At the precise moment that your opponent's arm has reached its fullest extent in the attempt to hit you, draw up your right foot, slide in your left and strike. This is a first-rate opportunity for your own straight left, or for a right at the body, or—when you come to learn it—a left hook-hit at the jaw. But to be fully effective such a return must be timed to the fraction of a second; and that can only come of practice. Ducking has already been referred to in connection with body blows. It should be borne in mind, however, that the movement may prove dangerous, especially where the head is lowered as well as shifted to the side. For that brings it within reach of a hook-hit from your opponent, or an upper-cut—a difficult blow, which will be dealt with later on.

Ducking and moving the head backwards to avoid a straight blow and forwards to protect the chin, develops the muscles of the neck to a remarkable degree. That is why most habitual boxers are bull-necked. Some experienced boxers when ducking bend their knees and go down so far as to be almost sitting on their haunches in order to let a blow pass right over their heads. This is not to be recommended, however, since the most agile boxer will find it difficult to recover his upright position sufficiently quickly. Besides, if done continually, this constant bobbing up and down is likely to be tiring. And one of the great points in scientific boxing is to reserve your strength and so to manœuvre as to let your antagonist do most of the work and let him, if possible, tire himself.

Slipping, on the other hand, though more hard to make perfect, is less likely to leave you open to attack. Wait until your adversary leads off with his left; or if you can do so by a feint, invite him to lead off and, as the blow comes, duck to your right. Do this, not by lowering the head, but by turning your left shoulder towards him, at the same time advancing with the left foot well past him. In this way his left arm will pass harmlessly away not merely over your own shoulder, but outside it, and you—if you are quick and he is slow—can be at the other side of the ring before he realizes what has happened.

But, unless you have some very adequate reason for getting completely out of reach, it is infinitely better to stop and take advantage of the position you have gained. By turning out the left foot—that is,

towards your opponent—and bringing round the right to its corresponding position, and by doing this at the utmost speed, you will be in the right attitude for attack whilst your man is still wondering why he hasn't hit you. You are then in a position for planting a short-arm blow with the right on his ribs, or you may be able to get in a hard right to the side of his head over his extended shoulder.

The side-step is used, less for avoiding any particular blow than a series of them. That is to say, it is the best way of breaking your antagonist's rush; either when he is trying to pen you against the ropes or in a corner. It is a most necessary dodge to learn, but should not be attempted until you thoroughly understand ducking and slipping and getting away out of distance.

Your opponent has gained some small advantage, and, as he should, has followed it up. You have been unable to stand against him and have retreated, steadily and in good order until you find yourself in a corner. Once resolutely hemmed in, you are liable to become flustered and confused; you cannot retreat any more, and sooner or later your opponent will get in a blow that may finish the matter there and then. So as soon as you find yourself in this predicament, make up your mind to be out of it at once. There are two ways of doing this: one as already indicated by side-stepping; the other by sheer force. You have gone back until you can go back no more. You make a stand, hold both arms slightly bent, and go straight for your man, fighting him, forcing him back. That is well enough if you can

rely on your strength being greater than his, and if you are able also to bear the strain.

[Side-stepping is less heroic but of more practical use. Strength is not required: there will be no severe strain on your reserve force. Turn the body suddenly to the right, at the same time taking a good pace to the right with the right foot. Keep your head turned to the left so as to watch your opponent. Draw up the left foot immediately into its proper position in front of the right, and you will find yourself well away to your man's left and out of danger. You will then be able either to get away to the middle of the ring, or, which is better, turn the tables on your opponent by forcing him into the corner which you occupied only a moment before. Needless to say, this manœuvre must be accomplished with lightning speed, if it is to achieve its purpose.]

The reason why side-stepping is better left alone until more elementary and more important movements are learnt is that it reverses—just for a moment—the golden rule which insists on the left foot always being in front. Also, just for a moment, you are standing in a position when very little will upset your balance. Side-stepping can best be practised with a sparring partner or instructor stronger than yourself, and well able so far as force is concerned to keep you in the corner.

These then are the ways in which to avoid blows. We come now to the far more common, but on the whole less desirable guard. It has already been said that when taking up your position facing an opponent, the right arm should be held diagonally

across the chest with the knuckles inwards, so that the muscular part of the forearm and not the bone may stand the brunt of the blow it has to meet; or rather not so much the blow as the forearm of your opponent.

1st [In order to guard a left lead at the head thrust out the arm firmly in the position described, and return it to its original position immediately afterwards, that you may be prepared for another blow. Take care to hold the arm diagonally still as you guard. Most beginners make the capital mistake of raising their elbow. If you do that the forearm is but a narrow bar across the face; and your opponent can hit over or under it as he pleases. Held slantwise it can be moved to left or right far more surely than the horizontal arm can be shifted up or down. Besides, even when held perfectly still, the diagonal guard covers far more of the target. It is necessary to put considerable power behind the arm as you push it out to guard, as otherwise it may be badly hurt or beaten down. And then the blow may land after all.]

2nd [To stop a left hand body blow, all you have to do is to lower your arm so as to guard the "mark." It should, however, be held slightly away from the body, as otherwise the arm may be driven so forcibly against your body as to allow you to feel the blow: though, of course, it will be in a modified form.]

3rd [Guarding a right hand body blow is, of itself, quite easy. You merely have to lower the left arm somewhat so that the elbow protects the ribs. Unfortunately, however, you are seldom in a position

to do that, since it is when your left arm is extended in a lead at your opponent's head that he is most likely to duck and try the blow in question. You should then be prepared to cover your left ribs with your right glove.

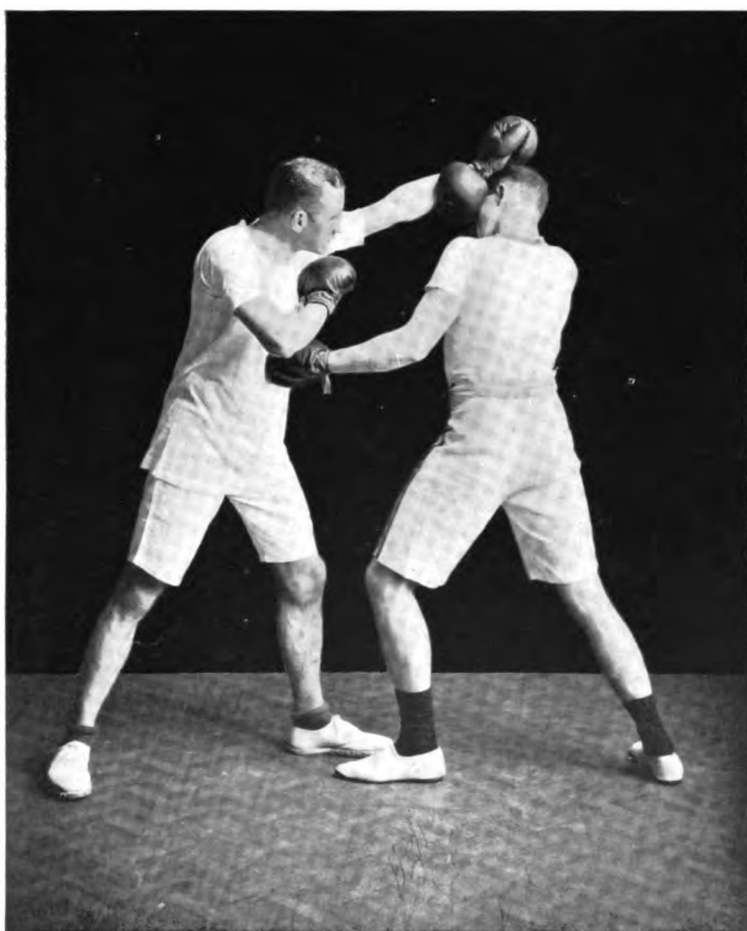
5 A right handed blow at the head either of the straight or swinging variety (that most frequently employed by beginners) is unquestionably the easiest to stop effectually. Your left arm being naturally held fairly high, it only remains to make it rigid; and nothing can get past it from the outside; and nothing from the inside that your right arm guard cannot account for. Also, of course, you can guard the face from a right hand blow by bending your left arm at the elbow; remembering, as with the right arm guard, to turn the knuckles towards your face and the muscular side of the forearm to the enemy.]

2 Then, too, the position, strongly recommended, with the left shoulder held perpetually high renders it extremely difficult for your antagonist to touch that part of your face which is most vulnerable—the jaw. No doubt with bare knuckles this high-held shoulder would be less effectual. An eight ounce glove makes your fist above three times its natural size, and therefore unable to glance through (so to say) the joints in your harness, as a naked fist would. Moreover bare knuckles could do more damage to the upper part of your face. You cannot, unless your strength be really prodigious, knock out a man by a blow full in the face given with a well padded glove. A blow on the side of the temple or behind the ear may do

so readily enough, but the only damage likely to occur in the front of the face is the breaking of a nose or the blackening of an eye. In the days of knuckle fighting it was a great thing to pound away at your man's eyes so that they became badly swollen and he could not see. But it is comparatively rare for such a contingency to arise with ordinary boxing gloves.]

To refer back to ducking, there is a trick practised sometimes in ordinary boxing which is foul, but which is certainly allowable and even to be recommended in a serious street encounter. The word "street" will be understood to convey an occasion when you are attacked (it may be in a country lane) and you have to defend yourself—or someone else—with your bare fists. It often happens too that the trick is done unintentionally. When he ducks instead of merely avoiding his opponent's lead, an unfair boxer will come in close and bring his left shoulder into heavy contact with his man's ribs. Such a blow may cause very considerable damage, a referee will call a boxer who does it to order, and if he persists, disqualify him.

This invaluable dodge for a rough-and-tumble fight is made still more effective by throwing back the left arm just as the shoulder meets your opponent's ribs. This puts the bone into relief and makes a sharp point. But in ordinary boxing, quite apart from the unfairness of the trick, it is usually much better policy to duck away from a blow at a distance, and not to come to such close quarters as would be necessary when the shoulder is brought into play.



GUARD FOR A STRAIGHT LEFT, WITH LEFT HAND COUNTER ON THE
"MARK"

(see pages 74 and 79)

Another point to be remembered with regard to body blows is that when within range of the enemy's arm, always keep your stomach muscles well set. As this requires a certain amount of effort, they can be safely relaxed when you are out of distance: but the difference between a blow on the "mark" when the large abdominal muscles are closed over it and one given when they are not, is just the same as upon the open and closed jaw. A man with well developed muscles can take a mighty lot of hard hitting in that region: but a blow there when the muscles are undeveloped or allowed to be soft and slack is like a blow on a window with the shutters open.

CHAPTER VII

COUNTER BLOWS

"Strength, most undoubtedly, is what the boxer ought to set out with, but without art he will succeed but poorly."—*Boxiana*.

COUNTER blows are those which are intended to frustrate your opponent's lead. They are many in number, and should not be attempted by the beginner in boxing until the elementary forms of offence have been thoroughly mastered. The right hand body blow is, of course, often a counter—that is, a blow given in return to one of your opponent's ; for leading off with the right is always dangerous. You should wait for your antagonist's left lead at the head, or better still for his right lead at the same spot. For the straight right hand lead at the head is about the most difficult blow to bring off successfully that there is. If your opponent attempts this, you cannot do better than to counter with the right on the body.

[O]ne of the most effective counters you can use is the straight left, to stop your man when he is rushing you. It is a famous mistake to charge or jump in at a man at any time. If you jump you are liable to be hit when both your feet or one of them is off the ground—when, therefore, you have no balance. Your downfall will be almost certain in that case. But it is particularly inadvisable to rush a man who

is retreating slowly, and guarding well and who is obviously not dead beat.†

We will say that you are retreating like this, in good order, trying to draw your opponent after you. Believing that he has you in his power, he rushes; perhaps with both arms half extended, or with one drawn back to swing. Stop short suddenly with your left straight and rigid before you, and he will run on to it. His whole weight will be behind him: and if at the same moment you throw your shoulder forward and advance your left foot, your weight will be added also. Such a blow with the force of your combined bulk behind it is not readily forgotten by the man who gets it.

The most common form of counter blow is the hook-hit. [As its name suggests, it is given with the bent arm. One of the best methods of using the hook is to wait for your antagonist to lead with his left. Guard the blow with your right arm, at the same time coming a little closer to him. As his shoots out, lower your left arm and hit out, with the knuckles uppermost, at his mark. Do not put much weight behind that blow, but instantly draw back your arm and send a similar blow to the angle of his jaw. The first, if it has no other effect, will draw down your man's guard; and the second, if you are quick enough, will land in a most damaging manner. When hitting with your left at a man's body, be careful always to avoid his elbow. If he holds it low over his ribs and well pointed, it forms a dangerous spike even through a thick glove. There was a case of a man who swung his left heavily at his opponent's

ribs, caught him on the elbow and found subsequently that through the padding of an eight-ounce glove he had broken a bone of his hand and put two knuckles out of joint.

[The left hook at the jaw is a first-rate blow. Properly timed and judged it has often finished a battle, or at least paved the way for the decisive blow coming next after it. Really there is no need to complicate it by the preliminary hit at the body. A double hit in any case is seldom of much use unless given by a boxer of the most tried experience. Double hits depend for their success entirely upon speed, and speed of a by no means common order. But either of these blows—at the body or at the head—taken separately is an admirable counter. If you don't contrive to land the blow, you will not be in any worse case than you were before; if you do, you can follow it up promptly with another, or with a right hand blow at the jaw. At all events the great thing is to keep pegging away at your man, never to leave him alone, so long as you have the power to hit hard.] There is, of course, a limit to the advisability of persistence, and that will be discussed in the chapter given to Competitions.

[The most generally used crooked blow is the right hand cross-counter on the jaw, which has been responsible for more knocks out than any other. This is delivered when your opponent leads with his left. You duck to the left yourself, and bring your right hand across to the jaw over his shoulder. To do this the right arm should be well bent, so that your glove and elbow is in a straight line at right

angles to his head. But if you try this blow with the arm only partially bent, so that your elbow and your opponent's as he leads are alongside each other, you will only reach his ear or eye or cheekbone. His shoulder and upper arm will be between your glove and his jaw. In any case, owing to a man's shoulder being well lifted to protect the side of his face, the blow will often have no effect at all.

Of course, the ideal condition for a right hand cross-counter is when your opponent is either too tired to hold up his shoulder, or, underrating your own power, is careless about it. It is a good plan instantly to follow up a right hand cross-counter with a straight left at the face. To do that well, you should step back a little and come forward again quickly with the left foot, as in an ordinary lead off.

It cannot be too frequently repeated that a boxer must always follow up an advantage. You will see a man sometimes land a good blow and then stand off to watch its effect and admire it. That simply means that his opponent has time in which to recover from its effects. Even when wearied, or possibly hurt yourself, never fail to keep on at your man. It needs considerable determination sometimes, but then determination (to be Irish) is one of those many things in boxing which are half the battle.

The upper-cut—a very over-rated blow—is for some reason or other a great temptation to beginners. By them, however, it should be eschewed. The blow requires considerable cleverness to be of any real use, as of its nature it is difficult to put much weight behind it. It can be done, but not by an in-

experienced boxer. The upper-cut is used when your opponent ducks too low, or when, as often happens with a clumsy boxer, he habitually bends his head forward. An opportunity for a left hand upper-cut is frequently given when a boxer aims a left hand body blow at you from too great a distance. His feet will be very far apart, and his head will be low and right in front of you. You drop your own left and bring it up suddenly, bending it from the elbow, into his face. The knuckles should be uppermost. You will have to twist your body a little to the right in order to throw any weight behind the blow, at the same time jerking your left shoulder. A similar chance sometimes arises for your right hand when your opponent tries his right at the body, and then since your left foot is advanced you will find it easier to get weight into the blow. The upper-cut most frequently occurs during in-fighting (*q.v.*).

And then there is the swing (with either hand) which may be a counter and which may not : the most beloved blow of all beginners and many old stagers ; a very effective one when it does land, and except against an already beaten man quite the most dangerous to the smiter of the whole list. This blow is given by drawing back the arm as far as it will go and swinging it forward with the whole weight behind it—usually at the side of the opponent's jaw. Its merits are therefore obvious. If such a blow lands in the right place, no one can stand against it. And as said above, in the case of a man already so worn out that he cannot raise his arms to guard, it is certainly a good way of finishing him off. But equally obvious

are the demerits of the swing, and they outweigh its advantages.

In the first place, the swing is dangerous to attempt because you must draw your arm right back and away from your body : and that not only exposes it, but makes it impossible to bring your arm back into position in time to guard a blow. Your preparation for straight blows need give no inkling to the adversary of your intentions. The swing sends him a message—"gives him the office," to employ ancient jargon—long before the blow can by any possibility land. So, if he has his wits about him, he makes perfectly certain of thwarting it by a hard straight left, which must come in first for the simple reason that it has about a quarter the distance to travel.

If that objection is not sufficient there are others. You must be even more especially careful when swinging than at any other time to hit with the big knuckles. And somehow it does not come naturally to do that, and in the flurry and excitement of dealing a prodigious blow the boxer forgets and hits with his thumb. At the least it will be badly sprained : often it is put out of joint. Of course a boxer has no business to be flurried and excited, but nevertheless even those of many years' experience very often are. If you put your thumb out, that hand will be useless for hitting for the rest of the encounter.

And then to a man whose strength and agility are still unimpaired, a swing should be an almost ludicrously easy blow to frustrate. To guard it, the half bent arm held well away from your head on either side is enough. Of avoiding it entirely, there are two ways.

Firstly, by coming in close to your man preparatory to an onslaught with half-arm body blows. In that case your antagonist's swing (if it is intended for your jaw) will be wasted on air somewhere behind your head. But be careful to come forward towards him near enough : otherwise the swing may land on the back of your neck, and if it is a particularly hard one, you may be knocked out of time by that. Such cases have been known.

Secondly, you can step back—just as you would to avoid a straight left : only step back a little farther. This is much the better method, for then not only will your adversary's arm swing round into emptiness, but the force of it will put him off his balance. In order to illustrate this fact, you have only to stand in the ordinary position for boxing and swing at an imaginary head. Your feet being rather close together and all your weight suddenly shifted from one side to the other, your position will be evidently perilous. If in a competition or serious combat you are fortunate enough to make your adversary do this, you can step in quickly and punish him without the slightest fear of a return.

Then there is an infallible guard with the left for the right swing at the head, which merely consists in holding out your arm slightly bent and in stepping back a little so that the hit cannot land over your shoulder. The swing lands on that, and if (as often happens with a wild boxer) the arm comes with the inner side foremost, its contact with your elbow will be considerably painful to the striker. The chances are indeed strongly in favour of his arm being made

useless for some minutes afterwards, or even for the rest of the fight. Of course the elbow should never be used in this manner with malice prepense : but he who swings should remember that he may expect it ; and in a street fight it is certainly a legitimate guard, and a definite practice to bear in mind.

The same thing may be done with the right arm to guard a left swing ; but this entails extending your right away from the body and thus leaving it open.

Swinging then is a dangerous practice and should only be resorted to with a tired opponent, or one who is obviously the worser scientific boxer.

[Feinting plays a most important part in relation to counter blows. You are (for the sake of argument) particularly fond of a right at the body : therefore you want to draw your opponent's guard away from that part. Pretend to lead off at his head with your left : that is to say, with your eyes on his, move your arm not too violently forward, and so draw up his guard. Then duck away from his counter, which will probably be of the same kind, and go in with your right.]

An excellent plan in a competition, and especially towards the end of it, if you feel fairly strong, is to make a regular succession of left-leads. Apart from all else, if they land, they add up the points in your favour. Left—left—left—one after another, and your opponent will think you mean to do nothing else, perhaps that you have hurt your right hand and cannot hit with it. Left, left, and he will be taken completely by surprise when you suddenly duck and bring the right home on his body. Some men drop both their hands in order to give their adversary a

free target, meaning to spring aside as he attacks and take him at a disadvantage. But this is very unwise, as a good boxer will be quick enough to accept the invitation intended as a fraud.

Another feint which may be useful, but in an inexperienced boxer apt to recoil upon itself, is to duck rather low to the left to invite an upper cut on that side: and then to straighten your head and bring your left into your opponent's face. But unless this is done with remarkable speed and smartness, you will receive the upper cut, and have no chance for your own counter.

CHAPTER VIII

IN-FIGHTING

"Why about the pugilists this pothor?
These first shake hands before they box ;
Then give each other plaguy knocks,
With all the fondness of a brother."

AS has been said earlier in this book, the preliminaries of foot-work may most usefully be practised in front of a long glass. Nimbleness of feet is just as important to the successful boxer as quickness of head and hand. A good dancer will find his gentle art of great value when he comes to learn the rough one.

After a sharp rally—especially with a man heavier than yourself—you should break ground : that is, not merely get away after a blow, but retreat in good order to rest or to recover, perhaps from a damaging hit. To do this, lead with your left, at the same time guarding with your right ; plant your left foot firmly on the ground, push on it, and spring well back. As your left foot touches the ground again in front of your right (when, in fact, you are in your original position), repeat the process again : but learn to do it so quickly as to make almost one movement of it. With practice you will be able to do this so as never to fear for your balance.

The ordinary foot-work required in straightforward boxing is simply a matter of practice ; and a really good boxer should never need anything else. There is one trick, however, which has become so popular owing to the skill with which professionals use it, that it can scarcely avoid some mention. This is called "changing feet" ; and was brought over from America in the first instance. It is one of those deceptive things that look beautifully easy when done by a first-rate man, but which is both difficult and dangerous. Changing the feet should never on any account be attempted by any one who has not thoroughly mastered the principles of ordinary foot-work.

As you advance upon your opponent—left foot and hand in front in the usual manner—you suddenly draw the left foot back and put the right in its place, thus breaking one of the most important rules of good English boxing. The movements involved must be so quick as to appear one to the onlooker ; and yet must not degenerate into a jump off the ground. As your right foot comes down on to the ground quite close to your opponent's left, you swing or hook your own left hand to his body. This can be complicated by a second and harder blow to his jaw without moving the feet. You then spring back again into the ordinary position. Fitzsimmons was a brilliant exponent of the dodge, and used it with tremendous effect : but it is not to be done by everybody.

The underlying idea is to convert your left arm into as powerful a weapon as your right for the occa-

sion : for with your right foot in front it is easier to swing all your weight behind the left arm blow than in the ordinary position. So much for the advantage of changing feet when it is properly done.

On the other hand, it is more than probable that you will be slow over the manœuvre, and your man may literally catch you tripping. Once the feet are out of gear, out of their normal positions, you can never depend on your balance. And if your antagonist is quick enough to hit you at the moment when your feet are level and close together, you are bound to go down, and a fall—even from a light blow—is a disconcerting occurrence. Apart from any hurt involved it is disheartening. Or things may be even worse with you. Your opponent may surprise you as before, hit you when you are unsteady, and, not knocking you down, continue to punish you whilst you are trying—probably in vain—to resume the old position. The coolest-headed man is apt to be flurried then.

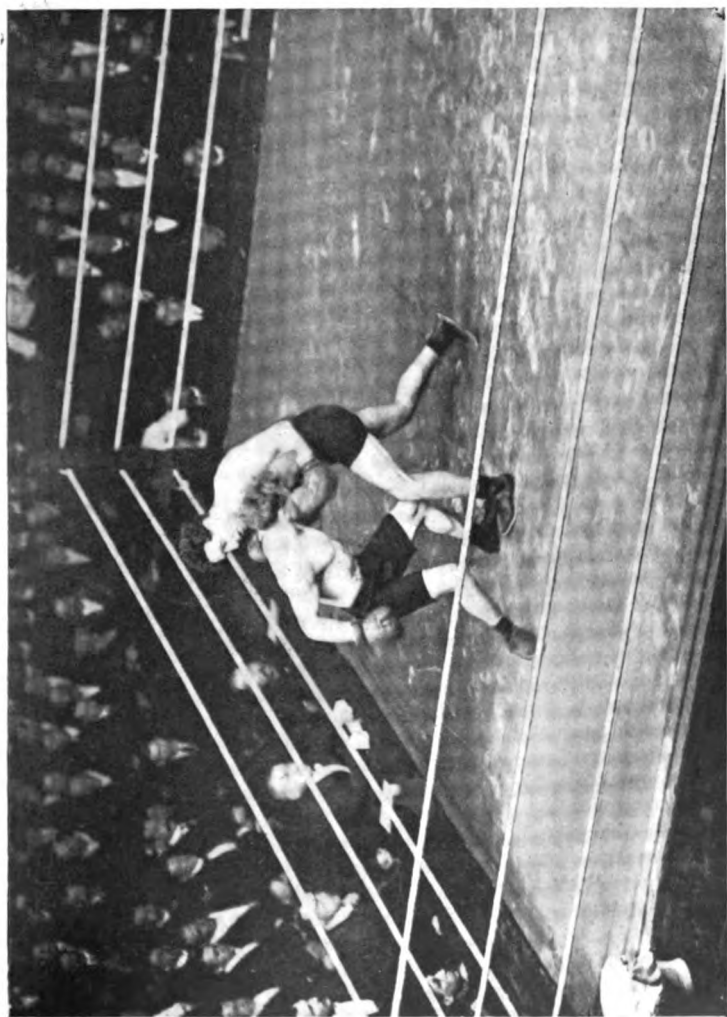
A necessary branch of boxing, but one that is fraught with several dangers is in-fighting : which, roughly interpreted, means fighting at close quarters, with short, half-arm blows. There is nothing than this, from the onlooker's point of view, which gives keener pleasure to the lover of scientific boxing. It requires a very quick eye and some intimate knowledge of the sport to appreciate in-fighting : and it needs two fair-spirited boxers to make it possible at all. For in-fighting your attack must be uncommonly quick, your guard quicker still. For the average amateur, in-fighting, to be kept up for any appreciable

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length of time, needs the very finest training. It is extremely exhausting: and you may take it for granted that (being an average amateur) more of your opponent's blows will land on your head and body than you will guard. At the same time, if you can stand the strain of hitting left-right and right-left in the quickest possible succession, there is always a good chance of damaging your man.

