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The Mecca of Fakers in French Capital

Paris—Paris is the Mecca of the bluffers and fakers in every line of endeavor from music to prizefighting. You find more famous American dancers who have never been heard of in America; more renowned Russian dancers who are disclaimed by the Russians; and more champion prizefighters who were preliminary boys before they crossed the ocean, per square yard in Paris than anywhere else in the world.

This state of affairs exists because of the extreme provinciality of the French people, and because of the gullibility of the French press. Everyone in Canada knows the names of half a dozen French soldiers and statesmen, but no one in France could give you the name of a Canadian general or statesman or tell you who was the present head of the Canadian government. By no one I mean none of the ordinary people; shop keepers, hotel owners and general bourgeois class. For example, my *femme de manège* was horrified yesterday when I told her there was a Prohibition in Canada and the States. “Why have we never heard of it?” she asked. “Has it just been a law? What then does a man drink?”

An American girl was recently billed at the Paris music halls as “America's best known and best loved dancer.” None of the recent arrivals in Paris from the States had ever heard of her, but Parisians flocked to see the American “Star.” Later it came out that she had a small part in a U.S. musical show some years ago.

Russians have inundated the city. They can get away with almost anything, because it is easy for a Russian to claim that he was anything he may want to say, in Russia; there is no way to check up on Russian reputations at present. So we have great Russian dancers, great Russian pianists, flutists, composers, and organists—all equally bad.

Jack Clifford, who styled himself the colored light-heavyweight champion of the United States and Canada, was a recent nine-days' wonder in France. He avoided meeting any fighters and demanded tremendous sums to box, but announced his willingness to meet Carpentier if a suitable purse was offered. No American had ever heard of him—but the Europeans swallowed him whole.

Clifford met his downfall in Vienna, where a third-rate Austrian pugilist, with an unpronounceable name, punished him so badly that the fight was halted in the third round to save the Negro from further punishment. Clifford had been on the floor most of the evening and did not show even an amateur's knowledge of fighting. The crowd, which had paid several baskets of kronen apiece to see the American black champion, attempted to lynch Clifford with the ropes cut from the ring, but the Negro was saved by the police and left Vienna that night.

At present a familiar figure to those Torontonians who attend boxing matches is basking in the pleasant spotlight of European publicity. It is none other than Soldier Jones. Jones is being hailed by the Paris papers as "the heavyweight champion of Canada, the man who has never been knocked off his feet, the winner of eighty-five fights by knockouts and the best fighter that Canada has ever produced."

Jones is at present in England, where he is being groomed for a fight with Joe Beckett, but his manager has sent press dope over to Paris, where it is being published by the English papers and avidly copied by the French.

Torontonians who recall what happened one night last year, when this same Soldier Jones abandoned caution so far as to enter the ring with Harry Greb, will be able to form their own opinions of how easy it is to become a "champion" abroad. The only rule seems to be that you must choose to be a champion of some very distant country and then stay away from that country. That is the way the fiddlers, fighters, painters and dancers are doing.