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Square Fight Sure, Men Prime for It, Says Jack London

Prolonged Contest at Reno Today Will Mean Bent, Dented and Maybe Broken Ribs for 'Jack' Johnson, Novelist Prophecies

No Longer Mere Brutal Game, Prize Ring Offers Valuable Lesson in Fair Dealing

Will Jeffries Make Negro Extend Himself, And If So, How Long Will it Take Him to Do It?

Now the All Important Question

It is the lull before the storm. The fighters are resting, the fight fans are resting, and, it being Sunday, the very gambling hazards of Reno are resting. The last argument has been given, the last theory expounded, yet everything remains in the air, unproved, and the partisans have paused, open-mouthed, waiting for tomorrow when Billy Jordan says, "Let 'er go," the gong sounds, and the black giant and the white proceed to let go at each other and to prove or disprove the ten thousand and ten thousand pros and cons that have been advanced the last week—or for the last whole year.

The one thing Jeffries hates is applause. Out at his training quarters "Farmer" Burns pleads with the spectators, with tears in his voice, not to clap their hands. Applause always gives Jeffries the grouch, and so one is led to believe if Jeffries wins the fight and 20,000 men tear themselves loose in the wildest outburst of applause that the Sagebrush State has ever heard that Jeff will have the most profound, confounded and enormous grouch that ever a man possessed.

A trifle of prophecy: If the fight goes any decent distance, bent and dented ribs for Johnson, if not broken ones.

There are no illusions among all these fighters, fight followers, and trainers as to conditions of men. They know the sport for what it is and they know it intelligently. Any person who believes that prize-fighting is nothing but pure brutality and barbarism would learn much by a day's contact with this army of fighters and fight fans that has poured into Reno, and such a person would be surprised that there is more in the game than two men pummeling each other. The game is a myriad times finer and greater than that.

In the eleven days I have been in Reno, during which time I have rubbed shoulders with all these men who know the game, not once have I heard the whisper passed of "fake." There is not one man on the ground who entertains the slightest suspicion that the fight is fixed in any way. This old cry of fake was raised several months ago, but it died from lack of sustenance. Not one thing was found on which to feed it. Depend upon it, the big fight is absolutely on the square.

One of the most touching things I have seen here has been the devotion and loyalty of every fellow in the training camp to Jeff. Especially will I never forget an exhibition of this by Sam Berger. Sam was one of the group that believed the big fellow should do more sparring, and Sam argued for it passionately, late and early, and all the time. The last day of his active training Jeff boxed some fast rounds with Choynski and "Brother Jack." Finishing with the latter, Jeff proceeded to take off his gloves.

"Hold on!" Berger cried: "I'm here," and to those near him Berger said in a low voice: "I'm going to give it to him as long as I last," and he did, too. He surged in like a hurricane, walloping the big fellow as hard as he was able, crying aloud from the very effort of the blows he delivered, taking his punishment in return, and keeping it up until toward the end, all but out from a heavy rip to the stomach, he was held up by Jeff to prevent him from falling to the mat.

Sam wasn't yearning for this punishment, but out of his heartfelt anxiety and loyalty for his leader he did his little best, better to fit him for the big fight.

Especially, do I remember how Sam received Jeff's shoulder. It was a blow of such crushing impact that it would have finished there and then any man of Berger's weight who did not make a practice of boxing.

Prize-fighting may be brutal, but, in my humble opinion, there are many things worse. Prize-fighting has rigid fair play rules. Foul blows are not permitted nor are big men allowed to fight with the little men. Heavy-weight fight with heavy-weights, middles with middles, and light-weights with light-weights. But out in the world this fair play does not obtain. If a rebate is a foul blow in the business world, what can be said of food adulteration, the packing of life preservers with scrap iron, and the bribery of the people's legislators and representatives? Can the worst that ever happened in any prize-ring compare with short weighing the Government, which is the people? How about a big man who pounces on 1,000 little children, puts them to work in a factory, and destroys them, bodies and souls? Or what of the big merchant, who, by the club of hunger, compels his women employees to labor long hours on a semi-starvation wage?

As for me, I prefer something that may be, in its way, brutal, but that at the same time is eminently fair. There is not a little learned from prize-fighting. If some of the fairness of the prize-ring were carried into business life it would be a much more beneficial world in which to live.

Jeff is going to extend himself in this fight. Will he make Johnson extend himself and, if so, how long will it take him to do it?

Jeff is not so slow. Ask Fitzsimmons, who has fought twice with him, and who ought to know. Fitzsimmons vouches for Jeff's quickness.

Johnson has a remarkable arm and shoulder development, so has Jeff. Question: Will Jeff be able to put it over the negro in the roughing of the clinches? This will be worth watching for.

Another trifle of prophecy. Neither of the big fellows is going to spring anything new. Each is going to fight in the same old way he has always fought. It is the combination of these two men that is new.

Query: Suppose Jeff wins and retires again? Won't that leave Johnson in the ring as the heavy-weight champion of the world? and won't the championship situation be just where it was before Jeff decided to re-enter the ring? Of a certainty, outside of Jeff, there is no other heavy-weight who can best Johnson.