For a short man tackling a tall one, in-fighting is highly useful. A long reach is of enormous advantage in boxing, and the tall man with long arms, if he is well taught, will make the most of it. He will do his utmost to prop you off with his straight left: and you will sometimes find it very difficult to get past it. He will naturally do everything he can to prevent you from coming close to him, thereby rendering his reach useless. But it is worth risking something to get inside his long arms.

Do not rush or charge, or you will merely increase the power of his blow. The best way is to duck inside a straight left at your head and then to pound away at his body. If he is near the ropes at the time, or you can drive him there, this onslaught at the tall man's wind will be still more effective. He will be unable to get away before you have sent him half a dozen short, hard blows; and all the while he will be trying desperately to upper-cut you and to force you away. His arms will be over your head and his gloves will beat upon the back of it, unlikely to do much harm. Should you, on the other hand, happen to be the tall man; when your short opponent has come in close to you, drop your arms a little, now



L SUMMERS AND LEWIS. THE ATTITUDE OF SUMMERS (ON THE LEFT) GIVES SOME IDEA OF THE POWER THAT MAY BE GIVEN TO A BODY BLOW. LEWIS IS ABOUT TO UPPER-CUT

(see page 51)

that your long reach is of no avail, keep your elbows bent well in front of you so as to protect the body, and strive by the force of your blows on the upper part of your adversary's face to push him away.]

In order to get as much power as possible behind your blows, you should swing your shoulders. It is necessary, for in-fighting to be effective, to keep your arms rather closer together than is usual in long range boxing; and to hit quite straight, particularly at the body. Your jaw is more or less protected by carrying your head low with your chin on your chest. By bringing your head down when attacking your opponent's body, you give him good opportunities for upper-cuts, though not for very hard ones. Your chin will be safe from them, but your nose will not. When getting away after a sharp rally of in-fighting you should cover up well: that is to say, hold both fore-arms rigid and vertical in front of your face about six inches away. At the same time bend forward a little. Your elbows will protect your body, and as you step back your antagonist will be unable to touch your jaw.

"Covering up" in this way is useful sometimes when breaking ground away from an opponent who has just given you a severe blow on the side of the chin, enough to daze you a little without actually bringing you to the floor. The most useful blow to be delivered when in-fighting is a short, sharp, jolting one which only travels six or eight inches to your antagonist's jaw. Repeated again and again this is a very punishing hit. And a systematic attack on his body, preferably at the "mark," is very wearing.

But the chief objection to in-fighting is that it leads so easily to clinching and is spoiled by it. As clinching has, nowadays, assumed rather an alarming aspect, it should be particularly explained. A clinch may be unavoidable: and it is then, figuratively speaking, the embrace of each boxer by the other. You may literally fall into your opponent's arms, or—especially when in-fighting—your arms may become hopelessly entangled and your instinct tells you to hold tight and start fair. Instinct in this case should be severely subdued. Immediately you find yourself in holds, break away. As a rule, in amateur boxing this should be quite spontaneous—each man springing back readily, trusting his opponent not to hit him while he is doing so.

It is more usual, however, in practice for each man to put his gloves on his opponent's shoulders and separate by a mutual push. If you do not break of your own accord, the referee will very quickly tell you to do so. Generally, an experienced referee (who talks as little as he possibly can) will wait for a moment to give you the chance of getting away of your own accord. When your opponent deliberately holds your arm or body to prevent you from hitting, you should place the palm of your free hand on his chin, not hitting him, but firmly pressing his head back, so that he must let go. And so long as he holds you, and you do not hold him, you are at liberty to inflict what punishment you can.

There is nothing which so utterly ruins boxing

from the spectacular point of view, and from the true boxer's own point of view, as clinching. It is the most virulent spoil-sport that ever tried the patience of a good referee. "A man shall not profit by his own laches," says a legal maxim: and that is why clinching and holding to avoid punishment is so essentially unfair. If a man is hit, it is because he has failed to guard or avoid the blow: if he doesn't land a blow, it is because he is not skilful or quick enough. Therefore further punishment in the former case, and in the latter—retaliation, is only what he deserves. He should not be allowed to avoid it by breaking a rule. But that is exactly what an increasing number of boxers do. They are, let us say, getting rather more than they bargained for; or are hotly pursued, or driven into a corner; and in order not to be hurt any more, they clutch hold of their antagonist, seeking to baulk his hitting. That is unfair.

And that is why boxing as a sport is radically different from boxing as a means of self-defence. If in a serious row you have to defend yourself, you will certainly do anything in your power to avoid punishment: although incidentally, clinching, or indeed any fighting at close quarters, is not to be recommended with the hooligan type of ruffian. In a sport, you must not take certain obvious, physical advantages. If clinching were allowed, in many cases there would be practically no hitting at all. Two men would shake hands, lead, fall into each other's arms and display all the symptoms of acute affection until the call of time. If a boxer

means to clinch nothing short of disqualification will stop him. If he, as a beginner, falls unconsciously into the habit, he should be reminded of it every time that he puts on the gloves, and his instructor will do well to associate the practice in his mind with a severe dig in the ribs; just as one tries to couple the ideas of a chicken yard and a whip in the mind of a puppy.

It will be seen from the boxers' proximity to each other how easy it is for in-fighting to degenerate into a series of clinches. But there is not the smallest need for it. So long as both men continue to hit and guard cleanly and mean it, so long—in nine cases out of ten—will they keep separate.

Clinching is, moreover, not only an unfair means of defence, but has its nefarious uses on the other side. If you have worked your man into a corner and he—not trying to side-step or slip past you—tries boldly to fight his way out by sheer force, it is manifestly inexcusable to stop him by holding him instead of bearing the brunt of his attack.

CHAPTER IX

KNOCK-OUT BLOWS

"A less degree of art will tell far more than a considerably greater quantity of strength."—*Boxiana*.

ANY blow which causes a man to fall so that he is unable to rise within a reasonable time is called a Knock-Out Blow. By far the most common is that given with either hand upon the point of the jaw. The word "point" is misleading. It is not the extreme end of the chin that is meant, but the jawbone from an inch to an inch and a half on either side of it. Delivered higher up towards the ear, the blow is not so effective, because the leverage is less. The sensations caused by a blow of this kind which does not succeed in bringing a man down is one of sudden shock, rather than of actual pain; and everything appears misty for a few seconds. A more severe blow intensifies the shock, and the man who receives it staggers and falls. It may be taken as a dependable rule that when he falls forward, he is knocked out.

The physiological causes for these results are—without going into elaborate medical details—as follows:—The points of the jawbone fit, on either side of the head, into a socket. Immediately behind

that is the temporal bone, which is very thin. A blow, then, on either side of the jaw levers up the point on to this thin bone and gives a shock to the base of the brain, greater or less according to the power behind the blow and the amount of leverage. The effect is instantaneous—though fleeting—concussion and paralysis.

A cross-counter is the best means of producing this result, for the arm of the striker moves at right angles to the objective, which gives the full leverage to the blow.

There is, or was, a notable boxer in America who was known as the iron-jawed man, because nobody ever succeeded in knocking him out. It is, however, probable that he owed his invulnerability not to the strength of his jaw, but to the abnormal thickness of his skull.

The same rule applies to hits on the temple and the back of the ear, both of which—if hard enough—may knock a man out. A very severe blow on the back of the head gives a shock to the brain from back to front—a *contre-coup*; and this, too, though cases of it are rare, may upset a man.

The blow on the "mark" comes next in importance. It is not very often that this alone knocks a man out. An experienced and hardened boxer, especially one with well developed abdominal muscles, learns never to expose his body without contracting them; so that the effect of a blow is greatly minimized. But a severe blow on the "mark," or a series of them, is bound to weaken a man: whilst a single upper-cut rightly placed there is almost sure to bring his head

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forward. If his muscles are not tightly set and the blow is particularly hard, the boxer who receives it gasps for breath. This is a common enough sensation to the majority of people, boxers or not. Any sudden knock just beneath the breast-bone will wind you. To make it more effective in boxing it should be directed slightly upwards.

The blow causes a shock to the diaphragm or midriff, and it is the consequent paralysis of this which causes the condition usually described as "being winded."

The diaphragm is a huge shield of muscle dividing the chest from the stomach. And from its proximity an exceptionally hard blow on the "mark" may give a shock to the heart also.

This may also be accounted for by the shock to the large nerve-centre known as the solar plexus. But doctors have yet to make up their minds quite completely as to the various secondary causes and primary effects in the case of knock-out blows.

In an issue of the *Sportsman* (October 1907) Professor Osborne, of Melbourne University, is quoted on the subject.

"If a blow was delivered on the point of the chin," he said, "the impact was transmitted to the temporal bone, and from that to the semi-auricular canals, which were the organs of equilibrium. When the fluids that these canals contained were shaken violently, the recipient momentarily lost all sense of balance, and, as a direct result, fell to the ground a helpless mass of bone and muscle.

"In the solar plexus knock-out, the vagus nerve,

which was affected, slowed down the heart pulsations, and the recipient of the blow became faint. But this blow was not dangerous except where the heart was affected. Injuries, and occasionally serious ones, were received in boxing, but, as a form of sport, it was probably not so dangerous as cricket. It was certainly not so dangerous as the Japanese ju-jitsu, in which fatal results could be produced with great ease, and was, on that account, never likely to take its place as a regular sport."

But primary causes and secondary effects are really all that the boxer needs to grasp. If he gets a hard blow on the jaw he goes down, and most probably loses the fight: if he gets a hard blow on the "mark," he is winded. The intermediary occurrences are of profounder interest to scientists in medicine than to scientists in pugilism.

The actual heart blow, delivered higher up, is quite recognized in boxing, and from it deaths have occurred; but not in the case of perfectly sound men. Before any kind of competition or contest a boxer should be medically examined. No doctor will pass a man or boy who shows the smallest sign of a weak or enlarged heart. Indeed no one should ever attempt to box at all who has any doubts on the point. But a hard blow over the heart will sometimes knock a healthy man out without injuring him. A severe dig in the ribs causes a sickening sensation too, but will not stop a man, unless, of course, it is positively herculean and given with bare knuckles, in which case a couple of ribs may be driven in. But a succession of hard blows on the ribs—particularly

those on the left side near the heart—will wear a man out. The left side ribs are the principal objective for the right-hand body blow.

The majority of deaths in boxing have been caused by cerebral hæmorrhage, a condition which—without a blow as the immediate cause—is known as apoplexy. It is very rare, and is usually brought about far more by the fall, the striking of the head upon the floor, than by the actual blow of a gloved fist.

In several cases deaths from boxing have resulted from the strain of sudden training following on debauchery. A man who is a hard drinker goes into training for a contest. The bottle is kept from him sometimes by main force. His heart lacks the stimulant, and when a sudden and severe strain is put upon it he succumbs.

And then there is the kidney blow. This is usually dealt with the right hand during in-fighting. It is extremely painful and leaves behind it a feeling of nausea. In the preponderance of cases it does no real injury. At the same time instances of a bruised or ruptured kidney have been known.

Hitting your opponent on the back does not seem, somehow, to conform to the best traditions. There are so many other places where you can hurt him more profitably ; or, if necessary, more speedily disable him. The kidney blow is a comparatively new invention, and up to quite recent times was exclusively practised by professionals. In late years some instructors have been teaching it to amateur pupils. But now by the rules of the National Sporting Club, a referee has power to disqualify a man

for using it. Arbitrarily to interfere with the method of a sport is to mangle and maim it as a rule. But no possible harm can be done to boxing by disallowing the kidney blow. A referee has no difficulty in seeing when a man is trying to give it, and he can warn him accordingly.

A knock-out is a decisive end to any battle, but it is not always an ideal one. If two men have been boxing for a reasonable time, and one has already shown himself the better, and then knocks out his antagonist, the matter is conclusively settled. But where a knock-out occurs almost at once, in the first or second round, a genuine test of their respective powers has not been made. The carelessness of a moment on the part of one man, or the other's fluke, are not to be regarded as the final determination of their endurance, strength and skill. In amateur competitions of three rounds it is much more satisfactory to see the men "go all the way," or for the encounter to be curtailed by a knock-out only to the extent of a minute or so

But it is impossible to lay down the law about it. If a knock-out is prohibited, it is difficult to estimate to what lengths the delicacy and debility of the sport may go. As suggested above, the proscription of one particular blow which has no result indissolubly linked up with the sport will do no harm; but to cut out a whole class of blows, whose result is fundamentally connected with (at least) the practical purposes of that sport, would be disastrous. You might as well forbid a particular swimming stroke in playing water polo.

Besides, in order to stop knock-out blows, you would have to prohibit all hard hitting. And then boxing would be a miserable farce. Occasionally it does happen that a knock-out crosses the path of sporting justice; but if the men concerned are genuinely anxious for a real test, and neither are satisfied with the result of the first encounter, a second can generally be arranged.

When a pair of boxers in a competition are very unequally matched, the better man should win as speedily as possible. It is far better for the poorer boxer to be finished off quickly with one or two prodigious blows than to be kept on his feet, and punished and hurt. Of course, if his conqueror is quite certain of him, he can play with him during the three rounds. But, being a competition, most boxers in this instance would feel it ignominious to be played with. If you are, for the sake of practice, having a spar with a man who could eat you, as the saying goes, you don't want to be knocked about. In a competition each man should do his best. Particularly is this the case with the better man who has to go through one or more other heats in the course of an evening. He cannot afford to tire himself by being kind. He should win as quickly as he can and so save himself. And besides no man can ever be quite certain. No sport is so utterly fortuitous as boxing. And than too much confidence there is only one thing which is worse, and that is lack of it.

You can often tell when a man has received a nasty hit on the jaw which has just failed to bring

him to the floor. His right foot jumps and spasmodically taps the ground two or three times. The movement is nervous and quite involuntary. Fortunately, if you are hit on the jaw and do that, you can generally disguise the fact that you are hurt; and your antagonist, with his eyes on yours, will not see that tell-tale foot. And in another moment or two the immediate danger from weakness will have passed off. In the same way a man who is knocked out completely may twitch and move his legs or one of them. This movement also is involuntary and not—as you are apt to think when watching—an effort to rise.

If you hit a man on the jaw at the side of the ring so that he falls half over the ropes, it is better to regard him as “down,” and to stand away until the referee expressly tells you to box on. If your opponent is done for, he will generally slip to the floor.

An amusing instance of a knock-out blow on the “mark” occurred some years ago at one of the outlying theatres of London. The play in question was one in which a boxing match takes place on the stage; and nightly the hero had to knock his antagonist out of time. This antagonist throughout the run of the piece was a retired pro, a good fellow and a fine boxer. During a long tour he had managed to teach the hero a good deal. One night, however, the latter’s place was taken by his understudy, a man who fancied himself—not without a certain amount of reason—as a boxer. It was the pro’s business to fight one lively round, and in the

middle of the next to fall—dramatically rather than naturally—before a tremendous swing. Now the understudy had a grudge against him, and the first round was no mere exhibition spar, and a critical audience hugely appreciated the difference. The new hero was stretching the bruiser to his utmost capacity.

“I’ll have to hit yer,” the latter kept saying, “I’ll have to hit yer. Go slow, can’t you?”

But the understudy, thinking that this was a good opportunity of hurting the man, pressed him more than ever. The bruiser, having no desire really to be knocked out, and feeling, justly enough, that his opponent was taking advantage of him, thought he would steady the actor by a tap in the wind. He did not intend it to be more than a tap, but the man ran on to it. His hands dropped and there was an agonized expression on his face. The pro instantly saw that the action of the play was on the verge of being spoilt. With the presence of mind that boxers have, he caught his man as he was falling and, hugging him in his arms, gave a fine display of clinching. “For God’s sake call Time,” he whispered to the super, who was holding the watch, as he staggered with his man towards the ropes. The super rose to the occasion. In the next round a very limp hero sparred gingerly for an opening, and his opponent fell with a loud crash as soon as he decently could.

CHAPTER X

TRAINING

"By training, the mental faculties are also improved. The attention is more ready, and the perception more acute."—Sir J. SINCLAIR.

IN no issue of athletics has common sense been called upon to fight with prejudice so sternly as in the matter of training. In the early days of the prize-ring there was no training to speak of. Then Captain Barclay, the famous walker and patron of boxers, invented a system, and used it with excellent effect upon Tom Cribb for his famous battle with Molineaux, the black. This system appears to have consisted mainly in walking immense distances every day at a terrific pace. Cribb, who started at sixteen stone, lost over one-sixth of that weight during his preparation. And in his case the reduction in bulk was beneficial enough. He was what is known as a beefy man; and the fat was sweated off him, and there remained upon his bones the huge muscles for which he was renowned, unencumbered by the burdening profusion of flesh. Barclay was a first-rate amateur, and was accustomed to putting on the gloves with all the best bruisers of his day. Indeed a youngster beginning his career in the ring regarded a successful trial with Captain

Barclay as the first stepping-stone to success. He knew then, from his own experience, what was needed in the way of training. Of course, his system has been superseded now, but it acted very well with the sturdy champions of the past.

The chief difficulty in the path of perfect training is the fact that people have been absolutely unable to grasp that one man's meat is another man's poison. Just as it is absurd to expect a class of twenty boys to learn their lessons by precisely the same method (though things being as they are it can scarcely be bettered), so it is ridiculous to train a team or a crew upon the same lines. It is impossible to suppose that batches of eight or fifteen men can have severally the same constitutions to be treated in the same way by rule of thumb. And the training of the body does not present the same difficulties in this respect as the training of the mind. Nevertheless, there are still plenty of people who do try to train a team in a universal manner; still those who believe that training is a fixed and immovable process, to be applied similarly to rowing and running and football and boxing. And there are still many folk who believe that the principal object of training is the reduction of weight.

But of course each sport should have its own and especial preparation, and each man must pay attention to his own peculiar organism; and it may be taken as a definite rule that the loss of weight after genuinely superfluous flesh has been removed is thoroughly bad and unwholesome.

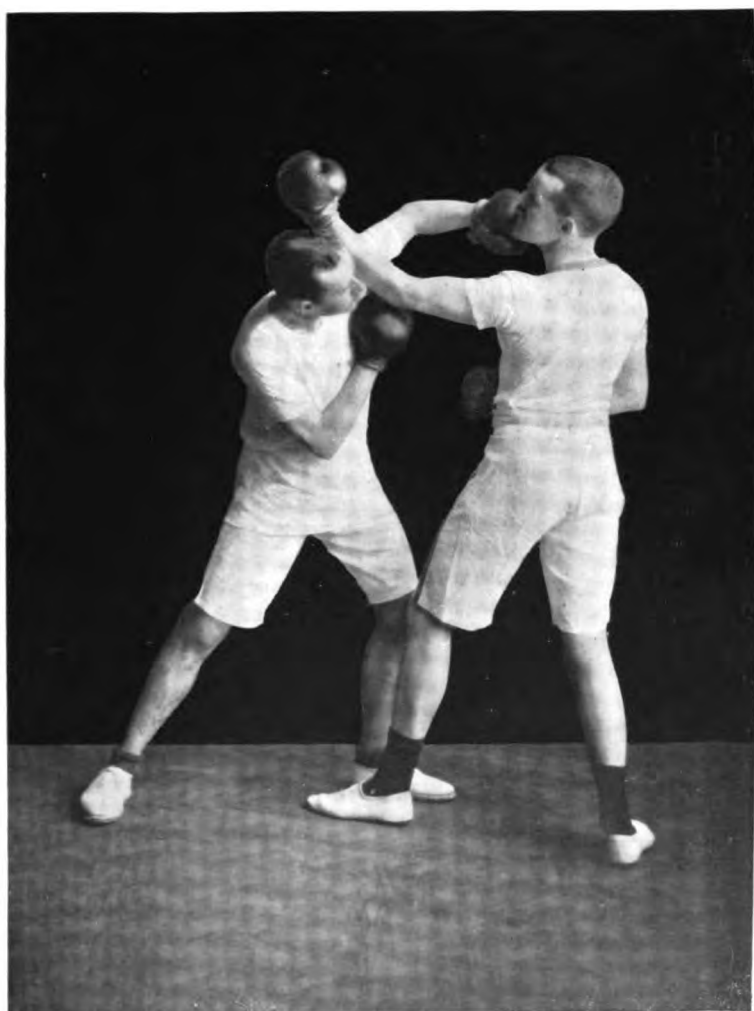
There is no training for boxing like boxing itself.

A hard encounter with the gloves searches out weak places in your wind hitherto unsuspected. A man who is in perfect condition for football or for running long distances finds himself hopelessly "beat" at the end of three minutes' boxing. So when training for some competition or match, do as much sparring as you can.

The kind of training you are to undergo preparatory to a competition must depend not only on your physical capabilities, and disabilities, but upon your occupation. The professional boxer gives his whole time to training. Very few amateurs can—so few, indeed, that they can be left out of the question.

In order that some sort of scheme may be laid down to help people, if possible, to get into good condition for a specific encounter, it will be best to classify boxers roughly by the kind of life they ordinarily lead, and to deal separately with each group. There are boys at school, men with daily occupation, and men without it, undergraduates at the universities, and soldiers and sailors (who will be discussed separately in the chapters on Service Boxing).

It will, of course, be understood that many of the suggestions given in the ensuing paragraphs will overlap. That is to say, exercises that are useful to boys are equally useful to men, sometimes in rather larger doses; and, of course, the remarks about punching the ball and skipping apply equally to any one of whatever age or occupation who is entering for a competition. Individual judgment must be used. It is impossible to cater for everyone, and these suggestions



AVOIDING A STRAIGHT LEFT AND REPLYING WITH A LEFT HAND
CROSS-COUNTER

(see page 96)

on the subject of training are only intended as general hints which are commonly found useful.

For boys at school very little special training should be necessary. The regularity of their lives—compulsory games and the fact that boys are usually taking exercise of some sort without any set purpose—is quite sufficient to keep them fit. But it is just as well to do something extra daily for the improvement of that particular variety of wind proper to boxing. At most public schools you will be unable to give very much time to your special training, unless you are going to take part in the championships at Aldershot, when a certain latitude in respect of other pastimes is given by the authorities. But you will generally find time to box several rounds with your instructor and various sparring partners, which is the greatest concern, and to skip and use the punching-ball, which respectively come next in importance.

With regard to the instructor, you will have, of course, no choice. At the majority of schools he is an old soldier, inclined to teach boxing by numbers (as though it were a species of drill), and to resent any methods that are not his methods, or those of the particular army champion whom he most favours. But Tommy Atkins is a good man of the slap-bang, mechanical sort, and he will generally take a deal of beating. With regard to your other sparring partners—and this applies equally to all who are going in for a competition—try to get as much variety of style to encounter as you possibly can; never box with a man or boy whom you are likely to meet in the competition (you may learn his tricks, but he will also learn yours,

and in any case it is better to come fresh to the real combat), and do a good deal of your practice sparring with men bigger and better than yourself. It is a very good plan always to spar for a specified length of time—that is to say, in proper rounds with a minute's rest in between each, but to make the rounds rather longer than they will be in the competition, and one or two more of them. In this way you will be prepared for a greater strain than you will actually be called upon to undergo ; or perhaps it would be better to say that the extra exertion of actual combat will be—in part at least—balanced by the longer round in practice.

Always bear in mind that whilst there are in amateur competitions only three rounds, these three must be fought at top speed.

A first-rate exercise for what I have called the boxing wind is skipping, a very convenient form of exercise too, because you can skip anywhere and at any odd moment. Five minutes t a quarter of an hour's skipping before your tub in the morning is a good way of beginning the day. At any time when you are skipping you should begin easily—"single" at first, gradually increasing the pace, finishing with a short burst of the "double," with both feet together. Towards the end of your period of training, when your condition requires very little improvement, try and get the greatest possible number of revolutions every minute, for, say, two or three minutes. And repeat this at intervals between your bouts of sparring.

Punching the ball is quite a sport by itself. All manner of skilled tricks can be played by the expert,

and before now they have justified themselves on the music hall stage. For the purposes of training, however, there is not the smallest need to be elaborate. To hit the ball again and again in rapid succession in order to improve the speed of your deliveries requires a certain amount of practice. But there is really no need to use more than the ordinary blows.

There are many kinds of punching balls, but the most useful one is pear-shaped, rather larger than a Rugby football. It should hang by a stout strap from the middle of a solid platform. This last must be securely rigged up by means of an iron bracket on a wall. The strap should be fastened to a strong swivel on a short chain, which should in turn pass through the middle of the platform and be prevented from falling through by a large nut. If the leather itself comes into contact with the sides of the hole, the constant friction is apt to wear it through very soon.

The worst point about a punching ball is noise. It should therefore be put in a place apart, preferably the gymnasium or club-rooms which you use for sparring. When anyone is working hard with it there is a thunderous devil's tattoo which is positively deafening. The strap from which the ball hangs should be double, with a buckle, so that a tall man or a little man may adjust it to his own height. You should regard the ball as your opponent's head, and the middle of it should be on a level with your eyes.

For anyone already in fairly good condition, a hard five minutes' round with the ball is generally quite sufficient at a time. Begin with the straight left, squaring up to the ball as though it were a man, com-

ing forward with the left foot, and getting away out of distance immediately after you have landed your blow. Then try straight lefts and rights alternately in quick succession, then left and right hook-hits, standing still before the ball and sending it to and fro at right angles to your body. You must learn to catch it on the first rebound, and this, if your hitting is hard, will require considerable speed. Lastly, come quite close up to the ball and practise right hand cross-counters, your elbow well raised as you hit; the impact between your fist and the ball taking place when the latter is just opposite your eyes.

Old gloves should be worn for work with the ball, or else specially light ones made for the purpose. Since, however, you need to become as accustomed as possible to the eight ounce glove with which you will ultimately do battle, the former is the more useful. It is a pity though to use new gloves, as the contact of leather and leather is apt to roughen the surface and wear them out before their time.

In order to practise body blows a heavy sack should be used; but not used too much, as it is a little prone to make you slow. At all events you cannot learn to be quick with it. There is no rebound, and all you can do, having hit it left or right, is to wait for the sack to come back to its vertical position. With quick alternate half-arm blows, you can come close and continue hitting when the sack is out of the vertical. When doing this a certain amount of skill is required to keep the sack in front of you. The weight of it is upon your glove as you strike, and it is liable to swing away

from your direct hit. The sack should be stuffed tightly with sawdust (not sand, which is sometimes used, and which is liable to make you sprain your wrist), and should hang from an iron bracket or a beam. No platform is required for it.

It is a cardinal mistake ever to tire yourself out by skipping, or punching a ball, or sparring. You should go to bed at night thoroughly and wholesomely tired, and the difference between that and being over tired, though hard to define, is within the experience of every one.

With regard to the simpler forms of physical exercise which are usually taken indoors, but which in suitable weather would be much more useful in the open air, that most required is for the purpose of developing the muscles of the stomach. There are two good ways of doing this—there are probably many more, but these will suffice.

The first is to stand up straight and then with arms upraised above your head to bend slowly, very slowly forward until you touch your toes with the tips of your fingers. It is irksome at first, especially in the case of grown men who are unaccustomed to that kind of exercise, but the difficulty soon wears off, and it is worth the trouble.

For the other you should lie flat on the floor or on a mattress, and raise first one leg and then the other; and after a turn of that, both together until they are at right angles to your body. The knees must not be bent, and your head and shoulders should remain rigidly upon the floor. And the chief point in both these exercises is that they should be under-

taken as slowly as possible. After you have lifted up your legs ten or a dozen times, keep them straight upon the floor—the heels always touching the ground—and bend your body upwards, with your head straight and your arms at your side. To do this perfectly and very slowly will be found hard work, but it is quite the best way of developing the abdominal muscles, which play a most important part in boxing.

A certain amount of dumb-bell exercise is usually compulsory amongst the smaller boys at a public school; and for them, provided the dumb-bells are not too heavy, it is necessary. But for boxing it should be remembered that the muscles of the arms are of secondary importance. Your arms should be hard and wiry, but big muscles are not required. Fitzsimmons, probably the most famous, and in his day quite the best boxer alive, was never remarkable for any show of muscle save on his back and shoulders. Nor was Jem Belcher, the finest of all the old time prize-fighters. And if you use dumb-bells much, you are liable to develop enormous showy biceps which will probably be out of proportion to the rest of your muscular system. And you are liable to become muscle-bound; that is to say, so over developed that each muscle gets in the way of its neighbour. The result of which is that you are slow. Huge muscles in the arms are not really of much use to anybody save professional weight-lifters. Certainly, when training for boxing, after the age of seventeen or so, exercises with dumb-bells are not advisable. On the other hand, the ordinary

movements usually gone through with dumb-bells are most useful without them, if the fists are tightly closed and the muscles exerted.

The question of diet is extremely important. That is to say, it is extremely important not to diet yourself. Ordinary food that you are accustomed to, eaten with the appetite that exercise and health give, is always the best. Of course, obviously stodgy things and unnecessary sweet things should be avoided, and new bread. But it is much better never to play tricks with your food. A sudden change to a Spartan system of diet will probably put you out of sorts and do far more harm than good.

For boys, then, skipping and punching the ball are the only really necessary aids to training apart from boxing itself. If they begin their special preparation three weeks before the event, that will be amply sufficient.

Those whose day is fully occupied, especially when that occupation is entirely indoors, are severely handicapped. But even these, if they take time about it, can get into fine and hard condition. In this case the training must be real training, and should begin a couple of months or at least six weeks before the competition. And it is not as though one combat of three rounds is to be expected—there may be four or five upon the same day, in a competition where, like the amateur championships, the entries are numerous.

First of all comes the question of smoking. It follows as a matter of course that smoking is bad

for your wind, particularly if you inhale. So smoking must be cut down. At the same time, if you are a heavy smoker, to leave off abruptly is to court disaster. Of course people say that you should never allow a habit to take such a hold upon you that you cannot drop it at a moment's notice : perhaps you should not. But you do. And the strength of mind required in order to stop smoking suddenly and entirely is considerably less than that required in order to leave it off gradually. But the latter is the better way. You don't feel the deprivation so much, your nerves are by degrees schooled to their bereavement. So little by little you can leave off smoking altogether, and your wind will benefit accordingly. Men have been known—professional champions amongst them—to smoke right up to the day of battle and on that day itself : in the strictest moderation, of course—one pipe in the morning, one in the evening. The individual must judge for himself. As a general rule, it is safest to say that smoking should be stopped. And where men spend the greater part of their lives indoors it should certainly be stopped.

For these, too, it is absolutely necessary to rise early, and, in all weathers, to get fresh air and exercise before breakfast. As in everything else, begin gradually—even if you have only a quarter of an hour in the open air. Increase this little by little to an hour : not more, as otherwise you will start the day tired. And if you have an hour's exercise before breakfast, you should eat a little first. A cup of tea and a biscuit is suitable and sufficient ; but without that you will be tired and depressed ; and the hateful

view of men and things—so common a cause of distress to yourself and those about you before you have breakfasted—will become accentuated.

Begin your early morning exercise by a short, sharp walk in your ordinary clothes. Later on, when you are giving more time to it, put on flannel trousers and a sweater under your jacket and go for a longer walk ; once in every two hundred yards or so taking a very hard sprint of fifty yards. On coming in again, do the floor exercises already explained before having your bath and changing.

In order to get variety of practice in its most convenient and accessible form, you should belong to a club ; and, if possible, go to it for sparring, and punching the ball (if you have not got one at home) at least twice a week. On the other nights keep out of doors as much as possible. Do not go for long runs ; but, as in the morning, sprint for a short distance now and again. But make walking your principal exercise, and, if you can, walk where there are hills. A fast walk up a steep hill without bending your knees will discover any weak points in your wind remarkably soon, and if you persist in it will eradicate them.

When it comes to reducing weight, you have to be very careful indeed. The five standard weights for amateur boxing are :—

Bantam—not exceeding eight stone four pounds.

Feather—not exceeding nine stone.

Light—not exceeding ten stone.

Middle—not exceeding eleven stone four pounds.

Heavy—any weight.

The rule is that any one entering for a competition should weigh on the day thereof in their fighting kit, but without gloves. It very often happens that a man is a few pounds over one of these weights. He will be too light for the heavier ; and this is especially obvious where a man of eleven stone eight pounds has to box in the heavy-weights with a man of fifteen stone. It seems a great pity that he should not reduce his weight and go in for the middles. It entirely depends on the individual. If he is fleshily built, with much superfluous flesh, the loss of four pounds or a good deal more will not only fail to hurt him, but will materially improve his condition.

But where a man, already in fine and hard training, lean and spare, tries to get his weight down he is bound to lose strength. When he tries to get rid of several pounds in a great hurry he may injure his health for life. It is certainly very hard lines upon him if he is prevented, by his weight, from going in for a competition on which he set his heart, and for which he may have already trained for weeks ; but the disappointment is better faced.

As a rule, it is much wiser to build yourself up, so to say, than to pull yourself down. A man who is already tough and hard has only to keep so, just improving his wind and his skill as best he may. But if he is above the weight to which he comes nearest, and at which he feels that he should fight, it is far better—rather than miss the competition altogether—to take his chance with the bigger man than to run the grave risk of weakening his heart by semi-starvation and strain.

The case of those whose day is their own is naturally simplified, and for them the benefits of an open air life should be insisted on. But with nothing else very particular to occupy their time, these are sometimes prone to overdo their training: which is the next worse thing to training too little. The best way out of the difficulty is to find some pursuit which helps training in a way and yet has nothing actually to remind you of it. If you ride much, when training ride only rather less and give the rest of the time to the more direct processes of preparation. At the same time the early walk and the late one are excellent habits to adopt; for though you will not need the fresh air so greatly as the man who has been working all day indoors, the tonic effect of the former and the soporific effect of the latter are most valuable.

Naturally it is always better to train in the country than in the town; and when you ordinarily live in the smoke, it will be a good plan, when possible, to migrate to the cleaner atmosphere for this special occasion. At the same time it is difficult to find many people to box with—or indeed any at all—in the heart of the country: it will be impossible to take a retinue of bruisers with you, and you will be forced to content yourself with some one instructor whose services you may have hired for the occasion. So it is better, if you live in London, to do your training within easy reach, so that you can arrange for various sparring partners to come to you, and so that you may yourself go in periodically to box at some club. But such an elaborate business will not

suit a great number of men who are entering for a competition : and they will probably take their chance wherever they may happen to be, and probably spar with the same man every day. And the man, provided he is a thoroughly capable one, will teach you as much as the average amateur requires to know. But to box with several men is much better.

A most exhilarating and beneficial treatment for a boxer about to go in for a competition is some form of massage. And it is certainly a good way of winding up an afternoon's exercise.

"Professor" Ned Donnelly (an old bare-knuckle fighter who earned some renown in the 'sixties), in his book on the *Art of Boxing*, recommends a mixture to be rubbed on your hands, arms, face and chest three times a day. This consists of a pint of whisky, a pint of vinegar, some horse-radish, and some rock salt, with about five lemons squeezed in. These ingredients should be put into a pot and boiled, and when cold decanted into a bottle, which should last for a considerable time. Donnelly's prescription was probably intended to toughen the skin, rather than to make you supple and to refresh you. Some trainers use a mixture of camphor and methylated spirits, some are contented with Elliman. But it is the rubbing which matters more than the stuff rubbed in. And you should be rubbed all over, back and front.

After sparring and punching the ball and skipping all the afternoon, let us say, you should have a tepid shower-bath—which would be provided in any well appointed gymnasium or club—followed by a cold one ; or at least a sponge down. And then, prefer-

ably in a room where there is a fire, if the weather justifies it (and boxing competitions are usually in the winter or early spring), you should lie on a large table to be massaged. The effect is wonderfully stimulating, it removes all stiffness and leaves you almost as fresh as when you began the day.

It is homely advice—but remember that it is easy to catch cold after you have been boxing ; and that though it is possible to fight and even win a competition with a cold upon you, it will be twice as hard work. A cold drains your strength in an extraordinarily short space of time.

The choice of an instructor should not be difficult. At Oxford and Cambridge, besides the men attached to the respective clubs, there are several private practitioners, whose rival claims must be decided upon their merits. At the Belsize Boxing Club in London, there are several first-rate men ; and in any big town in the north, the Midlands, or in London itself, there is not much difficulty in finding a good professional with some idea of imparting his knowledge to you. Rudimentary boxing is not a particularly difficult thing to teach ; but, like every other sport, it requires considerable patience. And you must find a man who is willing to take trouble with you. Many people, when training, do not join a club but hire the services of a private instructor. An important thing to remember is that he should be of about the same size and weight as his pupil. And he should be a well-tried man whom you are perfectly certain knows more about boxing than you do. But even if you have the luxury of a coach to yourself, it is a good thing to

belong to some club, if only for the chance of sparring with the other members.

Training at the universities is a much easier matter than it is anywhere else, because the whole atmosphere is one of athletic preparation. Somebody is always training for something. You need never feel solitary in your efforts of abnegation. At the Boxing Club rooms there are the best of instructors, and, of course, a large choice of people to spar with, as well as all the accessories you may require. The early morning walk need never be lonely, though the majority of undergraduates in training for other sports than boxing prefer to run. There is no occasion to take any violent exercise until the afternoon. The morning can be passed in the ordinary succession of lectures, or in reading; or if work is of negligible importance in a not too zealous walk. Luncheon should be a very light meal, followed by at least half an hour of idleness. This should be succeeded by three hours' really hard work with skipping rope, punching ball and gloves—principally gloves. And the evening walk before going to bed—as near ten, one way or the other as possible—completes the day.

About a fortnight before the competition, the exercise should be increased by three rounds of sparring and an hour's walk in the middle of the morning. But two or three days before the event you should leave off boxing altogether. You will be better for this rest, you will come to the actual competition the fresher for it. The skipping and the punching of the ball and the sack may be proportion-



IN-FIGHTING: BOTH BOXERS ARE CARRYING THEIR CHINS TOO HIGH,
MUTUALLY EXPOSING THEM

(see page 91)

ately increased ; but if you are in really good condition the last three days should be comparatively devoid of very violent work. Walking is really quite sufficient. Competitions—always at Oxford and Cambridge, and elsewhere generally, except when the entries are very numerous, as in the amateur championships—are in the evening : so during the preceding morning and afternoon, it is better to take an almost complete rest ; walking a little perhaps, but lying down and reading a good deal.

The afternoon before a competition, especially if it is your first, will prove rather trying. There are people with nerves so completely steady, who are so utterly insensible and regardless of the trial awaiting them, that they can be genuinely interested in some book or discussion which is remote from boxing. So much the better for them. Men have been known even to go to bed and to sleep throughout the afternoon ; and that is better still.

But the average man is horribly nervous, and cannot for the life of him think or talk about anything save the competition to come. To advise men like this not to think about it (as some people invariably do) will only be a cause of irritation ; to say “never mind, it’ll all be over soon,” will have about as much beneficent effect as the same remark addressed to a man about to be hanged. It is much better to face the situation, and, if you are unable to keep your mind away from the competition, to talk about it with people who know the subject and are likely to help you ; not those who make depressing comments as in the following story :—

The Oxford representatives had gone over to Cambridge for the Inter-'Varsity competitions, which are held at Oxford and Cambridge on alternate years ; and the redoubtable Mr. Hopley was the light-blue heavy-weight. In the train, by way of cheering his prospective opponent, one of the Oxford men informed him—what was literally true—that the entire space of time Hopley had spent in the ring in all competitions for which he had ever entered would go inside a quarter of an hour ; as he had generally succeeded in knocking out his man in the first minute. Blunders of this kind are generally emphasized and made worse by the bungler suddenly becoming aware of what he has said, and trying to improve on it by assuring his victim that of course things will take a different course this time. Incidentally they did not ; for Mr. Hopley added forty-three seconds only to his experience in boxing competitions.

About half-past three o'clock on the afternoon of the encounter you should have a good rub down ; or if you have to travel far to the place of meeting, have it as long before the competition as you conveniently can. Also, when you have more than one fight on the same night, it is a most excellent plan to make your second or trainer rub you down between them : the same method being followed as in training. For this reason an instructor should always have a rudimentary knowledge of massage.

On this tiresome day, too, the question of food is important ; not so much as to what you will eat as when you will eat it. Of course it entirely depends on the hour at which you are expected to box. When

the competition begins at eight o'clock in the evening, which is a usual time, you should have a very light lunch at about one, and a good meal at five. Beef-steak, toast, and stewed fruit at this hour do not sound very attractive ; but you require them, particularly the steak. You should drink little—a glass of claret for choice. Some people drink tea. Water, either plain or aerated, should be avoided.

The question of drink during training is much discussed. Donnelly, already quoted, recommends red wine mixed with water, with the mid-day meal. Without the least desire to uphold teetotalism, it may be said that this is generally unnecessary. People must be guided by what they find individually suitable. One glass of red wine at the last meal before boxing may, however, be really valuable. It should always be remembered that large quantities of liquid are very bad for the wind, and that water adds in the most amazing way to your weight. If you are at all near the limit of the weight at which you mean to box a tumbler of water drunk just before weighing will turn the scale on the wrong side.

It is a great temptation to a nervous boxer to walk about aimlessly and incessantly on the day of the competition. It should not be done. In the evening you will require all the strength you have, and this restless patrolling of the streets is apt to be far more tiring than you can realize at the time.

CHAPTER XI

COMPETITIONS

"The fight, the fight's the thing,
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King."

THE spirit of competition is inherent in human nature. To almost every man, as soon as he has learned some new power, comes the desire to test it; to see if he can do something better than someone else. This spirit is by no means universal in sport, but it is extremely widespread. In boxing it is probably less so than in gregarious pastimes, because you literally fall or stand alone; and people fear terribly lest they should make fools of themselves in public.

Sooner or later, however, a large number of amateur boxers feel the wish to pit themselves against their fellows. Often this is less for "pot-hunting" than because they realize that outside a proper competition with a referee and judges and seconds, with their sponges and towels, and a timekeeper with a stop-watch—in fact, with all the ceremonial which draws the distinction between practice and the real thing,—they realize that without these things the test is not a genuine one; that neither they themselves nor their opponents will be strung up to the highest pitch of eagerness and enterprise.

So quaking in your canvas shoes, and wishing you had not been so foolhardy, listening with sickly appreciation to the cheers of your friends to whom you are certain you will prove a delusion and a snare, you will clamber up on to the stage and through the ropes ; and remarking for the first time in your life very likely how misty a sea of faces looks in artificial light, how aloof from you, and how helpless your position—before them all and in the glare of light—you will go to your corner and sit down.

Attending you will be your second : only one is allowed by the rules of the Amateur Boxing Association, though occasionally this rule is broken. There is no reason why it should be. One man, if he is as energetic as he ought to be, can do everything that you need. It may be said in passing that one of the most ridiculous features of the modern professional contest is the bevy of unnecessary seconds who follow their principal into the ring. Your second will probably be the instructor who has trained you—at least he ought to be : for he will then know where you are likely to fail and where to succeed, what your best blows are, and when you should use them.

Immediately you sit down in your corner he will begin to flap a towel before you. Professional seconds invariably do. Their reason for it is one of those unfathomable mysteries that will never be solved. Perhaps it is some kind of etiquette—it is impossible to say. And occasionally you may find a boxer who likes it. But why, having just left a warm dressing-room, and having come into a large, cold hall in next to no clothes ; when you are not in the least out of

breath,—why you should at that moment require to be fanned is a little obscure. Many men find that this preliminary flapping makes them cold and uncomfortable. So if you have experienced this before, tell your second previously not to do it. The few moments between sitting down in your corner and the call of time are more profitably occupied by the second in words of advice and encouragement. And these—if it is your first competition—however trite, are apt to be comforting.

Then you and your antagonist are asked if you are ready ; the timekeeper orders the seconds out of the ring, and “time” is called. You meet your man in the middle of the ring, shake hands and fall to.

And then all is well. Purposely an attempt has been made in the last part of the foregoing chapter and at the beginning of this to draw the least desirable emotions experienced by the novice entering for his first pitched battle. There are plenty of men who are never nervous at all, are not afraid of making exhibitions of themselves, and who are really spoiling for a fight. To these the call of time brings them to the threshold of their desire ; to those others, less happy in anticipation, it means the end of suspense. And then, when the first blow is struck, and there is no possibility of drawing back, the spirit of fighting enters into you, and you glory in your utmost physical endeavour.

At the outset there are two points to remember. If your man is a stranger to you—so far as boxing goes—you must learn something of his capabilities. Therefore reserve your strength just at first, go slowly

and watch. At the same time, bear in mind that you are an equally abstruse problem to him, so make up your mind to enforce his respect at the very beginning, and so—be first. Keep to the straight left and forget for a moment or two that you can hit with your right hand at all. Some men believe in surprising their opponents at the beginning of an encounter by doing something startling and original. That is like leading a double-blank at the beginning of a game of *Matador*. It may succeed, but it most probably won't. You may astonish your adversary, but he will know the trick later on—whatever it may be—and will be prepared for it: so you won't have it to fall back on. The most original course you can pursue in boxing is to be absolutely ordinary in a quite perfect manner. And it is the most difficult course.

If you are a beginner, it is thus better not to try and take advantage of some of the more advanced tactics of the ring, and especially in the first round. Keep hard at work, hitting with all your might when you do hit: but watching carefully for an opening and to see, if possible, what blow your opponent is most keen on trying to bring off. This will probably be his favourite blow, the one with which he hopes to finish you off. If, like yourself, he is a beginner, he will be inclined to show his hand at once. He will be too impatient, very likely, to withhold it till the right and most appropriate moment. So wait and observe what kind of blow he most fancies and take advantage of it. He will be so eager to bring it off that he will never think you have been watching him. So when, for the fourth or fifth time, he tries that

desperate right swing, or ferocious left-hand upper-cut, or something equally daring and blundering, wait for it, stop it, and retaliate with your own particular favourite, delivered at your leisure and with all your weight : and it is to be hoped that your favourite blow will be something straight from the shoulder. For it can never be repeated too often that straight blows, particularly straight left blows, are incomparably better than any others.

One of the rules governing the public school championships tells you that any boy seen to be working for a knock-out will be warned, and if he persists, disqualified. The desired effect of the rule being that competitors are to do their best to win on points. There is no surer way of gaining points and insinuating your way into the favour of the referee and judges than by leading off continually with the straight left. Moreover, other things being equal, the man who does the most leading off wins. So having made up your mind as well as you can as to your antagonist's capabilities, go for him and keep on going for him. Your training will here begin to tell. If you are in really fine condition, you will be able to maintain the effort and fight at top speed throughout the three rounds. If you are in poor condition you will be pumped and well nigh dead beat at the end of the first round.

But whatever has happened (short of a knock down), go leisurely to your corner at the call of time and sit down in the chair (which your second, with the amazing dexterity of which seconds have the secret, will have whipped over or under the ropes

and be holding in position for you). The first attention to be paid is the squeezing of a spongeful of cold water over your head and face, and the careful wiping away of any blood: for even if you do not bleed easily at the nose, or have not torn an ear, you will generally find that the skin of your lips is cut through, merely by being hammered against your closed teeth.

And a small point to be remembered here is that you should bring your own sponge. Apart from anything else, professional seconds consider as an indispensable part of their ministrations the thrusting of a corner of the sponge into your mouth and the washing of your tongue. He will then give your arms and legs a brisk rub over with his hands, and devote the remainder of the sixty seconds' rest to fanning you with a towel vigorously flapped. You will need that then, and appreciate it to the full. Even if you are not at all winded, you will be hot. And it is the most invigorating part of the proceedings: so much so that out of the minute at his disposal, the second should give at least thirty seconds to fanning. For your part, you should lie back, sitting on the edge of the chair with your legs stretched out before you; your shoulders against the back of the chair or the post in the corner and your head well thrown back. You should hold the converging ropes on either side of you with your gloved hands.

Before entering the ring in the first instance, make a special point of seeing that your shoes or boots are well fastened, and that the sash round

your waist cannot come undone. Much valuable time is sometimes wasted between the rounds because your second has to tie you up in one way or the other; and the same applies to laced gloves, which occasionally become loose in the middle of a round. In that case the referee will order you to stop boxing until your second has tied them up again. But any interruption is unsatisfactory, and it is always possible that you or your antagonist will thereby gain an advantage—not exactly unfair, but completely outside the ordinary give and take of the encounter.

Canvas shoes, either because they do not fit properly or because, being awkward with your feet, you have kicked one against the other, sometimes come half off your foot, and you find yourself trying to box with the soft canvas and hard india-rubber doubled up under your heel. In such an emergency you should immediately get away out of distance and kick the shoe off altogether. That uncomfortable condition will not be so dangerous to your chances as the other. For this reason, and particularly if you are at all weak about the ankles, boots are to be preferred. The best boxing boots are made of soft black leather with india rubber soles; and once put on and properly laced there is nothing to fear from them.

At the end of the minute's rest, the timekeeper calls "Seconds out of the ring," before "Time." In practice (save in the amateur championships where the letter of the rule is generally strictly obeyed) you will find that seconds never do leave the ring

when they are told to. They continue to flap their towels until the call of time, edging away from you as the seconds go on. This is a mistake. Because, as you spring from your chair, you are liable to become mixed up with the second and flurried before ever you get to your opponent. If the man must continue to fan you, let him do it from without the ropes.

Another of the minor delinquencies of seconds is to give advice during the progress of the round. This is against the rule, which is the first consideration; and it is also useless. You are far too much occupied to listen when your second is urging you to use your right or to go "underneath." Or if you are not, and you do pay attention to him, you cannot pay it in full to the man who at the moment is much more important—your adversary. The latter, if he sees that you are listening to your second, will naturally take advantage of the fact. For this matter and for others more urgent, a strong referee is required; one who means to be obeyed. In an amateur competition the last thing wanted is any small fuss or petty disturbance, such as would be caused by a second being ordered from the room: and therefore referees are loath to exercise their full powers in this respect. But a really good referee will always be obeyed even when the miscreant in question knows that he will not enforce his authority with penalties. As a matter of fact you are generally much too busy even to be aware that your second is coaching you during the progress of the round. If you do hear him, or see him signalling to you

which he often does, it will only be in a half-conscious manner.

When a man is knocked down and his second gives him the smallest help to rise, or touches him even, he will be disqualified. In this case it may be of very real assistance for a second to shout at you to get up, or to beat with his hand upon the boards to remind you where you are. And though some referees pass this over rather often, chiefly because they have a more urgent matter to attend to—that is to say, the man who is down and his antagonist—it is not the less a trick to be forbidden.

Indeed it is because this action on a second's part is genuinely useful that it should not be allowed. In boxing you have to overcome an opponent as best you may—by yourself. Besides if you are properly knocked out nothing on earth will make you rise; and if you are merely dazed, the strength of your own determination ought to be sufficient.

Between the rounds, however, when he is chafing your arms and sponging you, a second's advice may be most valuable. If he really understands his business he will know how you stand with regard to points. He will know if you are hopelessly beaten—and if the beating is quite hopeless you will know yourself:—he will know if you have so far won easily—a thing about which you are unlikely to feel sanguine: and he will know—most important of all—when you are on the border line, when you and your opponent are equal. And that is a condition which you will probably misinterpret for one of the two extremes: most likely the pessimistic one. And

the time for your second to give you his views on the subject is during the interval between the second and last round. You will then be able to make your supreme effort.

In the first case, when you are obviously beaten, he will tell you to stick to it ; and he will probably recommend you to do your utmost to knock your adversary out. In the second case, when you are well ahead on points, he will tell you to go steadily, to lead with your left and to take no risks, lest you should spoil your excellent chances. And in the last case, which is the most critical—when you are about equal, he will urge you to lead and to keep on leading with all your might, never to rest or to stop attacking for an instant. If he is a cunning old hand, and sees that you have plenty of strength left, he will tell you that you are behind on the first two rounds, and that if you want to win you must fight like a demon. Many an over-confident, many a discouraged boxer, has won his battle in this way.

To go back to knock-down blows, there are several important points to be remembered. In glove fights for a money prize, ten seconds' grace are allowed. If the man cannot rise in that time he is beaten. If during the time he is down—and this applies equally of course to amateur boxing—his opponent hits him, the latter is disqualified.

A man is reckoned to be "down," not only when he is sprawling on the floor, but even when his two feet are on the ground, and, at the same time, any other part of him. This rule is to guard a man who is rising. He gets up on to his feet and keeps his

hands on the floor in order to push himself up. So long as his hands or one of them are on the ground he is down. For this reason, when you are knocked down, the best way to rise is in that gradual manner. Get your feet well planted and make an arch of your body, bringing your hands nearer to your feet by degrees along the floor, until you are able to rise. Make a backing movement away from your opponent as you do so, and take this opportunity of dusting your gloves against your body as described in a previous chapter.

Now the rule of the Amateur Boxing Association dealing with this question makes no provision for the ten seconds' grace. It simply gives it that when a man is down, his opponent shall retire out of distance and shall not begin to box again until told to do so by the referee. And the referee is empowered to stop a round, if in his opinion a man is outclassed or unfit to continue, and that man shall lose the bout. There is no word about a knock-out. The matter rests entirely with the referee. In practice again, in competitions held by many amateur clubs—certainly at the universities—the formal ten seconds are counted (not usually aloud), and if a man rises before the count of ten, he is—unless obviously dead beat—allowed to continue boxing. Of course, the referee uses his discretion, and even without a man actually going down sometimes stops the encounter, if he thinks one of the competitors has had enough. But it happens occasionally that two men will go on knocking each other down alternately all through a round and yet no particular damage is done. Or one

man may suffer half a dozen knock-down blows and yet have plenty of strength left : and the referee will refrain from stepping in because he sees that no harm has been done ; and this man may yet turn the tables on his antagonist and win.

Rather a delicate point comes to be considered here. If a man goes down without a blow, the referee can disqualify him. If he is knocked down, we will assume—judging by practice and not by the letter of the amateur rule—that he has ten seconds in which to recover and rise. Sometimes because of a hard blow, which has just failed to knock him out completely, a man will require every second of the ten. Sometimes he can rise in five ; sometimes he may have been upset because he was badly balanced and can get up immediately. For the purpose of argument we are saying that ten seconds are allowed—what advantage can be taken of them ? It is a matter which must rest with the individual. A boxer's ideals in sport are entirely his own affair. It can only be said here that when a man is heavily knocked down and struggles to rise at once, fails, struggles again and succeeds, and goes for his man once more with all his diminished power, the sight is an admirable one. The action may be quixotic, but it's none the worse sport for that. And it shows the real spirit of amateur boxing—the word “amateur” being read in its real sense.

Illustrating the question of the ten seconds' count, a story is told of an Irishman in America, which (it is to be hoped) will be unfamiliar to some readers. The Irishman was keeping time at what we must

suppose was a very rough and ready contest between one of his own countrymen and a black. In the course of the battle the former was knocked down—very severely knocked down. “One!” cried the timekeeper, watch in hand—“One! did ye hear me, Pat? Two! Git up ye fool—there’s only ten seconds and ye’ll be beat. Three! Pat, think of your old mother. What’s it she’d be saying to ye, beat by a nigger, too! Four! Think o’ the old counthry, Pat. Git up, man. Five! I’ll be countin’ ye out directla.” And so on, conversationally and slowly, until at the call of eight, Pat staggered to his feet. In the next round, by a mighty effort, Pat succeeded in knocking down the nigger. Desperately fearing lest he should revive in time, the man with the watch set off at top speed. “One, two, three, four, five and five’s ten. You’re out, ye black baste.”

Whether or not this story owes its origin to another of the first historic combat between Cribb and Molineaux is not to be said. The latter is undoubtedly true, and scarcely redounds to the credit of those concerned with one side of it. In the twenty-third round Cribb went down, utterly beaten. Molineaux, an enormously powerful negro, quite exhausted him with his smashing blows. There was no chance of his coming up to time for the next round; for it must be remembered that only half a minute’s rest was allowed between the rounds of a prize fight. Seeing that his man’s case was hopeless, Cribb’s second went across the ring to Molineaux’s corner and charged him with holding bullets in his hands—which, by the way, would have



A LEFT HOOK AT THE JAW: THE BLOW BEING STRUCK IMMEDIATELY
AFTER GUARDING A STRAIGHT LEFT

(see page 79)

done much more harm than good to the striker. The black had done nothing of the sort, and Cribb's second knew it; but the altercation gained a little extra grace for Cribb, and he was able to come up to the scratch for the next round, subsequently winning the fight.

To resume the discussion of amateur competitions, it sometimes happens that a man has the (comparative) good fortune to be knocked down just a moment before time is called at the end of a round. Immediately he hears the timekeeper's voice, the second may jump into the ring and raise his principal, carrying him to his corner. It is here that a really experienced second is needed. Brandy or other stimulants between rounds are scarcely ever to be recommended, and most certainly not for a man who has just suffered a blow on the jaw. The best means of restoration in all cases is the sponge of cold water sluiced liberally over the head and held to the back of the neck. Old time professionals had an amiable habit of biting their principals' ears. There is no doubt that the sharp pain thus inflicted might revive a man, but it is hardly to be said that he would welcome it. Unless the blow which brought him down was an exceptionally severe one, the competitor should be quite sufficiently recovered by the end of the interval to continue boxing. If he was knocked down by a fairly light blow, or one which hit him high on the jaw, he ought to be able to start the next round quite fresh and vigorous.

When you knock your opponent down, immedi-

ately back away from him to the farthest corner of the ring—without waiting for the referee to tell you to do so—and remain there until he is well on his feet again. The referee will then, unless he thinks your antagonist cannot stand any more, tell you to box on. This of all others is the moment when you need a cool head. You have knocked your man down with a blow on the jaw, let us say, and he is still dazed and “groggy.” Victory is within your grasp, you think. Certainly it very often is. But you should take nothing for granted, nor relax your vigilance for a moment. Men who appeared to be hopelessly beaten have, before now, concentrated their whole dying effort into one tremendous hit at a careless boxer, and have thereby won. So keep your guard rigid and attack steadily.

You will often see a competitor who has just floored his man go for him in a perfect frenzy of excitement, eager to snatch laurels whilst he may. He will swing wildly and heedlessly, and unless his opponent is very far gone indeed quite vainly. As already described, a swing is an easy blow to stop; and a man who has just risen from the floor will be on the look-out for it. No. It is even better to allow your man to recover somewhat, whilst you wait for a perfectly secure opening, than to lose your head at this critical moment. Another reason for stepping right away from a fallen foe—apart from fairness to him—is that some boxers, even experienced ones, are so excitable that they completely forget all rules, lose themselves entirely and hit

their opponent when he is down. It is not the least a question of unfairness or of unsporting conduct. Judged by the least considerable motive, no boxer would do it if he gave himself time to think : because he must be aware of the immediate disqualification which would ensue. It is sheer excitement.

Johnny Summers, quite one of the most brilliant light-weights of the day, than whom a fairer and more sportsmanlike boxer never put on a glove, used at one time to lose his head in this manner. He would forget everything. He never so much as heard the referee telling him to get away, but would pounce on the man who had dropped on his knees and was clinging to the ropes and hit him there. It is astonishing that so accomplished and experienced a boxer should do this, and the instance serves to show how important it is for every one to learn the necessity of a cool head.

When after knocking a man down and he has risen, and the referee has told you to box on, a good method of attack is, as usual, to lead with the left at his face—as hard as you can—to get away again, feint with the right, and send a left hook to the side of your opponent's jaw. But whatever you do, the great thing is to do it deliberately.

Knocks-outs sometimes give a most unsatisfactory termination to an encounter. In the case described above, where a man is knocked down in the last seconds of a round, and where, but for the call of time, he would have been knocked out, what is to happen if the round in question is the last? The

man who has been knocked down may have hitherto been winning well on points. Is he the winner still, when his antagonist has had the last laugh? It is a question to be decided by the referee. If he is palpably knocked out, lies still, and is unable to stir hand or foot, the referee will give his decision to the man who knocked him down. If he is just about to rise as time is called, the fight would probably stand on its own merits, or an extra round might be ordered.

Amateur competitions are governed by two judges and a referee. The judges sit on two sides of the ring and the referee on the third side, with the time-keeper next to him. By this distribution practically every blow that is struck comes under one official's eye. At the end of a combat, provided there has been no knock-out, the master of ceremonies goes to each of the judges in turn, who has written down the name of the competitor he considers the winner. If the judges agree, the M.C. declares the name. If they disagree, he goes to the referee, who either gives his casting vote, or if he is himself uncertain which of the men deserves the verdict, orders an extra round of two minutes. That generally, in fact almost always, decides it. But the referee can go on ordering further rounds until two out of the three opinions coincide. As a rule, the referee prefers to decide himself, if he can—as the competitors may both be nearly dead-beat; and after all, the battle is only supposed to be one of three rounds, and it ought to be settled in that time if possible.

So it is that if you or your second have reason

to believe that you and your antagonist are equal on the first two rounds, whilst putting forth your best endeavour to win in the third, it is always well to hold a little strength in reserve. It is in this extra round, if it is ordered, that your condition will finally tell. Both men will know that the fight has to be fought afresh in miniature. Therefore they will naturally think only of points and lead the whole time. There is nothing to be gained here by trying to knock your man out, unless indeed he lays himself helplessly open, which is unlikely; all you can do is to box in your very best style, and keep on leading as fast and as well as you know how. If you do that and your stamina is better than your adversary's, you will win.

The question of reserving your strength comes far more urgently home to you, when you are boxing,—not as the representative of one club against another,—but in a competition where there are preliminary heats to be fought off. In a large competition there is likely to be the vastest difference in the merits of the various combatants—some being complete “rabbits.” If you have some experience behind you, and you are drawn with one of these in the first heat, there is little to trouble about. In such a case the process of weeding out takes little time, and the “rabbit” will be outclassed and possibly beaten in the first minute of the first round.

It is a pity when two good men are drawn together at first; because whichever wins will be battered and worn, and may very likely be beaten subsequently by a man whom, when fresh, he could

easily have mastered. It is so much more satisfactory for the best fight to be the final. But in a big competition—like the amateur championships—it comparatively seldom turns out to be so. With a large entry there are certain to be good boxers together in the preliminary fights, and the two best of these meeting at the end will surely be too tired to put up a very fine battle.

Such is the strength of some men and the perfection of their training, that you do see most admirable finals now and again. But it is not to be expected as a rule. How then is a competitor to reserve his strength? He must do his best throughout in order to win at all; or rather he must be ready to do his best. The only way is to box with one main idea in your mind besides that of beating your opponent: let him do as much of the work as possible. Do not run about the ring; do not waste your energy on swings, which if they do not land, as explained before, take more out of the man who gives them than any other blow. Avoid much in-fighting, and on this occasion more than any other—for your own sake abjure clinching.

When you draw a bye in the first heat of a competition, it is usual to spar with your own second or with a friend. The rule gives it that you may box with anyone approved of by the judges and referee. The idea is, of course, that you should not come fresh to the next heat, as you would if you had not boxed at all. At the same time it is not to be expected that a bye shall be such an exhausting affair as an actual bout, and there is no particular

reason why it should be. You are entitled to take some advantage when the drawing of lots gives it to you. A good, brisk spar for three rounds of the same duration as those in the competition is sufficient.¹

The length of rounds varies according to the practice of individual clubs. The Amateur Boxing Association provides that the first two rounds shall be of three minutes and the third of four. But in many club competitions the rounds are shorter:—two, two, and three minutes being generally enough to test men properly.

After the encounter is over, you retire to your corner, and your second should be just as zealous then as before previous rounds in refreshing you by every means at his disposal. There is always the chance of the judges disagreeing and of the referee ordering an extra round. In boxing it is better never to take anything at all for granted. When the decision is announced and in your favour, you go over to your opponent's corner and shake hands with him there, generally leaving the ring before him. You also shake hands before the beginning of the last round.

An awkward problem with which you are very occasionally faced is a boxer who stands with his right leg and arm in front. It is generally a naturally left-handed man who does this. Such a style is very rare, and to see it successful is rarer still. When pitted against a right-handed boxer, you must modify your own style accordingly. Such a match will be

¹ For the method of drawing, see Rules of the Royal Navy and Army Boxing Association, Appendix ii.

a perfect hey-day for one who uses the ordinary position, but is fond of his right. If that right is quick and strong, he should make the most of it.

Facing a right-handed boxer, certain of the rules which you have learnt in order to beat a more usual opponent must be reversed: thus you should work round towards your left, so as to avoid his left—which will be held in readiness for a heavy cross-counter or swing, just as another man's right is.

Then, to lead with your straight left at his head is just as dangerous as, opposed to the ordinary boxer, it is to lead with your straight right: and thus the best and most valuable of all blows is made of none effect.

Remember that an opponent of this kind will keep on leading with his right, regarding it as his best blow. You can guard that easily enough with your left arm, slightly bent and held further in front of you than when guarding with your right. But never forget that it is your left which is your guarding arm. If you try and guard with your right, you will have to pull it over to your left shoulder, and you are then bound to leave your body fully exposed to your opponent's left: to say nothing of putting yourself into an awkward and ill-balanced position. But with an antagonist of this sort it is much better to avoid the blow altogether, duck to your left and give him a right-hand body blow with your elbow bent, and your body leaning well forward. Then get away to your left, moving your right foot first and bringing your right arm back again into position in case you have to guard his left again.

The pleasure in a good fight is unlike many others. There is generally little enough joy in anticipation and less retrospectively than in many other cases. It is the actual conflict in which lies the keenest enjoyment. Nevertheless enjoyment in a hard-fought battle is not to be had without a fair knowledge of boxing.

No one should enter his name for a competition who does not feel perfectly at ease in his movements, or to whom the rudimentary footwork and the ordinary blows do not come almost instinctively. Unless you have advanced thus far as a boxer, your little theoretical knowledge will only hamper any natural and preconceived ideas on the subject. And as mentioned before, the natural fighter—the man in whom a certain amount of boxing is born—is a more dangerous opponent than one who has just been taught enough to make him stiff and awkward. The latter usually finds himself helpless when pitted against a man equal in weight and size, but more knowledgeable. And a really bad drubbing is apt to discourage many a promising beginner. It is far better to wait—not necessarily until you are a good boxer—but until you have rubbed off the rough corners and find the accepted methods natural to you.

CHAPTER XII

ACTUAL SELF-DEFENCE

"... may Mars who watches o'er
The half-stripped votaries of the sawdust floor,
Protect thee still."

THE practical uses of boxing for the purposes of self-defence in a street or other row are considerable, but sometimes just a little over-rated. Everybody is accustomed to stories, actual or invented, telling of the big bully thrashed by a little boxer. Plenty of big bullies have been thrashed by little boxers: but in the interests of truth rather than of sentiment it is as well to add that where the bully is himself a boxer (and a boxer may be fairly competent without being very courageous) the little man will wish he was a big man. Weight and height and size must of themselves tell.

But then, most fortunately, these valuable qualities sometimes tell against their owner. A hulking ruffian with no knowledge of boxing, or—what is worse—a very little knowledge, will expend his strength in futile swings and wind-mill blows; he will get his feet mixed up; he will fight himself to a standstill. And all the while the other man, little or not as the case may be, will keep himself in

reserve ; looking on, so to say, an interested spectator. The mighty, blundering arms will pass and repass over his head ; but by a little slipping and ducking on the part of a skilled opponent, these stupid blows will never land on any vital part. And then when the giant has worn himself out and stands panting and exhausted, his antagonist—still keeping admirably cool and collected—will carefully and systematically smash him.

That is the best side of street fighting, and it happens fairly often ; but it is not always safe to reckon on the ruffian being a merely hulking one : he may be a good hand, for instance, at kicking with hob-nailed boots. And so to be useful in such emergencies the boxer has to alter his methods a little and be prepared for eventualities in no way connected with the Queensberry rules.

Of course you will soon see whether the man who attacks you, or whom, for one reason or another, you feel called upon to attack, is going to fight fairly or not. In the former case all you have to do is to box as well as you can—as though you had entered for a competition with bare knuckles, but with certain modifications. In the latter you must keep a sharp look out and employ certain dodges, some of which will be indicated here, which are outside boxing.

In the first place, your position in any impromptu encounter should be rather different to that employed in ordinary sparring. You should stand more edge-ways on towards your opponent, so as to give him as small a target as possible ; and your attitude should be more cramped. You need not be afraid of this

on the score of being tired the sooner, as such a fight is unlikely to last long. It is extremely important to guard every vital point rigidly. Your left shoulder should be held well up with the chin sunk below it. Your left arm should be more bent than is usual, your right elbow nearer the pit of your stomach, and the fist close to your face. Your feet will be in the same position as they ordinarily are.

It is an ungainly posture, and there will be none of the free and easy movement which is so essential to good boxing. But a fight in grim earnest cannot allow for the elegances of sport. You must protect yourself as best you can and damage your enemy as much as possible in the quickest time. In the case of a hooligan, you must do all in your power to disable him completely. Winning by a fair margin of points is hardly satisfactory in a street rough-and-tumble.

If your opponent stands up and boxes like a man, there is one particular blow you should try and land at once; and that is a straight left at his throat. You can occasionally bring it off when boxing with gloves if your antagonist leans his head back; otherwise the size of the glove mitigates its effect, and the blow lands partly on the top part of his chin and partly on the top of his breast-bone. With the bare fist, however, there is no difficulty about bringing the knuckles into undisturbed contact with the apple of the throat. Such a blow, well delivered, may virtually finish the encounter. The man who receives it gasps for breath, and probably staggers back, laying himself open to another blow given as you please—at the

side of his jaw. It is extremely painful, this throat blow, and if you happen to receive it yourself you should cover up with both hands and get away for a moment or two if possible. In order to land it, you should feint with the left at your opponent's head in order to make him throw it back to avoid the blow. Then step in a little closer and send the left home well under his chin.

Remember always in a street fight a man who has some knowledge of boxing, but does not mean to use it fairly, will try and drive you up to a wall and hit your head back against it, if he can. The consequence of that is obvious ; so always try to keep in the open. Do not waste time in hitting your man about the head if he ducks low : it will not hurt him, and you may damage your knuckles. In the same way, unless he has no coat or waistcoat on, be chary of hitting him in the body. Buttons or a watch chain may do considerable damage to your knuckles, especially when repeatedly hit. Of course you must not leave his body alone—particularly if the man is a fat or a flabby one. But make sure that when you do hit him there that the blow is a really hard one, carefully timed. With the hooligan type you should make a point of avoiding his mouth. Dangerous cases of blood-poisoning have resulted from knuckles cut on the teeth of this sort of man. Aim for his jaw, his throat, and his temples in particular.

With the man who fights "all in," as the saying goes, who will employ any means of hurting you from half a brick to a knee in your stomach, you must be more vigilant. This kind of man will often charge

with his head down, trying to butt the wind out of you. The ordinary boxer will naturally regard this as a first-class opportunity for an upper cut. So it is. But you need something much more damaging than that. It is not the slightest good being quixotic on such an occasion. You must stop the man as best you may. The thing to do in this instance is to wait for him, and as he comes in bring your right leg up in a level with the left, and lift your knee with all your power into his face. Your fists should then get a chance of completing the good work in the next second. By the same mark, never lower your own head in case your opponent may remember his knees.

Then there is the ruffian who tries to kick your shins. That is easily stopped if you can keep a cool head, and, as before, wait for him. Lift your foot off the ground six inches or so, and the fellow's own shin will come into violent contact with the toe of your boot. More dangerous is he who pretends to fight with his fists and suddenly kicks out sideways at your stomach. Of course the most serious injuries may be caused in that way: but if you are quick enough—and the best of boxing is that it makes you alert to perceive this sort of thing as well as the fair manœuvres of the ring—if you are quick enough then you can step back half a pace, snatch your opponent's leg as it rises, and by an upward jerk throw him down.

In any sort of street fight, however, do not be led into wrestling unless you are an expert at it; and keep to long range hitting, waiting your chance for



A STREET FIGHT. THE THROAT BLOW IS GIVEN MUCH MORE EFFECTIVELY WITH THE NAKED FIST THAN WITH A GLOVE.

(see page 148, c.f. page 7, iii)

a punishing blow. Little blows are of no use. It is far better to hit seldom and with all your might.

With the type of man already referred to who stops at nothing, who stoops to anything, it never does to run any risks at all. If, for example, you get your head into "chancery"—an expression now obsolete as regards boxing—you are likely to be severely handled. The origin of the phrase is fairly obvious. Having once got into actual Chancery there is considerable difficulty in getting out again. Getting your head into chancery is caused by ducking too low past your opponent's left, so that he can bring his arm back quickly and hold your head beneath it. True that by this means he cannot hurt you much in the ordinary way as your face is protected by his body, and your left will be free to guard your own: but he may throw you badly, or he may inflict much punishment by kidney blows.

The best way to get out of chancery is to hit at your opponent's "mark" with your left as hard as you can, at the same time getting your left heel behind his. It is not the least use pulling with your head: but if you are strong enough you may be able to loosen your antagonist's grasp by forcing up his left arm with your right hand. But in street fighting you should make it a rule never to get near enough to your opponent to allow the possibility of chancery. In boxing, to grip a man's head under your arm is just like any other form of holding—a matter to be dealt with instantly by the referee.

There is another kind of antagonist more frequently to be met with than any other in a street

row, and that is the drunken man. He may be by practice a fair boxer or no boxer at all, or a "kick and half-brick" man. But when drunk—all types when thoroughly drunk have this in common—it is extremely difficult to hurt him. His sensibilities are deadened. His Dutch courage is heroic ; and though it is but Dutch courage it serves its purpose. Men like this are easy enough to knock down as a rule, for the simple reason that standing at all is a considerable trouble to them. But unless they are very far gone in drink they will rise, little the worse for the fall, and make for you again. It is always disgusting to hit a drunken man, but it frequently has to be done—and it is as well to remember how difficult it is to make any impression on him.

An instance of this once came within the writer's experience. Some boys walking on a heath near one of the public schools were stopped by a farm bailiff and accused—wrongly, as a matter of detail—of trespassing. They bandied words with him. The bailiff was a big fellow, excessively intoxicated. He chose one of the boys, quite arbitrarily, seized him by the throat, threw him to the ground, and fell atop of him. He was too drunk to keep his hold, and with the help of another boy pulling at the fellow's coat-tails, the first contrived to wriggle from under him. But he was scarcely on his feet before the bailiff had risen too. Whereupon the rest of the boys formed a circle round the pair and cried out for a fair fight.

The ground was level and grassy ; the light, though failing, was sufficient. Quite by chance the

bailiff had picked out the one boy in the group who had a certain knowledge of boxing. The latter led with his left, the former ponderously swung. The boy stepped aside, and sent home a right hook on the man's jaw. He went down, groaned a little, stirred, rose again. Three times the boy knocked the bailiff down without himself receiving a single blow. Of course the average schoolboy of seventeen, weighing not more than ten stone, cannot hit like a hardened pugilist; but his blows must have some power behind them. However, they made no impression on his drunken antagonist. After the last knock-down the man found a big stone on the ground with which he tried to batter the lad. Slipping past him, the latter wisely retreated, watching the fellow's blundering movements.

Finally, dodging behind a bush, he had the pleasure of seeing the drunken bailiff stagger off into an adjacent wood, believing he was still upon the schoolboy's tracks. Provided there is nobody else to suffer, nothing is to be gained by standing up to a man who tries to break your head with stones. And if you cannot disable or stop an opponent of this kind, the best thing is to exercise a wise discretion (it may be the better part of valour, but that's not the point), and retreat in good order.

Fiction and the annals of fact abound in stories of poetic justice, where a bully has been thrashed. Boxers as a rule are quiet and peaceful people, because they learn to be self-reliant: and it is usually the man who is uncertain of himself who talks most loudly and is rudest. Not having any tangible qualities of strength

or other excellence, such a man is insolent to strangers in the hope of impressing them with his importance. Unfortunately, he often succeeds. Now and again, however, it happens that he insults the wrong man, and his arrogance is, at all events temporarily, obliterated.

Borrow in *The Romany Rye* tells a story of a bragging and hectoring coachman. There is a feeling at the present time (probably fostered by charming pictures in Christmas Supplements), that the old-fashioned drivers of fours-in-hand were bluff and genial fellows, fond of their joke, and kind. George Borrow has little good to say of them, however. The man of whom he writes on this occasion had been particularly offensive to a mild-looking, elderly man who sat behind him. The latter was obviously not well-to-do, and therefore an unlikely victim to such wiles of jocularitas as the driver had at his disposal.

Nevertheless—"Remember the coachman," said the knight of the box to the elderly man when he alighted.

"If you expect me to give you anything," said he, "you are mistaken : I will give you nothing."

Then began the coachman to boast of his noble friends with whom, he assured those present, he was wont to hobnob, and of the princely sums they bestowed upon him. Later on the old man lit his pipe and went for a stroll ; and happening to pass the coachman, allowed some smoke to blow in his face.

"What do you mean by smoking in my face?" said the latter, and struck the old chap's pipe out of his mouth.

The mild old man silently picked up his pipe, and took off his coat and hat, rubbed his hands together, and advanced on the coachman in an attitude of offence.

“The coachman, who probably expected anything but such a movement from a person of the age and appearance of the individual whom he had insulted, stood for a moment motionless with surprise, but, recollecting himself, he pointed at him derisively with his finger; the next moment, however, the other was close upon him, had struck aside the extended hand with his left fist, and given him a severe blow on the nose with his right, which he immediately followed with a left hand blow to the eye; then, drawing his body slightly backward, with the velocity of lightning, he struck the coachman full in the mouth, and the last blow was the severest of all, for it cut the coachman’s lips nearly through; blows so quickly and sharply dealt I have never seen. The coachman reeled like a fir-tree in a gale, and seemed nearly unsensed. . . . The coachman, coming somewhat to himself, disencumbered himself of his hat and coat, and, encouraged by two or three of his brothers of the whip, showed some symptoms of fighting, endeavouring to close with his foe, but the attempt was vain, his foe was not to be closed with: he did not shift or dodge about but warded off the blows of his opponent with the greatest sang-froid, always using the guard which I have described, and putting in, in return, short, chopping blows with the swiftness of lightning. In a very few minutes the countenance of the coachman was literally cut to pieces, and several of his

teeth were dislodged; at length he gave in; stung with mortification, however, he repented and asked for another round, it was granted to his own complete demolition . . ."

It is, of course, dangerous to presume on a knowledge of boxing, and it can generally be said for boxers that they seldom do so presume. But it is much more dangerous to presume on the superiority of mere strength, as the following instance will show.

Two big school-boys had a minor quarrel. One was a boxer, the other was prodigiously strong and despised boxing. He believed that to hit a fellow in a calculating way, with systematic intent, was to take a mean advantage. And having the courage of his opinions he challenged the boxer to fight.

"We will see," said he, "what boxing can do against strength." To boast in that manner is to ask for trouble, as the saying goes. Professional boxers and even amateurs occasionally tell their prospective antagonists exactly what they mean to do to them, but that is commonly part of a deliberate plan. Most unfortunately for moralists there is real power in the strength of a loud boast, because in a credulous world people are very liable to be taken at their own valuation. In this case the boxer made no retort, partly because he was by no means sure that he could overcome the strong boy. So he merely accepted the challenge, and for the rest remained silent. The astonishing fact of a mill at a usual public school at the end of the nineteenth century would have been too eccentric for wide approval, it was thought, and

so the two combatants retired to a distant and secluded field where there was no chance of interruption.

The fight opened with caution on both sides. The boxer naturally waited to see what his adversary would do, how he would leave himself open, and what was the best method of attacking : the other, plucky as he was strong, took an almost scientific interest in observing how a boxer looks when he shapes up to you. Then he tried a wild swing which, if it had landed, would have settled the dispute then and there. But as is the way with wild swings it failed to land, and the attacker looked about him in some surprise, because when he hit his opponent simply wasn't there. This process was repeated several times. The boxer never attempted to land a blow, and after a while the strong boy closed and tried wrestling. The boxer hung limp in his arms and allowed himself to be pushed over ; a dangerous thing to do by the way, as a heavy throw may do more damage than many hits. After that they rested for a moment or two by mutual agreement.

Now the ground where they were fighting sloped considerably, and the boy who had hitherto done all the work (thereby tiring himself) was rather clever, he thought, in always manœuvring so that his opponent was below him. Early in the second round, he charged down upon his man, both arms whirling, hoping, and indeed expecting, to beat him down by sheer force. The boxer remained perfectly still on the lower ground ; and just when his man came within reach, extended his left straight from the

shoulder, at the same time moving his left foot forward. His fist took his charging antagonist precisely on the bridge of the nose. The latter abruptly sat down.

That was a one-blow victory—one synthetic, irresistible, unimprovable blow, as M. Maeterlinck would say! There was no question of continuing the fight. The nose was broken and crooked. The boy whose strength had been his pride had to cast about for something more reliable to be proud of, and in the mean time bore a not very plausible tale to the school doctor about running up against a tree.

The opportunity most likely to arise where a boxer may be useful is when he sees some ruffian ill-treating a woman, a child, or an animal. In the first of these cases the rescuer must always bear in mind that he runs a grave risk of being stabbed with a bonnet pin. Women of the class referred to cannot endure the least interference with their concerns: and after all a fight with your husband is quite a private and familiar matter. Moreover, women of this kind are usually well able to take care of themselves.

There was, however, a case where a man walking through a mean street could not hold himself in check. A big brute had got a woman on to her knees and, holding her by the throat with one hand, was hitting her with the other. As usual there was a small crowd of interested and amused spectators, who would not stir a hand to help her. Not wishing to soil his hands on such vermin, the passer-by went up to the inhuman beast and deliberately kicked him with all his might and a thick boot. The man let go of his wife (or

someone else's wife, as the case may be), took off his coat, squared up to his antagonist, and said quietly and with menace: "You do that again."

So he did it again. And the man put on his coat and walked away.

CHAPTER XIII

PROFESSIONAL BOXING

"Damn that fellow, I say to your face,
Who has plenty of blunt in his cly,
Who'd push an honest man out of his place,
Or to take from him his living would try."

BEFORE definitely determining upon a professional boxing career, a man or rather boy—for he has to begin very young—must be told plainly and without mincing matters what it is that he will have to undergo.

He should know, in the first place, that there is always a fair chance for genuine merit, a fairer chance than in any other sport by which a man may live. A boxer literally stands or falls by his own endeavour, absolutely and entirely. There is hardly any opportunity for favouritism. A really good boxer cannot be suppressed. He is bound to fight his way to the top, if he does not play the fool. All that is by way of encouragement.

In the second place, the boxer should have it clearly put before him that while there is always a chance of a big ultimate reward, there are very few who get it; that there is a strong chance of finishing a boxing career in comparative obscurity; that the fighting life is a short one—that is to say, a boxer of

five-and-thirty is reckoned a veteran. Lastly, without any exception at all, it is the most self-denying, frugal, and the hardest life that a man can lead. For a professional must train far more severely than an amateur. He is far more severely tried. He should always be fit. And the boxer who fights his battle, goes out of training at top speed, and then has to get back again into condition for another contest, will not last long.

But at the outset the novice must discover whether he has any real aptitude and talent. There are plenty of boys—sixteen or seventeen years of age—who think they would like to be boxers, hardy lads, willing to undergo the strain, risk the disappointments, and give up everything else for their chances in the ring. But they must find out if they have in them the makings of a boxer. Their best course is to be tried by a professional of acknowledged standing. There are always plenty of these to be found who will only too gladly put on the gloves with a youngster and tell him straightly what he is worth. And if, after a few trials, it is decided that he is worth something as a boxer, the next thing to do is to join one of the numerous clubs, to box regularly, to keep in training, and to further physical development in the right directions. The novice must eschew irregular combats before he has been put through his paces, and above all, in the meantime, stick to the trade in which he was originally set. No boxer, save one in the first rank, can afford to be a boxer only.

And then when he has been taught a good deal, and has continued to forget his primitive notions

(without having which he would never have wanted to be a pugilist), he should enter for his club competitions. If he proves successful, he will not want for shrewd people ready to push him into prominence.

The best opening of all, after he has learnt a little, is a novices' competition at the National Sporting Club. Every aspiring boxer knows that here, without the possibility of doubt, he will receive fair play. He knows that no man who fights "on the cross"—who goes down without a blow because he has been bought—is allowed at the club. To be seen there fairly often is the best "character" that a boxer can have. It is the only existing institution of its kind whose name alone essentially connotes the best boxing and absolutely straightforward dealing. If the committee of the National Sporting Club once take a man up and find that he justifies their confidence, it will be (saving sheer bad luck) his own fault if he ever looks back.

If the novice is big, there is always a better opening for him than for other men. Bantams, feathers, and light-weights are plentiful. Good middle-weights are comparatively scarce. Good heavy-weights are very rare indeed. They are always needed. And any novice (of thirteen stone and upwards especially) who mingles strength and agility with his weight, will be sure of a good opportunity of realizing himself.

Before a satisfactory settlement was arrived at a few years ago, the standard weights for championships formed a subject of constant bickering. If a man, say, of nine stone two and a half pounds called himself

champion at that weight, he could : and the fact that he had been thrashed by some one half a pound heavier or lighter, as the case might be, made no difference in his own estimation. If some people had their way the roll of boxers, both English and American, would have been as full of champions as the Haytian army is of generals. There would have been a championship for every ounce between seven stone and fourteen. So eight weights were agreed upon by the committee of the National Sporting Club—fly, bantam, feather, light, welter, middle, light-heavy, and heavy-weights : and for these challenge belts were given by Lord Lonsdale, President of the N. S. C.

The rules governing these weights and the holding of the belts will be found in the Appendix (iii.).

The better sort of British boxer is a fine fellow, a good and chivalrous sportsman. So was the old time prize-fighter ; and the latter was a tougher man—he had to be. But on an average it is doubtful whether he had as much brains ; he relied more upon his seconds ; he was usually a rougher diamond.

Can a man earn his livelihood by means of a sport, and yet uphold the highest tradition of that sport ? He can, but he very often does not. There are obviously fair boxers and obviously unfair boxers, but the latter never rise to eminence. An unfair boxer, one who is constantly breaking rules and fighting foul, can never hope to succeed. Unfortunately, however, there are many men who are unsporting boxers ; that is to say, they are bound by the rules, and they know it. But anything that they can do for which the

referee is unable to call them to order, they will do. This type of man would commit any foul if he could make sure of the referee not observing him—happily, a rare contingency.

“Yer mustn’t do that,” said an old pug once to a pupil who had hit him with his elbow, “it don’t pay. ‘Sides the referee might see yer.”

So to that kind of professional the referee is simply a policeman and a natural enemy. To the scrupulous boxer he is not a minion, but a giver of the law. The man who fights fair trusts the referee to uphold his fairness, to take stock of his endeavours, to sum up the difference between him and his antagonist.

“Business is business,” the unsporting boxer says to himself and to his critics. He has to earn his living, he will assure you, and he must do it by all the means in his power. If his opponent is such a fool as not to take similar advantages, that is his look out. And there are numerous tricks by means of which a boxer may gain an unfair advantage, and for which a referee will have difficulty in finding a remedy.

For cool impertinence and low cunning it is hard to beat the following incident. In an unimportant contest (it was not at any well-known boxing resort), a very modern young boxer was opposed to an old-fashioned veteran—one of that sturdy race with all the hall-marks of his trade upon him; a good humoured, thick-eared, flat and indiarubber-faced fighter, who in his day had stood up and milled with his bare knuckles. His antagonist was a sleek, pasty-faced youth, with long dank hair flapping on his forehead, and a shifty eye. He crouched, he struck

ludicrous attitudes, and he talked. He had probably tried to model himself on Tommy Burns, without having the Canadian's pluck or real generalship. But in a sense he was a good boxer—"clever" is the word used nowadays. But he was unable to make any impression on the old bruiser. In the third round he stood away, deliberately put his hands on his hips, and laughed.

"Arn't you goin' to hit me, old soul?" he asked. "Put it here." And he indicated his own "mark."

The referee immediately leaned forward.

"Don't play the fool," he said. "Box."

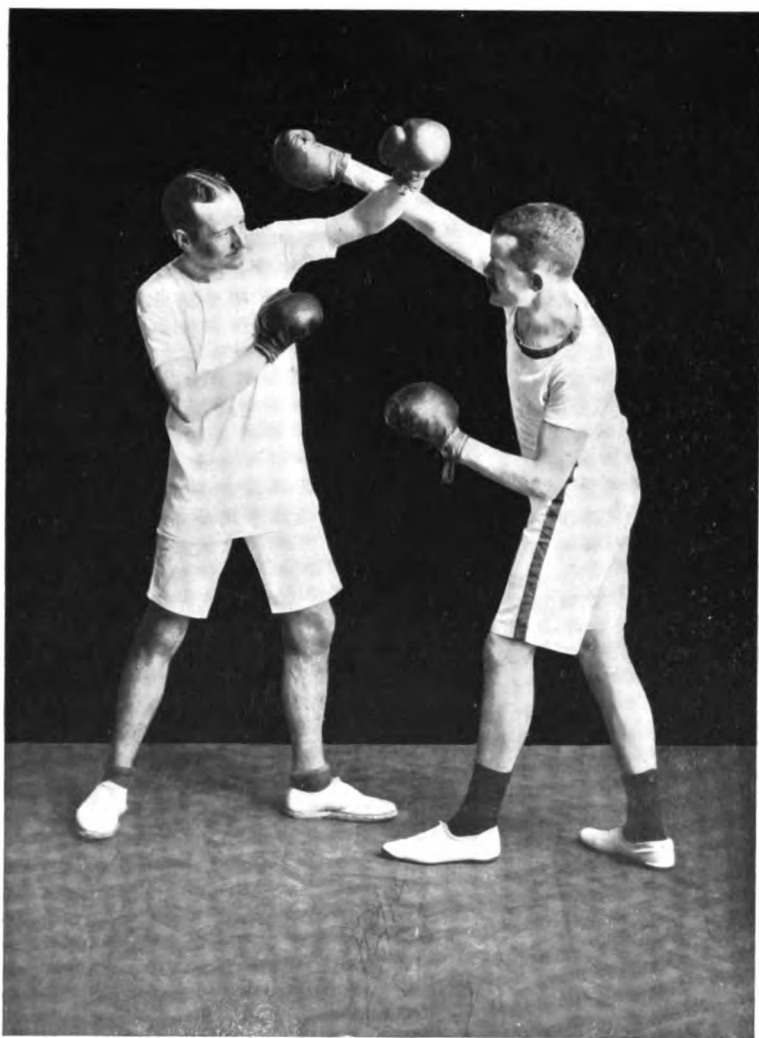
It was at exactly the same moment that the veteran, a slow-witted fellow, sprang forward to take advantage of his adversary's position. If he chose to lower his hands, he must take the consequences. But hearing the referee's voice, and not immediately gathering the purport of what he said, the old bruiser himself paused, with his hands half raised. Ten seconds later, his disconsolate seconds were hurrying into the ring to pick up his unconscious form.

The "clever" youth had foreseen it all. He knew his antagonist would try—vainly enough, no doubt—but still try to take the obvious opportunity: and he knew that the referee would be annoyed by his ape-like trick, and would speak about it. And the chances were that his opponent would misunderstand the official order and be flurried. Thus he had a perfectly clear and free opening for a knock-out blow. There was nothing to be done. Obviously it was the old stager's own fault. A more experienced referee would have ordered the men to stop boxing

before he made any comment. Then if the younger man had hit, it would have been foul. As it was, he was within the letter of the rule.

This "mouth-fighting"—talking to your opponent, jabbering absurd threats during the progress of a round has—like many other undesirable characteristics in the modern boxer—been largely imported from the United States. Quite a number of American boxers find, presumably, that talking succeeds. Certainly it is liable to "put off" a simple-minded opponent. Another dodge is to stamp fiercely on the ground and glare balefully. But these things are not too seriously to be considered. What matters a great deal more is the style of boxing which sometimes leaves the ablest referee in doubt. A man starts in-fighting, battering away at the body: in order to protect his own head the while he sinks it upon his opponent's chest: then he butts him in the jaw. If the referee sees that and has doubts about the intention, he warns the man; if the latter persists, he disqualifies him. But if the man who is butted has his back to the referee for the moment, it is not always possible to see what happens. He can appeal to the referee, but he may be endangering himself by doing so. Then there is a species of in-fighting which approaches so near to hitting in holds that the two are well-nigh indistinguishable.

One of the most pernicious influences in modern professional boxing is the cinematograph. Practically every important match nowadays is photographed, that the whole world may see the films at some future time. The principals in the match acquire an interest



GUARDING A RIGHT SWING. THE POSITION OF THE STRIKER'S HAND IS RIGHT: INJURIES TO THE THUMB RESULT FROM NOT TURNING THE KNUCKLES SUFFICIENTLY FAR OVER

(see page 84)

—a very substantial one too—in the cinematograph shows of their match. The proportion is a matter of private arrangement. The winner may have a certain high percentage, the loser a considerably less one—just as the prize money is, or should be, divided. What happens in a one-sided encounter? *A* can easily beat *B*, and knows it. From the moment they have entered the ring he is certain that he can knock him out at any given moment that suits his caprice. And if boxing is to be a sport and not a theatrical sham, *A* ought to beat *B* as quickly as he is able. But what would the public say? Only two or three rounds? How dull, how disappointing! No. *A* must keep up the pretence for a while, for twelve or fifteen rounds even, to please the outside public. For, if they do not get what they consider and call their money's worth, they will not patronize the cinematograph show. And then there will be no profits to speak of for *A*.

That is one venomous element in the commercial side of professional boxing. Another is the preposterous sums which certain boxers insist on for a prize. The magnitude of the reward can scarcely be cavilled at. In this case the supply creates the demand to a certain extent. If people once subscribe large sums for a contest, a man who earns his living with his fists will, reasonably enough, insist upon continuing to have a big prize.

What is utterly beyond reason, however, is when *A*—a boxer with a great name—insists upon a certain sum being paid to him—"win, lose, or draw." Quite apart from any idea of sport, that has not even

the essence of good commerce in it. It is an arrogant and absurd condition; and the pity is that such a clause in an agreement can be tolerated. What it means is simply this:—*A* has achieved notoriety and means to make the world pay for it. The world is exceedingly anxious for him to be matched with *B*. *B* is willing because he will probably beat *A*, and may possibly take his place as a man to demand enormous rewards. *A* procrastinates: he has got to work up the world's anticipation; he wants to bring people into that condition when they would be grievously disappointed if the match did not come off. He feigns complete indifference towards it. Of course he can beat *B* he tells the papers; but that's not the point. All his conditions must be complied with.

All the time he means to fight, win or lose. He is no physical coward and can take a thrashing with the best—if it is made worth his while. Or he may be a certain winner, and *B* may be not too willing to join issue; but fearful of not doing so lest his prestige should suffer. At each delay the world, who might well be interesting itself in something rather more promising and profitable, works itself into a condition of frenzy. Any concession will be made rather than lose the great fight. So the question of money is settled.

Then *A* (or perhaps—certainly in some cases—one should substitute for *A*, his manager and backers) invents another excuse for postponing the battle. He won't agree to box at such and such a place; or to accept the ruling of So and So as referee. Finally, the world gets tired of it all and the contest

is arranged, and—if the sentimental party have not in the meantime worked on the world's feelings and throttled negotiations—it takes place. Then *A* formally retires from the ring, circularizes the papers with one final advertisement of his new occupation, makes an arrangement with the proprietors of a patent medicine which serves the purposes of both, and disappears for a time. In a few months he crops up again; ostensibly persuaded by his friends, really in fulfilment of his programme. The means by which such a boxer plays upon the world's patience, by which indeed he originally gains most of his notoriety, is the vulgarest kind of press campaign. And the worst of it is that once the man in question has forced himself to be an object of public interest, the more reputable newspapers cannot ignore him. They are heartily disgusted, and show it plainly enough; but, however unwillingly, they perpetuate the advertisement.

It is all very ludicrous, and it is not boxing.

The foregoing career, invented, but not in the smallest degree exaggerated, is typical of the present day. And it has been dealt with at some length to show where a genuine danger to the sport lies. And the huge sums forthcoming for boxing matches breed the most pathetic kind of imposture. The good, old-fashioned bruiser, who hoarded his hard-earned prizes and retired at the end of a long and honourable career to his little pub, is dying out. There were and are ruffians of this sort as there are of every sort, but fine men well leavened the lump.

Nowadays our young pugs are learning to have

dizzier ambitions in emulation of the successful American bruiser, and fostered by him. They are very magnificent. They have diamonds. Of course, if a man squarely earns his money, no one has the least right to dictate the method of its expenditure. If the young boxer tries to be a swell, let him try. But it is a sad buffoonery : and the sadder from his own point of view—if he only knew it—because flashiness is so very characteristic of the black.

And this brings us to the most perplexing question that was ever faced by well-wishers of the sport. The negro has already been referred to in this connection, and by negro is meant the African slave, or rather his descendants in America. He is often a very fine boxer. From the time of Bill Richmond in the early years of the nineteenth, to the day when Johnson beat Jefferies in the present century, black men have fought with great success. Many of them have been extraordinarily skilful with their fists. But, as already said, a black man is not made in the same way as a white man. He is far less sensitive about the head and jaw : he can take, almost without knowing it, a blow which would knock out the toughest and most seasoned white pugilist. So that, other things being equal, the white man and the black enter the ring together upon a different footing. In some cases a negro's weakness in the stomach countervails the hardness of his head, but not always.

But these inequalities in physique are of small importance compared to the matter of temperament. Any triumph, of whatsoever nature, turns the head of the average black. It is bad for him because he

behaves like a spoiled child, which is just what he is. And when that triumph is a personal one, over a white man, the nigger becomes an appalling creature, a devil. His insolence knows no bounds. His preposterous swagger excites the passionate hatred of ignorant white men, the disgust of their betters. There is no holding him until his money has run out, or he transgresses the law. It is far better that blacks should be allowed to fight, exclusively, amongst themselves. There are good black boxers—reasonable men—with a sense of proportion, a sense of the fitness of things—good sportsmen with clear heads; Peter Jackson was one, but they are not sufficiently numerous to warrant mixed fighting.

Some boxers have all kind of tricks for attracting attention and making themselves appear, as they really seem to believe, more important. One of these is to enter the ring fully dressed and to take off their clothes, helped by a regiment of seconds, in their corner. The majority, however, come into the ring with a great-coat thrown round their shoulders, ready and anxious to begin at once. These accessory effects do not matter much if the boxing is good. But so long as the sport exists there will always be men anxious to disguise incompetence by that amiable love of display known as “swank.”

Up to a few years ago there were no two ideas so utterly, and it seemed so hopelessly, irreconcilable as France and boxing. Of all things of which a Frenchman was entirely incapable, the proper use of his fists came first. The notion of a Frenchman putting on a pair of boxing gloves was a stock joke.



In 1838 the *bourgeoisie* of Paris was excited to an acute condition of pious horror on account of the two battles fought on French soil between Owen Swift and Jack Adams. But in the process of years, and owing to the softening of the sport with gloves, this repugnance has succumbed.

And now, on the very day that these words are being written, comes the news of the defeat of Bombardier Wells, heavy-weight champion of England, by Carpentier, a Frenchman. And with such rapid strides has the noble art found favour in France that the fact of Wells being knocked out in four rounds has not been regarded with profound amazement. Of course *La Savate* was practised long ago : and the combined use of fists and feet was brought to a high level of scientific achievement. But it was against our national instincts to join issue in this way : and now at length France has learnt boxing as we understand it. Not that we are mainly responsible for this still rather overwhelming revolution ; Americans have taught the Frenchmen most. But the idea is the same ; and the most essentially British sport that existed—our exclusive boast—must now henceforward be shared.

It must be with something of sadness that we of the English-speaking races relinquish our old position—sadness tempered with the conviction that a mutual sport will do more to cement an understanding between two friendly nations than all the wiles of diplomacy.

Professional boxing is cleaner than it used to be. Twenty years ago there were bigger fights and better fights in a way : and such men as Robert

Fitzsimmons, James J. Corbett, John L. Sullivan, Frank Slavin, Charley Mitchell, and James J. Jefferies still hold, in the mind of the public, names for gigantic endeavour and achievement, not to be rivalled at the present day.

Nowadays the best boxers—in England at all events—are feather and light weights: and these, though their skill may be of a superlatively fine quality, never make so much ado in the world at large as the big men—literally big men. It is always the past which is supported by giants, but when our great-grandchildren regard this present as a distant past, it is doubtful whether they will see in it many giants of boxing.

This is no doubt largely due to the fact that while fighting has from the beginning attracted the widest attention and interest, there are far more boxers now than there used to be, and a much keener competition for the championships. Jim Driscoll and Johnny Summers and other first-rate men of our own time will never hold the place in history given to Jem Belcher and Tom Cribb at the beginning, or to Fitzsimmons and Corbett at the end, of the last century.

But the methods used in some of the immortal combats of the 'nineties, judged by the standards of to-day, were not of the nicest.

Corbett, by his own frank account of his great fight with Peter Jackson, the black, seized hold of his fist in order that the referee should tell them to break away, and so that he might start fresh again when Jackson's in-fighting was proving too much for

him. The underlying principle was the same as in clinching. At that time it can hardly be said to have been unfair; and if men had to fight to a finish some latitude on that account might certainly be conceded. Also the noble art in those days was in a transitional stage. Bare knuckle fighting in which wrestling was allowed had just been abolished; and out of its ashes was springing the fastidious sport called modern boxing.

All chrysalid stages of development are tiresome and often ugly: and during this time, though the science of boxing was yearly improving, a certain kind of craftiness was practised which would be utterly despised by first-rate men to-day; but which was then considered (in America, at all events) an inseparable part of the science.

Then, very light gloves were used; so that the punishment received in these encounters was infinitely more severe than it is nowadays. Indeed, the two-ounce glove gives as formidable a blow as a naked fist, and it protects the hitter's knuckles so that he can sometimes fight the longer.

Corbett was a terrific hitter and the fastest man on his feet of his time. In 1891, he fought Peter Jackson for sixty-one rounds. Both men were at a standstill, utterly exhausted, and the battle was declared "no contest," which means the cancelling of bets. Then in the following year he won the championship of the world by knocking out John L. Sullivan in twenty-one rounds. Sullivan was a mighty slogger who had won most of his battles with bare knuckles, but his science was rather primitive.

Then Corbett lost the championship to Fitzsimmons, who, with his opponent of that occasion, was a pioneer of modern scientific methods. Fitzsimmons is a tall, bony man with no great show of muscle, save on his back and shoulders; easy to hit, almost impossible to hurt. But he had, and doubtless has still for all his fifty years, an immense power behind his blow, and an astonishing capacity for taking punishment.

And then—last of the greater white champions—came Jefferies, a giant of a man, upon whom nobody could make any impression. He started his career as one of Corbett's trainers, and ultimately beat both his old principal and Fitzsimmons twice. He remained undisputed heavy-weight champion until, in 1910, after years of retirement, he was persuaded to fight Johnson, the black. Then he was beaten in fifteen rounds, and the world is still waiting for a white champion.

CHAPTER XIV

REFEREEING

The national sports of a people cannot be too sacredly guarded, by those who wish to preserve to the country its proverbial character for real generosity, manly feeling, and true courage."—Dedication of *Boxiana* to Colonel Berkeley, a famous referee and patron of the ring.

THERE are three main essentials in a good referee. He must have an absolutely comprehensive knowledge of boxing; he must be able to make up his mind inexorably, and on the spur of any given moment; and he must have the power to command, to enforce his authority. A man who lacks perfect mastery over some details of the sport is palpably useless to control it. One who is undecided in an emergency is apt to spoil sport. One who cannot make himself obeyed is like to kill it.

It is not to be said that a referee of consummate pre-eminence is required for a small amateur competition, but for professional contests you must have a good man.

There is a most flagrant instance in the writer's actual experience to illustrate the first point given above, whereby an injustice was done in an amateur match. At the end of the third round, the judges

disagreed and the referee ordered an extra round. That round was unquestionably decisive. Afterwards the referee condoled with the beaten man. "Personally," said he, "I thought you won pretty easily on the three rounds!" He was actually unaware that the referee could give a casting vote.

Of course, the best of referees are fallible, and must occasionally be guilty of an error of judgment. But they should not plead guilty. If you make a mistake once in a way, stick to it and brazen it out. It is not a matter of life and death; but if you say that white is black and then go back on yourself, all confidence in you will be lost.

Dealing with a troublesome professional, the indecisive referee is sure to give food for dissatisfaction. One of them is holding. "Smith, don't hold," cries the referee. And his voice and mien matter enormously. He must be peremptory, even a little fierce, but once let his order degenerate into a shout, and you know that he is a weak man. Smith, we will say, is a veritable nuisance: he is continually holding. The referee is constantly telling him not to: and at length loses patience. "If you don't stop holding, you'll both leave the ring," he says. Jones—the other man—has not been holding at all. And the referee's order probably comes less, in the first instance, from ignorance than from lack of observation. Secondly, his long sufferance is worn out, and his presence of mind is gone. He says anything that comes into his head, and people are aggravated.

It cannot be too urgently impressed that referees are for the sport, not for those who look on at sport. It is a commonplace that you cannot please everybody, and the good referee cares for the opinion of others, their delight or their annoyance, not one single snap of his fingers. And looking at the subject from the other point of view, having once accepted a particular man as referee—especially when he is authoritatively acknowledged as one who knows his business—whatever he says is, *ipso facto*, right. In a crowd of good sportsmen this is recognized as a matter of course; but, unfortunately, crowds are not invariably composed of good sportsmen. Loud disagreement is often expressed; and—by the riff-raff of the world that follows sport—personal menaces are hurled at the man who speaks his mind and gives an unpopular decision.

Mr. Eugene Corri, incomparably the best referee in this or any other country, whose sentiments are expressed in the foregoing paragraphs, has himself frequently been threatened by ruffians. Naturally these have been excessively futile and ignorant ruffians: but they always have been, are now, and always will be a danger to good sport. The fact is that these are men who put money on an event, with no risky idea of backing their sanguine expectation, but of subscribing to a certainty. Such people are always bad losers.

To return to actual methods, a referee for professional contests must award a maximum of five marks at the end of each round to the better man; or when he considers them equal, five to each. It

is usual in England for the referee to sit at the ring-side, and with clean-hitting, straight forward boxers there is no reason why he should move. But where there is much clinching—the fault being on one or both sides—the only way of keeping the men apart is to pull them with your two hands.

Of late years especially Mr. Corri has found it increasingly necessary to enter the ring, and perhaps to stay there throughout the encounter. Directly the men get into holds, he pulls them away from each other, and walks between them to prevent the possibility of a sudden and unfair blow. This is always done in America: and for that reason (prejudiced though it undoubtedly is) it is better not to do it here unless physical interference is genuinely called for. One excellent purpose is served by the presence of the referee in the ring: when a man is knocked down, an excitable boxer is often saved from himself by the referee's restraining hand. As already described, a boxer may forget everything he has learned for a moment, and, hitting a man when he is down or in the act of rising, turn a well-nigh certain victory into a defeat by disqualification.

In the accompanying photograph, Mr. Corri is seen in the act of warning Wells to stand away from his fallen opponent, Flynn.

Neither Mr. Corri nor any other capable referee speaks to the men boxing if he can possibly avoid doing so. A weak official is continually worrying the boxers throughout the contest; trying to make

up—one would think—for an ineffectual manner by bullying. It is quite hopeless to expect that an obstinate man will be kept in order by this means.

Before giving any specific warning, a referee should stop the bout. Misunderstanding, which might lead to a free blow for one of the boxers, is thus avoided.

It is also an important part of a referee's duty—in any kind of combat, whether amateur or professional—not to allow a man to receive unnecessary punishment. If in his opinion a boxer is completely outclassed, he should stop the fight at once. But in doing this he must use discretion born of long experience. A man may appear half-killed to one who has seen little or nothing of boxing, and yet turn out to be an easy winner. A boy whose face is covered with blood, one of whose eyes are closed, and who is a little weak in his legs, may be the object of the deepest pity on the part of inexperienced spectators. But the blood may be caused by a gentle tap on the nose; he can—after all—see clearly out of the other eye; and a moderate hit on the jaw may have made his knees shake a little. And the last, which is the worst symptom, soon passes off, and he may win. So anyone who would stop a bout on such slender grounds does not know enough about boxing to be a referee. A man who is really hurt has often far less to show to an undiscerning eye. He may be quite unmarked, but his breathing is strained; and there is a look in his eye quite unmistakable to anyone who has

closely observed the same thing a hundred times before.

Then there is the question of knock-down blows. A man may be brought to the ground time after time and yet not be beaten. And a referee should not stop a fight merely because a boxer has been knocked down two or three times. He must judge by other evidence as well—the way he falls and the time and manner in which he rises again—whether he is obviously ready to go on fighting, or whether his gloves are leaden weights too heavy to be lifted by so weak a man.

The following incident gives some idea of what a determined man can endure. In the light-weight competition of 1906, between Mr. C. C. Wilson of Oxford and Sir Philip Brocklehurst of Cambridge, the latter went down three times in quick succession from blows on the jaw. They were really hard hits, though just not hard enough for a knock-out. Almost immediately after the third fall, Brocklehurst, with a smashing right on the jaw sent Wilson down for nine seconds. He rose weak, but at once knocked the Cambridge man down and out. This extremely sensational encounter was finished in precisely two minutes.

Almost exactly the same thing happened with a contrary result the previous year, when the same Cambridge representative beat Mr. C. N. Newton. The fight was longer, and Newton though badly knocked about all but beat Bröcklehurst in the second round. Some referees would unquestionably have stopped the round after the

second or third knock down. And though in both cases, if they had, there would have been no ultimate difference, the man most punished still had a chance of winning, a chance which he all but seized.

The judges in a competition are happily free from severe responsibility. They have merely to write down the name of the man they consider to be the better. Judges should be provided with slips of paper on which they write the marks given to the competitors. Five marks is the maximum for the first two rounds, and seven for the third. The better man, or, in the event of equality, both men, must be given the maximum. It is not for the judges to speak to the boxers or their seconds on any occasion. That is exclusively the business of the referee.

A timekeeper, who should always sit next to the referee, ought for the sake of precise accuracy to have a stop-watch. He should give the seconds good warning to leave the ring before the call of Time: and in case of emergency he should cultivate a penetrating voice. It is an invariable rule that spectators must be silent during the progress of a round, but it is an impossible rule to enforce. And sometimes when excitement is running very high, the noise is so great that the boxers cannot hear the timekeeper's voice. At the National Sporting and some other clubs an electric bell is used, with which there can be no mistake at all.

One of the hardest tasks with which referees and judges alike are faced is to keep in mind that

the issue depending on their decision is boxing and boxing alone. It is so remarkably easy to take a fancy to one man's style or demeanour in the ring and regard that apart from his strict scientific capabilities.

CHAPTER XV

THE ORGANIZATION OF A CLUB

"Modern boxing . . . has been saved from falling into disrepute . . . by the efforts of a few amateur clubs."—E. B. MICHELL, *Badminton Library*.

THE organization of the smallest boxing club must be undertaken in the first instance by men who can give all their spare time to the work. Any new enterprize of the kind is necessarily fraught with a certain amount of difficulty and discouragement. The enthusiasm of a few men, though always essential to the carrying on of a club once it is started, is not sufficient to bring it safely into being. You must be certain of a sufficient backing both in numbers and in money. So you have to decide first of all if a reasonable number of people want the club, and then to find, if possible, a president or figure-head who is willing to subscribe liberally and take an interest in the club's welfare.

It is impossible to give anything but the most general idea of how a club is run, because it entirely depends who and what the members are, and where the club is situated.

The organizers of the club must fix the amount of the annual subscription and the entrance fee,

and then discover what other funds, if any, they have at their disposal.

Having determined on the club, a general meeting of all members should be called to elect a committee, which will control the management and elect officers. Subsequently there should be an annual general meeting for this purpose. These officers, apart from the president, should include a captain, an honorary secretary, and a treasurer. Where the membership is large it is a good plan to secure the services of a good man of business, not necessarily on the committee, to act as senior treasurer. It will be his duty to draw up the balance sheets, and to advise on matters connected with expenditure. The collection of subscriptions—the spade work of the financial side of the question—can then be left to a junior treasurer, who will sit on the committee. That body, for any ordinary club, need not exceed six in number, including the captain and secretary. The committee should have power to call a general meeting at any time to decide any specific matter connected with the club.

Having settled the question of funds, the next step is to hire one or more rooms. The rent should be comfortably within the means of the club. In dealing with the landlord it should be made perfectly clear for what purposes the club room is to be used. Boxing itself makes very little noise; but a punching-ball is terrible in this respect, and neighbouring householders might object, trouble of one sort or another might follow, and there would be no peace. You should hire a room where you

may do what you please, and hire it absolutely. Some clubs only have the use of their headquarters in the evening or on three or four days a week. It is infinitely more satisfactory to spend a little more and make your headquarters a genuine club, where members may leave their belongings and where the ring, punching-ball and sack are fixtures. For the same reason it is better to hire your room by the year, if possible: though this should not be done until you have ascertained the club's stability. It so often happens that a small club springs up like a mushroom and withers for lack of money, enterprise, and perseverance.

Naturally a large room is required—the larger and the higher the better, and one that is well lighted. Beyond a big table and a few plain chairs no furniture is needed, unless it be cupboards or lockers for members' fighting kit. Electric light or gas should be laid on, and if competitions are held in your own club rooms, there should be some means of arranging a good light immediately over or on all sides of the ring. In this way there will be no question of one man trying to get the light into the eyes of his opponent; which, though perfectly justifiable when it can be done, is an unnecessary complication for amateur combats.

A room should always be taken where water is or can be laid on. A small extra room where possible, or at least a partitioned corner of the main room, should be used for a shower bath. More ambitious luxuries will, of course, depend upon the amount of subscriptions. Then the fixtures must

be bought, and gloves for general use, according to the number of members.

Properly managed a boxing club should support itself by means of competitions. The public will always pay to see a good fight, and a larger room or hall can usually be hired for the purpose. The expenses are very small—the erection of a stage and ring, the hiring of chairs and seats, the payment of seconds and one or two odd men to collect tickets and make themselves generally useful. Members of a club very often manage all these extra duties for themselves. If a competition is extensively advertised, much more money is spent; and the printing bill is nearly always a considerable item. It will be the secretary's duty to see that there is no unnecessary expenditure in this direction.

Later on, as a club progresses in numbers, when the competitions have discovered talent, and sportsmen outside are beginning to notice the individual prowess of prominent members, a competition can be arranged with some rival institution; and members can be selected to represent the club at the amateur championships.

When the club is first started it should be affiliated to the Amateur Boxing Association, and abide by its rules and regulations.

Before the club has been actually formed, steps should be taken to secure the services of a capable instructor. In London this should present no difficulty and little expense. But in provincial towns where no good professional boxer happens to live, the latter disadvantage is inevitable. But an in-

structor is obviously necessary, and unless the prospective club is able to support one the possibility of its formation will scarcely have been considered.

To the honorary secretary usually falls by far the largest share of the club work. He must search out and enrol new members in the club's youth ; he must be ready to discuss glibly the advantages of boxing ; he must write innumerable letters, giving notice of meetings and other matters ; he must arrange all details connected with the competitions. As a rule, a willing instructor can be of the greatest assistance in this last. For he can supervise the fitting up of the ring, and remember to provide basins and towels and water and such small matters without which a competition cannot be conducted.

It is the honorary secretary's business also to arrange for the referee and judges and their entertainment, if they come from a distance and have to spend the night in the town where the competition is held. Lovers of boxing are always pleased to encourage even a new, small, and obscure club ; and there never need be the least difficulty in getting officials for your competitions who understand their work.

Then there are the complimentary tickets. The number of people who believe themselves entitled to watch any competition for nothing is wonderful. The secretary must discriminate, giving tickets on the principle, not of good nature, but of strict expedience. It is charming to please your friends, but if you are responsible for the well-being of the club, and know that your friends will pay to see the competition if

they cannot get in without paying—let them pay. Give free seats rather to those who may be useful to the club, who may bring others to the show, or may introduce new members when they are badly wanted.

A captain has less to do. His work is exclusively concerned with boxing itself. He should arrange the hours of attendance for the instructor, and draw up some sort of table for the lessons of beginners. Instructors are only human: they will have their favourites; and it is the captain's duty to see that each member has his fair share of teaching. Before a competition, those entering for it will naturally have more attention paid to them; particularly when the prospective encounters are to be against some other club. It will then be the captain who chooses the representatives and sees that they are properly trained. He is helped in his decision by means of a preliminary competition amongst the club members.

A particular instance may serve to give an outline of a good working rule. At Oxford there are two purely club competitions every year—the October Term and the Preliminary or Trial Competition. The former used at one time to be called the Novices; but the name was dropped owing to misunderstanding on the part of the public. The word "novice" in regard to a boxing club means a man who has never gained a prize since he has been a member of that club; not necessarily, as is commonly thought, a raw beginner. At the universities, a man may have won a public school championship and yet be eligible to compete in the novices' competition. So the name

was changed. The October Term Competition, then, generally discovers new talent, to be carefully fostered and developed for the following term.

Then, about the middle of February, a competition is held open to any member of the university who has not completed four years' residence. Usually, the winners of this, at their respective weights, represent Oxford against Cambridge; but not necessarily so. This is the great event of the year, and every effort must be made to find the best man at his weight to fight for his university. And it is not by any manner of means the best man who always wins the trial. So the choice rests with the captain, who, in the words of the rule, "shall consult with the committee, but whose decision shall be final."

Though superficially it may seem unjust, it is a very wise measure thus to restrict the judicial capacity of the preliminary competitions, because one of several causes may prevent the best man from winning. He may, for instance, injure his thumb, so that one hand is useless, and be beaten by an infinitely worse boxer. By the time he has to fight for Oxford he may have recovered. And the captain will choose him. Again, a man may be knocked out by a lucky blow; or even beaten by a narrow margin on points, and yet be, on the whole, the better boxer—or at any rate the one most likely to frustrate the wiles of the Cambridge representative.

A captain should in all cases make a point of watching the preliminary competitions of the rival club, noticing the different styles, and, if there is any room for choice, deciding which of his men is most

likely to win on this particular occasion. On one memorable occasion before an Oxford and Cambridge encounter, one of the weights was only contested by two men, and neither of them were of the least use ; and the man ultimately chosen had not even entered his name for the preliminaries at all.

Because of this rule the captain of a club may find himself in the most disagreeable and invidious position. He may himself be beaten in the trials, but honestly believes that he has a better chance of winning for his club than the man who has just gained the verdict over him. He must choose himself. And, though doubtless he will have the support of the committee, the situation is none the less a hateful one.

The fitting up of a ring, whether for a competition in a special place, or as a fixture in a club, should always be done with great care. There are two kinds of rings—one, the most usual, has posts in the four corners ; and the other has the posts outside them. The latter takes up more space, which is generally valuable on the occasion of competitions.

If the ring is to be on a raised stage, a margin of at least a foot—more, for choice—should be left outside it. Otherwise, when fighting against the ropes, a competitor is liable to slide his foot outside them and over the edge of the stage. And that may cause him an injury. But whether on the floor of a stage or not, the posts should be let into the ground for a distance of six inches. They should be four in number and five feet high, smooth and rounded ; but that portion of them which is in the floor must be square, fitting into a square hole. They should be

kept firmly in place by two iron stanchions, bolted to the posts themselves at about two-thirds of their height, and to the floor.

There should be at least two thick ropes, and three are preferable. These should run through holes in the posts, one within nine inches or so of the top and the others at equal distances; and they should be pulled absolutely taut. The tops of the four posts must be padded lest a competitor is severely knocked back against them. A convenient form of padding, frequently used, consists of a couple of old boxing gloves securely tied. If you think it necessary to protect the lower part of the posts, two or three pieces of thick felt will serve the purpose.

In order to avoid any chance at all of knocking against the posts, they may be fixed well outside the corners, the ropes being supported by loops.

Special attention should be paid to the floor of a ring, particularly when it is on a stage which has been built up just for one night. The boards should be well cramped together, so that they are perfectly level and tight. And—for competitions especially—they should be liberally sprinkled with resin.

Lastly, since competitions are almost always held at night, it will be the work of the committee in general to see that as soon as one fight is over the next pair of boxers are ready to enter the ring. With a big entry for various weights and dilatory methods, the evening's sport is apt to be far too protracted.

CHAPTER XVI

MILITARY BOXING: ITS ORIGIN
AND GROWTH

BY
J. H. W. KNIGHT-BRUCE,
SIXTH ROYAL REGIMENT

" . . . The image of war, with none of its guilt and only twenty-five per cent of its dangers."—SURTEES, *Handley Cross*.

THE wave of athleticism that has swept over England during the last half-century may, or may not, have been a good thing for the country in respect to her place as a world power. Good men think it has: equally good men think it has not. But there can be no shadow of doubt as to its incalculable benefit to the British army.

One may, perhaps, wonder whether an English business house, all of whose clerks are playing golf in their leisure moments and thinking golf in their working ones, is quite so likely to excel in the race for supremacy as, say, a German one, whose clerks are learning languages in their leisure moments and thinking of nothing but the business in hand in their working ones.

One may, perhaps, wonder whether a nation whose sons spend their youth playing or watching games

will be able to meet on equal terms on the field of battle a nation whose sons have received two or three years' systematic military training as young men. But however one may doubt the wisdom of a tremendous devotion to athletics in a nation, one can have no doubts whatever about such a devotion in her army.

The lessons to be learnt from games, and the increased physical and mental efficiency that come from playing them, are useful indeed to any man, but invaluable to the soldier.

And of all games, perhaps the one that does him most good is boxing. Think of the qualities essential to the soldier it calls out and fosters. Courage, fitness, the capacity for keeping one's head, when that said head is dazed and reeling from murderous blows ; good temper under reverses, instant obedience to the command of the referee, the knowledge that one still has a chance of winning however terrible a gruelling one may be getting at the moment, lightning quickness to seize an opportunity only presented for an instant. And many another lesson may be learnt in the ring and be found invaluable in the battle-field.

Why, it is the ring that is the real image of war : though Mr. Jorrocks thought fox-hunting was.

I once heard a well-known general give it as his opinion that "a good man to hounds is already a half-made soldier," and I think the same might be said of a good man in the ring. The boxing soldier is almost invariably an excellent fellow, as are his better-class colleagues in the civilian ring. The idea that because a man can box he will be at error to his room-mates is a fallacy. On the contrary, the few bullies I have

known have not been boxers. As an influence for keeping down drink, all games, and especially boxing, have of course worked marvels.

The fact that boxing makes for the improvement of the soldier is now most cordially recognized by all those in authority in the army. General and Commanding officers alike are most zealous in promoting boxing clubs, tournaments and championships in their commands, while the controlling body of service boxing—the Royal Navy and Army Boxing Association—has for its president His Majesty the King, and for its vice-presidents five naval Commanders-in-Chief and eight military General Officers Commanding-in-Chief. I think that this shows conclusively that boxing is recognized at its true worth in the making of the soldier by those who are responsible for that making.

And the men themselves are so keen. The best boxers in a regiment are held in high esteem by all. At any competition, from a regimental novice's to the army championship, the great majority of the audience appreciate the cause and value of each punch, each guard or counter, and every tricky little bit of ring-craft. No mere ordinary lookers-on they, applauding the showy blow or the furious rush, but cognoscenti, mentally discounting the value of the first by the fact that it was a wild swing, ill-timed, and only landing where it did by the grace of luck; and the second, because by all the laws of ring-craft the rusher ought at that particular moment to have kept at arm's length, fought cannily and tried to take some of the steam out of his man before walking into him.

But the audience, packed tier behind tier into the

murky distance of the regimental drill-shed or on the seats of the great hall at Aldershot, keen as they are and critical as they are of the actions of the referee through personal knowledge of the great game, are always ready to pay heed to the least sign from the master of ceremonies. A roll of applause for the winner and "another for the loser," should he have made a plucky fight, is pretty well all the rein the soldier audience give their feelings. And yet their feelings are there right enough, especially should the combatants in the ring happen to be of two different regiments, or even of two different companies or squadrons, both of whom are well represented in the audience. And so lessons useful to the soldier may be learnt even by the lookers-on.

The origin and early history of army boxing is rather "wropt in mystery." Of course, from the earliest days of the British army contests of some sort between two men, unarmed except for their fists, either for sport or because there was bad blood between them, have been not uncommon. But they were not officially sanctioned, and would probably have made the modern referee, with his "Boxing Rules and Guide to Refereeing" by his side, shed salt tears. The latter class of contest was, and is, discouraged as coming under the head of brawling.

In parenthesis, I sometimes wonder if this fighting between two men who have a quarrel is as terrible a thing as some people think. They appear to consider that the fighting is the cause of the quarrel in some obscure way. But this is, surely, putting the cart before the horse. The quarrel is there,



DUCKING FROM A RIGHT SWING AND COUNTERING ON THE "MARK"
(see page 84)

whether it is settled by fighting or not; and even admitting on one side that fighting in anger is bad, one must admit on the other that any bad blood there may be practically never survives a fight. Anyone can probably call to mind from the time of their school-days instances of boys whose enmity culminated in a fight and was transformed into a firm friendship from that day. And the boy is father to the man. And if no fight had taken place, but the quarrel had been patched up in some other way, I think it is a longish shade of odds that, at any rate, some traces of bad blood would have lingered on in the heart of one side or the other.

But this is a discursion. We had got to where two of Alfred the Great's Militia—now, alas! no more—throwing aside their flint-headed, sinew-bound axes (or whatever else they were armed with), engaged in an early form of mill with the whole of England not occupied by the Danes to fight in.

From this time till comparatively recently boxing in the army remained at this stage. The only differences worthy of note were that, the Danes having been driven off, the ring was enlarged and short swords and bucklers, good yew long-bows and yard-long, grey goose-tipped shafts, twenty-foot pikes and muskets of a lessening degree of dangerousness and inaccuracy were in turn thrown aside as a preliminary to the contest in place of the flint-headed, sinew-bound axes.

And, as over-civilization grew, the army boxer came more and more to be looked on (as was his civilian brother) as a swashbuckler, a bully, a man

of the lowest status with whom no good young soldier would consort. And, as most of us tend to take ourselves at others' valuation, doubtless to a certain extent he was all this.

Anything like organized boxing in the army began about 1886, when contests between men of the same or different regiments began to be directed by officers, put on a recognized footing and fought under recognized rules. I do not mean to say that before, especially during the great P.R. days of civilian boxing, no recognition had been extended to boxing amongst the men, but until about this date everything was very much in the air, left to the men themselves, and open to many abuses.

From this time onwards boxing as a sport for soldiers never looked back. Each year more men took it up, more interest was shown in it, more misconceptions as to its results were removed, more rules for its conduct were drawn up, and more and more was it put on a proper basis, with efficient organization and regulation. And, of course, the more it was brought under one set of rules, the efficiency of the referees and judges increased, and the sport as a whole brought into line throughout the service, the more popular did it become among the men.

In 1896 the sport had resumed such proportions that those in authority over it felt themselves justified in holding a championship meeting. Before this, of course, there had been men styling themselves "champions" of a regiment, brigade, division, army corps, or the army, but no one who was officially

entitled to these distinctions. This meeting was called the Royal Navy and Army Boxing Championship, and was divided into two classes for each weight, one for officers and one for warrant officers, petty officers, non-commissioned officers and men. In the officers' class three weights filled, the heavies, middles, and lights, of which the first was won by Lieutenant J. Simpson, the Gordon Highlanders; and the other two by Captain H. M. C. W. Graham, the Royal Marine Light Infantry. In the men's class four weights filled, the heavies, middles, lights and feathers, and were won by Private Leahy, the Grenadier Guards, Sergeant Collins, Drummer Collins, and Drummer Phillips, all of the same regiment, which thus swept the board at this meeting.

The holding of this first combined championship meeting of both services was a great fillip to the ring in the army. The sport had now been legitimized, and men had something tangible to fight for. To be declared the best man at the weight in both services, or even in one's own brigade or regiment (for this organization now extended throughout the service), was an honour worth the toil of training and the punishment of the ring.

By 1903 the entries for the Royal Navy and Army Championships had become so numerous, especially from the senior service, that it was considered that a championship for the navy alone might with advantage be instituted, not in any way to interfere with the existing championship of both services, but to be a step leading to it.

In 1912 another championship was added—for the army alone this time. It filled well, and the three officers' weights—light-heavy, middle and welter—were won by Lieutenant C. O. Lilly, the Dorsetshire Regiment, Lieutenant H. D. Bentinck, the Coldstream Guards, and Lieutenant G. le Q. Martel, the Royal Engineers; while in the N.-C.O.'s and men's class the heavy, light-heavy, middle, welter, light and feather weights filled and were won by Private Clohessy, the Royal Munster Fusiliers, Private Delaney, the Leinster Regiment, Private Harris, the Coldstream Guards, Lance-Sergeant Blake, the Gloucestershire Regiment, Private Halpin, the Leinster Regiment, and Private Rhodes, the 18th Hussars.

There are now the following championships in the army recognized as such :—

Royal Navy and Army.

Army.

Aldershot Command.

Eastern Command.

Irish Command.

London District.

Northern and Western Commands (combined meeting).

Scottish Command.

Southern Command (including Channel Islands).

India.

And so boxing in the army went on by mighty strides. But its very popularity was a source of possible weakness to it. It became unwieldy and

unmanageable from its size. Men began to learn low, dirty tricks of the ring from second-rate civilian professionals. Men of repute could command long purses for contests and refused to fight without them. Organizers of competitions were only too anxious to grant them, as by the presence of these star men the gate was largely increased, and consequently the profits of the meeting. And so the aspect of boxing as a money-making concern and not as a sport was brought to the notice of the soldier. "*Pecunia incubuit, victumque ulciscitur orbem.*"

In the civilian ring the bruiser has his bread to make by his gloves, and there of necessity the element of money must come in. But the soldier ought to fight, if fight at all, as an amateur; for the exhilaration and joy of the ring, for proving himself as good a man as his neighbour, and for the soldier-like qualities fighting brings out in him.

And owing to the number of competitions in the service at this time, the lack of any facilities for the training of referees in the army for the army, and the absence of any recognized code of army boxing rules, the question of referees and judges for service competitions became a difficult one. And nothing discourages a boxer more than the thought that he will be refereed by a man who does not understand the finer points of the game, or is, maybe, even ignorant of its elements. From all these causes there was a certain amount of dissatisfaction among army boxers, and there were many admitted evils in army boxing.

Up to this time the sport had been run as a sort

of side-line of army gymnastics, and was under the control of those in charge of the army gymnasias. In fact it was considered as much a part of gymnastics as bayonet-fighting or sabre play. But now the sport had assumed such proportions it was felt that it could no longer efficiently be run as a mere side-line, but it must have its own management and its own organization.

The result of this feeling was the Royal Navy and Army Boxing Association. This association had for its objects the encouragement and improvement of boxing in the services, rather by inducing large numbers to enter for competitions than by specializing with individuals; to act as a central body for control and appeal; to make service boxing a sport in line with other games and not a mere money-making concern; to put an end to clinching, which had crept into army boxing from the civilian ring, and which was felt not to be consistent with the traditions of boxing in the army; to secure or train in every regiment officers capable of acting efficiently as referees and judges; to put an end to enormous purses and make men fight, as they play games, for the honour to be got out of it for their regiment and for themselves; to draw up a code of rules which should hold throughout service boxing; to give hints on boxing generally, on managing boxing tournaments and boxing clubs; and to issue a list of approved referees and judges whose credentials it could guarantee.

In fact, the association was to standardize and bring into line and under control service boxing as a whole, to encourage and improve it in every possible

way, and to set its face against various admitted evils at that time existing in it.

The association was started in 1910, and at once drew up a code of boxing rules, which were first used in the 1911 service championships. It then legislated for the maximum amount of prize money to be allowed in competitions. It did this in the fairest possible way by classifying competitions according to the size of the unit to which they were open, and then allowing only a certain *maximum* sum for each entry to be given in prizes, of which two-thirds goes to the winner and the rest to the runner-up.

This is, of course, the best way of deciding the value of prizes, as the merit of winning a competition depends as well on the size of the entry as on the size of the unit from which that entry is drawn.

You notice the word "maximum" is in italics in my penultimate paragraph. For a reason. Although the Royal Navy and Army Boxing Association lays down this scale as the maximum, they are not anxious to see it enforced on all occasions. In fact, they wish gradually to wean the soldier from the habit of looking to the money aspect of the ring. And the great majority of regiments have already done this weaning.

More and more is it the custom for prizes to consist only of medals of little intrinsic value. This year in an infantry brigade stationed in the South of England the four regiments composing it gave no money prizes whatsoever at their respective regimental tournaments, and the entries numbered 120, 60, 56, and 52. In my own regiment which, through being stationed in India, did not come under the

association till after those serving at home, I found it was wonderful how soon the men accepted the altered scale of prize-money and how little it affected entries. This was all the more remarkable as at the time we were stationed at Bombay, where good men could fight in civilian contests, whose losing end was very many times greater than the first prize in our regimental competitions.

After all, the spirit of money-making in the army boxer was very largely the fault of the same spirit of gain in regimental boxing clubs, who hoped to outbid each other for the presence of star men and consequent heavy gates.

In fact, I think now it can be said that no man steps into the ring with less mercenary thought than the soldier.

For purposes of determining prize-money, tournaments are divided into the following classes :—

CLASS A.—Ship, or battalion of infantry, or its equivalent.

„ B.—Fleet of 5000 or under, or a brigade or its equivalent.

„ C.—Fleet of between 5000 and 10,000, or a force between a brigade and a division.

„ D.—Fleet of over 10,000, or a division.

OPEN.—Royal Navy and Marines, Army or Royal Navy and Army.

And in each of these classes the maximum amount of money prizes is laid down in both open and novice competitions, and it varies with the number of entries.

To give the whole scale of prizes is unnecessary, but an example will make it clear that the soldier is unlikely to buy himself out and retire to a cosy little pub with his ring-winnings even if the maximum prize-money is given.

Take the case of a man winning a novice competition open to his brigade for which twenty-three of his fellows also enter. Then forty-five shillings will be the maximum prize-money, of which he will only get thirty. And that competition will be of a class that will take some winning too. It will be open to any of three thousand men who have not actually won a competition *as a soldier*.

The maximum money allowed in the championships open to the whole of both services if there are over thirty-two entries is only 124 shillings, of which the winner only takes £4, 2s. 8d, while the maximum for a regimental novice competition of two entries is only 4s. There is a similar scale for contests.

The next step taken by the R. N. & A. B. A. was the shortening of contests to a maximum of half-a-dozen rounds.

The limitation of the duration of contests as a principle making for the betterment of the sport need scarcely be laboured. Indeed, as we have seen by the imposition of a limit at "The Ring," the principle has commended itself to professional circles, where, as in the services, it is recognized that there are limitations to human endurance, and that if boxing is to be always merry and bright, and long, dismal expositions of the art of clinching are to be avoided, then bouts of from six to ten rounds are the only contests in which these results will be obtained. The services stickle for six rounds, not because they believe that ten rounds are outside the capacity of the better class boxer; but because the service man is a sailor or soldier first, and the time necessary to

the training of a ten-rounds boxer cannot be spared from the duties which his service career involves.

And in practice it is found that for the majority of boxers a four-round contest ensues the best fight. Only the exceptionally good bruisers who have already won their spurs and proved their worth to the hilt—say a champion—are able, as a rule, to put up a satisfactory six-round fight.

The association, then, issued a list of referees who belonged to one or other of the services and whose capabilities they guaranteed, and they stipulated for officers as referees and judges in all tournaments held under their auspices.

This item on its programme will perhaps arouse more criticism than either of the others. It may be said, and very truly, that there are plenty of good civilian referees who are only too willing to help the sport in the navy and army. It may be said, also very truly, that a good many officers would willingly vacate their places in the referee's chair in favour of Mr. Corri, Mr. Scott, and a score of other well-known arbiters who might be mentioned.

If Great Britain were Great Britain only and not the British Empire, the needs of the navy and army might very well be met by civilian referees. It is not. The soldier serves half his service at home, the sailor scarcely a tenth of it. One cannot 'phone the National Sporting Club from Peshawar or the "Sportsman" from Tientsin. The regiment that goes abroad must take its referees and judges with it; and if it takes officers who have never served in either capacity at home, then the career of its boxing

club will come to an end within a very few months of leaving the troopship. That is one side of the officer referee question.

Another, and it applies to every sport, is that the more active the interest an officer takes in a sport the more keen will his men become. The officer who occupies the arbiter's chair, with a knowledge of the game that is patent to all observers, has established the same bond of sympathy between himself and his men that exists between the officer and private who shove together in the pack, who run together between the stumps, or who pass together on the wing of an army "Soccer" eleven. He establishes a trust and faith that, when the day comes, will take his men, if the needs be, to Hades for him and for the Empire that he and they represent. That is the reason why the association advocate to-day the necessity of officers as judges and referees.

But just as they must be good officers if they are to lead, so they must be practical judges if they are to judge ; therefore it is imperative that not one or two but every officer in the services should fit himself to act as arbiter in the pastime which the Army Council has recognized as a most important factor in the training of British sailors and soldiers.

At the present day every regiment in the army, at home and abroad, belongs to the association, fights under its rules, and accepts its laws in both letter and spirit. I think boxing in the army has never been in a more flourishing state than in this year of grace. I believe that there is no regiment that hasn't its boxing club, and that certainly in most

cases, I think in all, these clubs are well supported by the men and regarded as a most excellent thing by the officers. I have been told by an officer who is certainly qualified to know, that the average number of men who actually fight during a year in a regiment is certainly not less than 200.

And the standard is getting better too. Not so much do I mean that the star men in the army are more able to hold their own in the civilian ring when they retire, although I think that too is the case, but the standard throughout the service is improving. The form at regimental tournaments or garrison tournaments has improved vastly.

And army boxing now is clean, straight fighting, more like what one sees at the inter-'varsity or public schools championships. One seldom sees any clinching, butting, holding, knee, elbow or wrist-hitting, glove-holding, nerve-gouging or any other of the innumerable dirty tricks that are practised by low-class pro's.

There is no reason why the soldier should not shine in even the upper circles of boxing. He is picked for his physique when he enlists, which he does very young, his surroundings and mode of life are exceptionally healthy, every facility consistent with the efficient carrying out of his military duties is given him for training, and while the latter may interfere with the routine of the most vigorous training, still they are in themselves an aid to it. I believe Sayers used to walk to Edinburgh and back before his fights, so a field-day or route-march must be good for condition.

Of course, to a certain extent, the soldier and sailor have already made their names famous in the ring. No history of boxing would be complete without notice of "Tiger" Smith, Corporal Sunshine, Gunner Moir, or Bombardier Wells, to name but a few of our shining lights ; but I must say I look forward to the day when any man who can win at Aldershot will be good enough to win anywhere, and soldiers' names will be found enrolled on the list of world champions.

CHAPTER XVII

REGIMENTAL BOXING CLUBS AND MILITARY BOXING TOURNAMENTS

"Now, Costa, let us go into the tents and put on the gloves, and I will show you what a glorious thing it is to be alive, brother."

—BORROW, *Lavengro*.

ANY successes that may have been won by soldiers in the ring, any record number of entries for the service championships one may hear of, or, one may almost say, any keenness shown by the soldier in the matter of boxing, are due to the regimental boxing clubs. It is they who are the "fons et origo virtutis": it is they who encourage the shy recruit to put on the gloves, pick out the most likely ones from each batch and, while by no means neglecting the remainder, specially coach and bring them out till their shyness is dissolved into the quiet self-confidence of the man who knows that he can take care of himself between the ropes, and their wild swings are turned into clean, straight, well-timed and well-judged punches.

It is they who send this pick of the recruits a trial in a regimental novice's competition, and by tactful but firm refereeing impress more deeply on their minds the truth that they have inculcated in their training



A RIGHT HAND CROSS-COUNTER : THE MEANS MOST COMMONLY EMPLOYED FOR A KNOCK-OUT. IN THIS INSTANCE THE BLOW IS MADE EASIER BECAUSE THE BOXER ON THE LEFT HAS LED OFF WITH HIS LEFT FOOT CROOKED; AND HIS ARM THEREFORE GOES VERY WIDE OF ITS MARK

(see pages 53 and 80)

from the beginning that intentional fouling leads to instant disqualification in service boxing.

In fact it is they who find, and when found infuse with enthusiasm, the raw material, which may become anything from a boxer at a novice competition—and some men gamely enter again and again and never get beyond this—to a service champion.

So let us start with them, for without them we are lost.

All regiments have boxing clubs and have had them for years. They are controlled by an officer, assisted as a general rule, which should be universal, by a committee. Now the personnel of this committee has a very marked effect on the boxing of the regiment for good or ill. The majority of its members are especially chosen as being in close daily touch with the boxers, and those who might be boxers with encouragement. In fact they are usually privates picked for their intelligence, tact, and keenness. It is on these members of the committee that the club relies for the personal appeal and homely persuasions that no one else can give.

“Come now, you ought to box. There’s old Nosey Green of ‘C’ just gone and won a blooming pot and ‘e wouldn’t join the club last year, like you now. Said ‘e couldn’t box. And now look at ‘im. And ‘e with not ‘alf your reach.”

This committee is formed of a general and executive committee, of which the former includes the latter.

The general committee is composed of a president and a vice-president, both of whom are officers, a

non-commissioned officer—usually a sergeant—to represent the regiment, and a representative from companies or squadrons.

The executive committee is formed of the first three of these.

It is on the latter committee that the control of the club devolves. It is they who arrange and carry out meetings; select the regimental team; elect members to the club; have control of the club room; appoint the instructor; and take action in the event of unsportsmanlike behaviour or misconduct.

As I said before, the functions of the general committee are more of a personal nature. They are responsible for any company boxing arrangements there may be—gloves, punching balls, etc., kept in and belonging to the company alone for the purpose of a few minutes' practice when perhaps the club is shut: they, by precept and example, preach the joy of the ring and urge men to join the club, and having joined to enter for meetings, and hold up the best standards of boxing as those to be followed.

Now we come to the question of whether only a chosen few or any boxing man in the regiment should belong to the club. Both methods have advantages. The former has the great one that from selection comes ambition to belong to the club: it becomes an honour to do so. There are also certain advantages to be got out of the club in which only members partake. For instance, free tuition, use of the club room and gear, and admission to meetings.

But, on the other hand, I like to think of the club as open to all and caring for them from their first

donning gloves, not only taking them up when they have proved their worth. Tuition and the use of the club room are even more important to the beginner than to the expert.

As a rule there is no subscription to regimental boxing clubs. They can easily be made self-supporting from the sale of seats at meetings, but I am not sure that it is for their good that they should be so. As a rule a meeting should pay its way, but it is often advisable to hold a small meeting—say, for company novices—for which it hardly seems fair to charge entrance.

The club room has usually, like the impoverished gentleman's furniture, "a double debt to pay." If not "a bed by night, a chest of drawers by day," at any rate it was usually designed for some more purely military purpose than a boxing room. Generally its real object is to be a drill shed, and it is only pressed into service as the boxing room in its leisure moments. And then one is never certain. I remember one terrible occasion when a meeting had to be postponed on the day on which it was to be held, because our room was suddenly wanted for some men marching through the station to sleep in.

Of course it must be fitted up with the correct paraphernalia. A ring, at least one punch-ball, skipping-ropes, Indian clubs, dumb-bells, gloves, embrocation, a weighing machine, etc.

Naturally there must be a storeman in charge of all this kit, to see that it is kept in good repair, and that the room is kept clean.

If the shed is sufficiently convenient it can be used

for novice tournaments, but for anything else it is better to borrow the Garrison Gymnasium.

There must be an instructor. He should be good-tempered, popular, able to impart what he knows, and above all an absolutely clean fighter. I fancy a good "has-been" is about as good an instructor as can be got, one not past his prime, but who does not actually fight, or at any rate not so as to interfere with his duties. I see no reason why he should not be found in the corps. It will be cheaper than engaging a civilian, and he will be more likely to impart the lesson of clean fighting to his pupils.

The soldier generally steps into the ring well trained. And it is condition that tells as well in taking punishment as in lasting. A blow that will send an untrained man to sleep will not make one in hard condition grunt. Now the reason for this excellent condition of the soldier is two-fold. He is keen and he starts half-trained. That's the real reason. The swell civilian bruiser, who spends his time between his occasional appearance in the ring in a most dissipated life (what time he is not writing to the papers explaining that, "dead game sport" as he is, he cannot possibly look at any challenge whose losing end doesn't touch a few thousand), has naturally to undergo a very vigorous preparation. He has to get off a vast of bad tissue, and supple and harden himself all over. Not so the soldier. He may just have come off manœuvres when he goes into training, and if he's not as hard as steel and supple as whipcord then it's not the fault of their managers. At any time

of the year he is doing route-marches, or training of some kind that exercises his muscles. He goes to bed early and gets up early : he eats good, solid, wholesome food, nourishing and digestible : he is out in the open air most of the day, and his windows are open if he is indoors. Great care is taken about his sanitation and his health : he cannot drink immoderately or he would not be able to carry out his marches.

Now, if you consult any expert on training or read any work on the subject, you will find that these are the things they lay greatest stress on.

So if one starts training already half-trained, one must certainly have a shade the best of the weights.

I remember reading in an old book on sports very elaborate directions for training. This training was for rowing, which even now is strenuous, but in those days appeared to be little short of barbarous. However, it was not the vigour of the directions that struck me so much as the fact that they begin so very much *ab initio*. They took the extreme case (at least I hope so, even in those days) of an undergraduate who had just recovered from an attack of delirium tremens and wished to row in his college eight.

I forget the exact instructions, but remember they laid great stress on the necessity of beginning very slowly. *Festine lente* was their watchword. In this case, for the first few days, ten minutes' gentle snake-killing on the walls of the wishful oar's "bedder" would have been ample for a start, I consider ; but if my memory serves me aright, the directions did not begin until a stage or two after that.

So you see it rather depends on how fit you are when you start training how vigorous a course you need do. For the soldier who is doing his daily work, and is going to the club room with some regularity two or three times a week just for the fun of the thing to spar or punch the ball, or swing the clubs, three or four weeks is really ample time for him to get into hard condition for an ordinary three two-minute round competition. It can be done in less, but it is best to take training slowly, I think.

Of course for a big meeting or longer contest, longer will be necessary.

About diet. The food the men get (wholesome, once cooked meat, vegetables, tea, bread, etc.) is very suitable for training. The only thing is to avoid starchy and fatty foods, but a man in training can easily arrange to swop his share of potatoes, fat, etc., for greens and lean meat. He should avoid bread as much as possible, unless he can arrange to get it toasted at the cook-house, but I'm afraid that the good nature of not many company cooks will run to that.

He should avoid too great quantities of the strong barrack-room tea.

If he must have something to stay his inner man after his evening's work in the club room, or on the track, and cannot arrange to keep back some of his dinner, he should beware of the majority of the tempting delicacies offered on the coffee-shop bar. They are doubtless very seductive, but not good for training. But he can usually get a wholesome supper there, if he makes up his mind to avoid the more fancy dishes. Some

regiments make special arrangements for suppers of men in training, even to paying for them.

He should avoid too much of the "pop", which, with strong sweet tea, has largely taken the place of the old soldiers' beer—and lots of it.

A large glass of the latter a day, or even two, does no harm.

About smoking. I think that for a grown man who is accustomed to using tobacco regularly to knock it off suddenly altogether does more harm than good. But the young soldier and the man who only smokes occasionally can certainly stop it with advantage. Anyhow stick to a pipe. Cigarettes, especially the cheaper brands, are the devil for training.

About work. If the soldier is out training (I mean military training) all the morning he cannot do any, at any rate before lunch, but the exercise he gets will do him good. He should remember to put his back into everything he does, from sloping arms to carrying coal, if he wishes to utilize his duties to help him in his training. A former champion of England attributed the terrible punches he was wont to deal out to his opponents in the ring very largely to the muscles he had developed when throwing bricks to a mate in his former profession of brick-layer.

The custom of striking men off duty for training purposes is dying out, as it is recognized that it is against the spirit of service athletics as much as against that of service efficiency. And I remember once seeing a football team strolling round barracks in the early morning in India (where that time and the evening are the only two periods of the day during

which training can be done) having been excused a route-march on the ground that they were training. And yet they meant no harm by it and certainly not to shirk. Only it had not struck them that a route-march would probably be better for their training than their morning stroll.

If he is merely on a parade or two during the morning he can manage a sharp walk, finishing with a few fast bursts on the track just to open his pipes, or a run, or ten minutes with the punch-ball or the clubs or the skipping rope or merely a little shadow fighting, sandwiched in between his parades.

He will have to put in most of his work in the afternoon.

After dinner and half-an-hour's or an hour's rest he can go for a walk or run, its length and speed depending on the stage of the training. A long fast run is not good even in the more advanced stages: it binds the muscles of the legs and makes one slow in foot-work. Much better is a walk with occasional hundred yard bursts at top speed.

Then he will go to the club room and put in an hour or two's real hard work. Five minutes with the instructor practising his weak blows and guards, a sharp spar with a comrade, a round with the ball or skipping rope, shadow fighting, a sponge down followed by a vigorous rub with a harsh towel and afterwards with embrocation; all, or any of these may be indulged in. Men have a great tendency to practise only their good punches. A man has a good right hook to the body. Straightway he spends all his time practising it on ball and man until the whole

regiment knows about Dash and his right to the body, and he is very lucky if he is given a chance to bring it off in a competition ; besides having wasted much valuable time in practising a thing he was already good at, when he would have been much better employed strengthening some weak joint in his armour—a poor straight left, faulty foot-work, a slow slip, or what not.

Training abroad is of necessity somewhat modified by the climate. In Gibraltar, Malta, and, to a less extent, South Africa, very much the same routine can be carried out. But in India the case is different, and training varies with the station, the only general rule being that, the climate being more trying and the food less nourishing, a man cannot stand the same vigorous preparation. Exactly the same is seen in racehorses in the country and for the same reason.

In the plains in the hot weather very little can be done. A team going up for a tournament in a hill-station in the hot weather will probably have to begin its training in the plains. And when one has lain unclothed and sweating at every pore under a punkah all day, one cannot do very much work in the evening without taking too much out of oneself.

In a good plain station in the winter much more can be attempted, but one must remember that it is still hot at any rate in the middle of the day and the food less nourishing than at home, so not even then can too much be attempted without staleness as the result.

In the hills more can be done, but not on first arrival. This is where a lot of boxers make a

mistake. They come up from the plains in the hot weather, and at once feel the exhilaration of the hills, and attempt too much. They forget that neither their lungs nor their insides are yet accustomed to the difference in the density of air and the climate. They are surprised at the way they gasp for breath after their first run, but in a few days they master that, and then find that by over-exerting themselves they have put their insides out of order, and they will be lucky if they get them right again by the tournament.

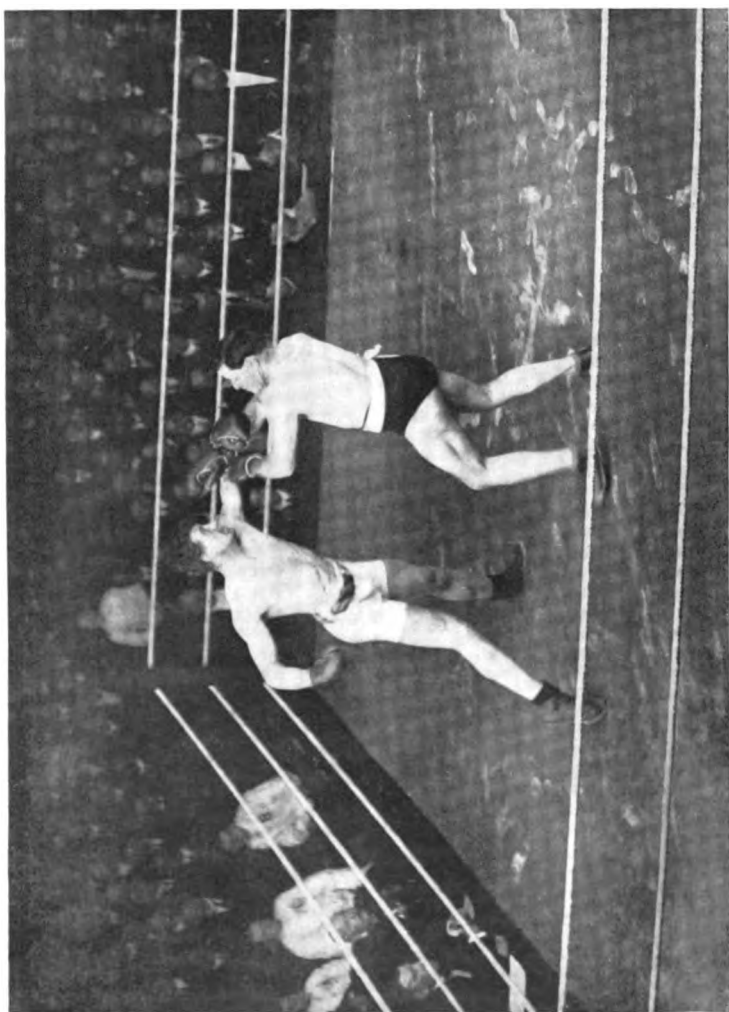
Boxing meetings in a regiment should be frequent, bright, and give classes for all. Frequent, to prevent the idea of boxing from slipping out of the men's heads : bright, to encourage many to enter and all to attend : and give classes for all, because that is the intention of service boxing.

The next step upwards is garrison meetings, then command, then army and navy and any championships.

The organizers of each of these classes of meetings as a rule agree to give a portion (25 per cent. or less) of their profits to the R. N. & A. B. A. if they are a financial success, in return for which the association guarantee their losses if they are a financial failure.

At any of these meetings good fights may be seen, though not always the pleasantest to watch at the biggest meetings.

I have seen a couple of 9 stone novices who had only been at the game a few months, but who had been thoroughly grounded in the first essentials of it during that time, put up a fight that everyone said



BOMBARDIER WELLS AND GUNNER MOIR. MOIR GUARDS HIS OPPONENT'S LEFT, AND PREPARES TO STOP HIS RIGHT

(see page 75)

was a treat to see. At each other they went hammer and tongs, pincers and nails. The nicer subtleties of the game were not for them, but they had learnt by heart the straight left and the straight right, and they kept plugging these two in as fast as they could. Occasionally they remembered that their instructor had said something about guarding, so they guarded ; but only occasionally.

And instructive, well thought-out fights may be seen. I remember in the finals of the heavies at the All-India Championship of 1909 seeing Private Clohessy, The Royal Munster Fusiliers, take on Bombardier Wells, who was beaten the other day by the French crack Carpentier. The Fusilier looked to be giving away a tremendous amount in height and reach but to have the better of his man in weight. Wells had not furnished then as he has now, and looked short of a rib. I overheard someone say that it looked like a fight between a barrel and a hop-pole.

Both men had evidently made up their minds as to their plan of campaign, and it was extraordinary how steadfastly they stuck to them. Clohessy meant to sacrifice all to get inside the gunner's guard and at those light flanks, which even then it was whispered would not stand too much hammering, or his jaw. He was as tough as oak and knew it, and meant to take any punishment he might get on his journey to Wells' body, and say nothing about it if only he could get there. He only wanted to get in once. The knock-out was his idea. Points he did not trouble about. The Bombardier, on the other hand, intended to rely on his extraordinary reach and punishing left to keep

him out, and by stop, stop, stopping him to pile up points and win on them.

I do not think that the men had ever met on the canvas floor before, although I knew them both—in fact had judged them. But they had taken each other's measure to the inch and had each determined on their line of action.

Almost as soon as the gong went the Fusilier rushed heavily forward, led with his left at the jaw, lunged again and shot out his right with the full force of the rush and lunge behind it.

He always appeared a little clumsy in his foot work, but was in reality by no means so, and could move his arms with the rapidity of lightning and the precision and driving power of piston rods.

The thing was so quick, especially coming so unexpectedly from so stuffy built a man, that one expected to hear the back of the Bombardier's head crash against the canvas. But, no : he stepped back ever such a little, shot out his long left, and by taking him on the head kept his man off.

That is the history of the fight.

Again and again did the Fusilier rush in with his terrible two-handed punches, now trying one method, now another, but always going for the knock-out and never minding what he got on the way. No mere ignorant rushing, mind you, but each attack carefully planned and thought out in a master mind, and different from the last in all but its intention.

And each time did the gunner side-step or duck or stop—but oftenest stop—not very hard, but hard

enough to keep his man outside his tremendous reach and score a point.

Never have I seen two men stick so doggedly each to his own plan of action and yet vary it with such genius.

Not that Wells escaped punishment: often did the infantryman get a blow in, but never with the full force he had put into it. The Bombardier was always just retreating or ducking or just met the other with his left first.

And so Bombardier Wells won on points. But I believe that had one of those sledge-hammer blows of Private Clohessy's got fairly home, he would not have done so.

A most instructive fight.

And, of course, there is lots of humour in army boxing, as in everything else in which Atkins has a hand. He has an incisive way of expressing himself that is often uncomfortably funny if one has to keep one's face. I remember once at a tournament held at Bombay between men from the troops that had been brought down there for the purpose of welcoming His Majesty the King on his way to the Durbar, and men from the East India Squadron and the Escorting Squadron to His Majesty's ship, a sailor far back amongst the onlookers suspected the Tommy who was fighting his mate of hitting with an open glove, and straightway gave voice to his opinion.

"What abart shuttin' your blooming 'ands?" he demanded.

Quick as a flash one of the Tommy's seconds took up the challenge, "What abart shutting your blooming mouth?"

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

DEFINITION OF AN AMATEUR.

An amateur is one who has never competed for a money prize, staked bet, or declared wager ; who has not competed with or against a Professional for any prize (except with the express sanction of the Amateur Boxing Association), and who has never taught, pursued, or assisted in the practice of athletic exercises as a means of obtaining a livelihood or pecuniary gain.

RULES OF THE AMATEUR BOXING ASSOCIATION.

1. In all open competitions the ring shall be roped, and not less than 12 ft. or more than 20 ft. square.

2. Competitors to box in light boots or shoes (without spikes), or in socks, knickerbockers, breeches or trousers, and jerseys. The gloves to be of a standard weight of 8 oz. each.

3. Weights to be, for Championship Competitions—Bantam, not exceeding 8 st. 4 lb. ; Feather, not exceeding 9 st. ; Light, not exceeding 10 st. ; Middle, not exceeding 11 st. 4 lb. ; Heavy, any weight. Competitors to weigh on the day of competition in boxing costume, without gloves. For all other competitions weights to be decided by the Association or Club promoting the same.

4. In all open competitions the number of rounds to be contested shall be three. The duration of the first two rounds shall be three minutes each, and of the third four minutes, with an interval of one minute between each round. A timekeeper (who shall be stationed beside the referee) shall be appointed.

5. In competitions where there are more than four competitors, a sufficient number of byes shall be drawn in the first series, so as

to reduce the number of remaining competitors to 4, 8, or 16 as the case may be, and the drawers of such byes shall not have to box them ; and in the second series those who have received byes shall compete before those who have already boxed.

Byes that may subsequently arise shall be sparred for the specified time with an opponent approved by the judges and referee.

6. Each competitor shall be attended by one second only, and no advice or coaching shall be given to a competitor by his second, or any other person, during the progress of the bout.

7. In all open competitions bouts shall be decided by two judges and a referee, who shall be stationed apart from each other. The judges shall award at the end of each of the first two rounds five marks, and at the end of the third round seven marks to the better man, and a lesser number to the other man according to his merits. When the men are equal the maximum number must be given to each. At the end of each bout the judges' scoring papers shall be collected by an official appointed for that purpose ; and in cases where the judges agree, such official shall announce their decision, but should the judges disagree, the official shall so inform the referee, and collect his paper, but before announcing the decision shall show the judge's papers to the referee.

8. The referee shall give his vote when the judges disagree, or he can order further rounds limited to two minutes each. Two of the three opinions must agree before a winner can be declared, otherwise an extra round is compulsory. The decision of the judges or referee, as the case may be, shall be final and without appeal.

9. Marks shall be awarded as follows :—For "attack"—direct clean hits with the knuckle part of the glove of either hand, on any part of the front or sides of the head, or body above the belt ; and for "defence"—guarding, slipping, ducking, counter-hitting, or getting away. Where competitors are otherwise equal, the majority of marks shall be given to the one who does most of the leading off, or who displays the better style.

10. The referee shall have power to disqualify a competitor for any of the following acts :—For hitting below the belt, for hitting with the open glove, the inside or "butt" of the hand, or with the wrist or elbow ; for striking a competitor when he is down ; for holding, butting, shouldering, intentionally falling without receiving a blow, wrestling or roughing, or for any other act he may deem foul.

11. In the event of a competitor being down, his opponent shall retire out of distance, and shall not recommence boxing until told to do so by the referee. A man is to be considered down even when he is on one or both feet, if at the same time any other part of his

body is touching the ground. The referee shall be empowered to stop a round if in his opinion a man is outclassed or unfit to continue, and that man shall be deemed to have lost the bout.

12. In all competitions any competitor failing to resume sparring when time is called shall lose the bout.

13. The breaking of any of these rules by a competitor or his second shall render such competitor liable to disqualification.

14. The judges and referee shall decide (1) the interpretation of any of these rules ; (2) any question not provided for in these rules.

APPENDIX II

THE ROYAL NAVY AND ARMY BOXING ASSOCIATION.

WEIGHTS.

Competitions in all the Royal Navy and Army Championships for Officers and men will be held in the following weights :—

Heavy Weights . . .	Catch Weights.
Light-Heavy Weight . .	12 st. 7 lb. and under.
Middle Weights . . .	11 st. 6 lb. " "
Welter Weights . . .	10 st. 7 lb. " "
Light Weights . . .	9 st. 9 lb. " "
Feather Weights . . .	9 st. and under.

METHOD OF DRAWING.

The number of entries in a competition, if not already a multiple of 2, *i.e.*, 4, 8, 16, 32, etc., must be made so by means of "byes."

For example, if there are five entries for a competition, the number must be brought up to eight by giving byes to three competitors.

By this system all byes are fought off during the first series of bouts.

The best means of "drawing" is, put the names of all the competitors in a cap. Say there are ten entries, then there must be six byes in order to bring the total to sixteen.

The first four names drawn out of the cap will fight, *i.e.*, first *v.* second, and third *v.* fourth, while the remaining six will be given byes in the same order as they are drawn.

THE COMPLETE BOXER

There will be no further drawing for places, the winner of the first bout will fight the winner of the second, and so on in each series as :—

1st Series.		2nd Series.	Semi-final.	Final.
1 } Winner				
2 }		Winner		
3 } Winner				
4 }			Winner	
5 } 5		Winner		
Bye } 6				
Bye }				Winner
7 } 7		Winner		
Bye } 8			Winner	
Bye }				
9 } 9		Winner		
Bye } 10				
Bye }				

Competitors should wear distinguishing colours around their waists.

RULES.

I. DEFINITION OF "AMATEUR."

- (a) An Amateur Member of the Services can enter and compete for a prize in any competition held under the auspices of the Royal Navy and Army Boxing Association, and not lose his amateur status, although competitors in the same competition may be professionals and, if successful, take a money prize.
- (b) If an Amateur Member of the Services takes part in a contest or receives a money prize or monetary consideration for participation in any competition, or infringes the definition of an Amateur as defined by the Amateur Boxing Association, otherwise than as set forth in Sub-paragraph i. (as above), he will forfeit his status as an amateur.

II. REFEREES AND JUDGES.

Contests and competitions will be controlled by a referee, assisted by two judges. The decision of the referee will be final without appeal.

III. MARKING OF ROUNDS.

Contests 20 points per round.

Competitions 20 points per round, and final round, if of longer duration, 30 points.

IV. AWARDING POINTS.

Points will be awarded for—

(a) Clean hits with closed fists, *i.e.*, knuckle part of the glove of either hand on any part of the body or head above the belt, *i.e.*, the navel.

(b) Generalship.

When points are otherwise equal the decision should be in favour of the competitor who does most leading off, forces the fighting, or displays the best style.

V. METHOD OF NAMING THE WINNER.

At the conclusion of a contest or bout in a competition the judges shall write the name of the winner, or otherwise indicate their opinion on a piece of paper. These papers will be collected and handed to the referee, who will himself announce the decision or direct it to be announced.

VI. POWERS OF REFEREE.

The referee shall have the power—

(a) To give his casting vote when the judges disagree.

(b) In competitions (not contests) to order an extra round limited to two minutes in the event of the judges disagreeing.

NOTE.—If it can possibly be avoided, competitors should not be made to box an extra round, especially in the semi-final round of a competition, the winners of which have very little time in which to recuperate before having to box in the finals.

It often happens that at the end of a close “gruelling” fight a fourth round is ordered, with the result that the ultimate winner is so knocked about that he falls a victim in his subsequent bout to a far inferior, but fresher, boxer.

It is a good plan to order an extra round when two men have been boxing in an even but timid manner, and practically converting the bout into a bye.

(c) To stop a contest or bout in a competition at any stage if he considers it too one-sided.

- (d) To stop a contest or a bout in a competition at any stage if he considers the competitors are not in earnest. In this case he will disqualify one or both competitors.
- (e) To stop a round for any reason in the interests of fair play. He will be entitled to deduct the time of any stoppage on this account.
- (f) The referee shall always name the winner of each bout in a competition. He should similarly name the winner of every contest, but in the event of the judges disagreeing, should he find it absolutely impossible to decide the winner of a contest, he may declare it a draw.
- (g) To disqualify a competitor who fails to immediately comply with his orders.
- (h) To withhold a prize for want of merit or failure to put up a genuine fight.
- (i) To give a bout against or to disqualify a competitor with or without a previous caution for committing any one of the following fouls, intentionally or unintentionally :—

FOULS.

- (i.) Hitting below the belt.
- (ii.) Hitting an opponent who is down, or who is getting up after being down.
- (iii.) Holding an opponent.
- (iv.) Holding an opponent with one hand and hitting with the other hand.
- (v.) Butting with the head or shouldering.
- (vi.) Hitting with the inside, side, or butt of the hand, the wrist or elbow
- (vii.) Hitting or flicking with the open glove.
- (viii.) Wrestling or roughing at the ropes.

NOTE.—A boxer must not prop up his opponent against the ropes and hit him while in that position.

- (ix.) Pushing.
- (x.) Going down without being hit.
- (xi.) A blow aimed deliberately at that part of the body over the kidneys.

VII. UNSPORTSMANLIKE BEHAVIOUR.

Competitors who are disqualified for committing deliberate fouls, or for unsportsmanlike conduct of which it is considered advisable to take notice, will be debarred from receiving a prize, or taking any further

part in the meeting, and must be reported to the R.N. and A.B.A. Honorary Secretary.

Their names will be forwarded to the Amateur Boxing Association or National Sporting Club, or both. A Black List and Suspension List will be kept and circulated to all members of the committee, and representatives of the R.N. and A.B.A.

NOTE.—An offender whose name has been put on the Black List will be suspended from boxing at any meeting for at least six months.

Men suspended for a period less than six months will have their names put on the Suspension List.

VIII. CLINCHING AND BREAKING AWAY.

Should a clinch occur, both men must break away immediately, and neither man may deliver a blow without having both hands free. In the event of its being necessary to order the men to break away the referee should stop the round, and the competitors will not recommence boxing until ordered to do so by the referee.

The referee shall, after giving fair warning, disqualify any competitor who persists in holding, or endeavours by any other unfair means to prevent his opponent hitting him.

In the event of both competitors continually clinching, regardless of the caution, they shall both be disqualified.

IX. DOWN.

- (a) A man is deemed "down" when any part of his person, other than his feet, is on the ground; a competitor, who is hanging helplessly over the ropes, *i.e.*, without being able to defend himself, will also be deemed down.
- (b) If a competitor is down he must get up unassisted within ten seconds; his opponent meanwhile shall retire out of striking distance, and shall not resume boxing until ordered to do so by the referee.
- (c) A competitor failing to continue boxing at the expiration of ten seconds shall not be awarded any marks for that round, and the bout shall then terminate.
- (d) The ten seconds shall not be counted aloud or otherwise indicated by the timekeeper or any other person, but the word "out" shall be given by the timekeeper on the completion of the tenth second unless the round is up meanwhile, in which case "time" will be called.

X. MEDICAL OFFICER.

A medical officer must always be in attendance at each meeting held under the direction of the Royal Navy and Army Boxing Association.

XI. RING.

The ring shall be roped from 14 to 24 feet square. The posts must be padded, and the floor, if of wood or any other hard substance, must be covered with a carpet, felt, or other soft material.

XII. GLOVES.

Gloves are to be provided by the management, and are to be of the same pattern.

Gloves for competitions to be 8 oz. each.

Gloves for contests to be not less than 6 oz. each.

XIII. WEIGHING.

Competitors to weigh in stripped or in boxing clothes as they prefer.

If a competitor is found to be too heavy for the weight for which he is entered, he may be allowed to fight in a heavier class.

XIV. SECONDS.

(a) Each competitor may be attended by two "seconds."

(b) Seconds shall not coach or speak to their principals or "claim" for them during the progress of a round.

(c) Any offence committed by a second may render his principal liable to lose a bout or to be disqualified.

XV. DISTINGUISHING COLOUR.

Competitors must wear Distinguishing Colours.

XVI. QUESTIONS NOT LEGISLATED FOR.

In the event of any question arising not provided for in these rules the referee shall have full power to decide such questions, and his decision shall be final.

APPENDIX III

NATIONAL SPORTING CLUB BOXING RULES.

CONTESTS.

1. All contests to be decided in a roped ring not less than 14 feet or more than 20 feet square.

2. Contestants to box in light boots or shoes (without spikes) or in socks. The gloves to be of a minimum weight of 6 ounces each. Contestants to be medically examined before entering the ring, and to weigh on the day of the contest.

Should Bandages be agreed to, the length and material of same to be approved and deposited with the Management of the Club at the time of signing Articles. The length of Bandage for each or either hand not to exceed six feet, and width not to exceed one inch.

3. In all contests the number of rounds shall be specified. No contest shall exceed 15 rounds, except Championships, which shall be limited to 20 rounds. No round shall exceed three minutes in duration. The interval between the rounds shall be one minute.

4. A contestant shall be entitled to the assistance of two seconds, whose names shall be submitted to the Committee for approval. The seconds shall leave the ring when time is called, and shall give no advice or assistance to the contestants during the progress of any round.

5. In all contests a referee and a timekeeper shall be appointed by the Committee. The referee shall award a maximum number of five marks at the end of each round to the better man, and a proportionate number to the other contestant, or, when equal, the maximum number to each.

If a contestant is down, he must get up unassisted within ten seconds, his opponent meanwhile shall retire out of striking distance, and shall not resume boxing until ordered to do so by the referee. A man is to be considered down even when he is on one or both feet, if at the same time any other part of his body is touching the ground, or when in the act of rising. A contestant failing to continue the contest at the expiration of ten seconds shall not be awarded any marks for that round, and the contest shall then terminate.

The referee shall decide all contests in favour of the contestant who obtains the greatest number of marks.

If at the conclusion of any round during the contest one of the contestants should attain such a lead on points as to render it an

impossibility for his opponent to win or tie, he must then be declared the winner.

Marks shall be awarded for "attack"—direct clean hits with the knuckle part of the glove of either hand on any part of the front or sides of the head, or body above the belt; "defence"—guarding, slipping, ducking, or getting away. Where contestants are otherwise equal, the majority of marks shall be given to the one who does most of the leading off or who displays the better style.

6. The referee shall have power to disqualify a contestant for any of the following acts. For hitting below the belt, for using the pivot blow, for using the kidney punch, for hitting with the open glove, the inside or butt of the hand, or with the wrist or elbow. For holding, butting, shouldering, intentionally falling without receiving a blow, wrestling or roughing, or for any other act which he may deem foul. The referee shall also have power to stop the contest if in his opinion a contestant is outclassed or accidentally disabled.

7. If in the opinion of the referee a deliberate foul is committed by a contestant, such contestant shall not be entitled to any prize.

8. The breaking of any of these rules by a contestant or his seconds shall render such contestant liable to disqualification.

9. The referee shall decide (1) any question not provided for in these rules; (2) the interpretation of any of these rules.

CHAMPIONSHIPS.

STANDARD WEIGHTS.

Fly Weight, 8 stone and under.

Bantam Weight, 8 stone 6 pounds and under.

Feather Weight, 9 stone and under.

Light Weight, 9 stone 9 pounds and under.

Welter Weight, 10 stone 7 pounds and under.

Middle Weight, 11 stone 6 pounds and under.

Light-Heavy Weight, 12 stone 7 pounds and under.

Heavy Weight, any weight.

TO WEIGH-IN EIGHT HOURS BEFORE ENTERING THE RING.

Any boxer holding a Championship must defend his title within six months after the receipt of a challenge for a minimum stake of £100 a side, excepting the Heavy Weight, when the minimum is to be £200 a side, and the Fly Weight, when the minimum is to be £50 a side; the

challenge to be accompanied by a deposit of £50, and approved by the Committee of the National Sporting Club.

Challenge belts will be given for the above Championships, which must be held for an unbroken period of three years, or won three times (not necessarily consecutively) in order for same to become the absolute property of the holder.

The holder of a Championship Belt shall not be permitted to enter for another weight unless the Belt he has previously won has become his absolute property, or he has surrendered same.

APPENDIX IV.

CONDITIONS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL BOXING.

Rough fighting will not be allowed. The decision will be given in favour of the competitor who displays the best style and obtains the greatest number of points.

The points shall be for "attack"—straight clean hits with the knuckles of either hand on any part of the front or sides of the head or body above the belt: "defence"—guarding, slipping, ducking, counter-hitting, or getting away.

Where points are otherwise equal, consideration to be given to the man who does most of the leading off.

No points are awarded for a "knock-out" blow. If a competitor is seen to be working for a "knock-out" he will be cautioned, and if he does not desist will be disqualified.

If, on the other hand, a "knock-out" takes place by accident the decision will be awarded on the points already allotted to each competitor.

The referee may after cautioning the offender disqualify a competitor who is boxing unfair, by flicking or hitting with the open glove, by hitting with the inside or butt of the hand, the wrist or elbow, or by wrestling or roughing at the ropes.

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