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**RING REMINISCENCES**

(Continued from page 6)

who once held sway in the heavy weight division, a comparison can be made that is now without its humorous aspects.

About 1867 Big Mike McCool was heavyweight champion of America — or at least he claimed to be the champion, which was probably true. Mike kept a saloon in St. Louis, Missouri at that time, and in the rear was a large hall which on Saturday nights was devoted to the noble art of self defence. The "science" of fistiana as a

sport was becoming very popular. All the prominent taverns in the big cities had gymnasiums in their back rooms and there was no scarcity of washed out and burped out old time pugilists lounging around, who could still do an executioner's job on some aspiring greenhorn candidate from the "sticks".

Hoping for the pardon of readers for digressing, I am constrained to recount the following "short" anecdote—"A young Irishman in New York City met a pal from home at the boat and proceeded to show him the 'sights.' He took the newcomer up Broadway and

into several saloons. After two or three libations of strong liquor the subsequent ones appeared very weak, and the late arrival remarked to his friend, "Yez have very fine drinkin' water in this country, Pat." To make the "hazarding" of the newcomer complete Pat took him to Tom Early's famous saloon on Broadway and into the back room gymnasium among the old-time "pugs." Then Pat made a surreptitious retreat, leaving the "green" one on his own. After about an hour Pat's conscience smote him, and he went back to nurse the friend after his supposedly sure beating up.

Pat furtively walking on the far side from Early's. The "Greenhorn" was standing in the doorway in his shirt sleeves, with his thumbs under his suspenders —feeling and looking very much at home. He spied Pat and called to him, "Arrah Patsy, come over and have a drink. I am now tinding the bar."

In order to attract big crowds to

those fistiana sores Big Mike would advertise the appearance of a number of then famous pugilists for the next Saturday night. He knew, and many of his audience knew that none of those famous pugs had any intention of appearing. Some of them were probably in Europe and others were undoubtedly in jail, but nevertheless Mike announced them as sure participants.

When the Saturday night crowd had gathered Mike would mount the stage and apologize for the non-appearance of his advertised stars. There is still extant a copy of one of his speeches of apology, as compiled and passed on by John B. McCormick, a famous sport writer of over fifty years ago, who wrote under the pen name of Mac-

ed in gettin' on the cars, and dislocated his shoulder. He can't be here. I had a tilligram tellin' me that his aunt is dead, and av course he can't spar under the circumstances. An uncle of Barney Aaron has just died in London and left him a fortune and he's sailed to see about it, an' Collyer wouldn't come to box nobody else."

"But I'll tell yez—yez has seen some good sport wid local talent, and meself and Sherman Thurston will do de wind-up and I hope everyone will be pleasant and congenial". One look at big Mike and the audience decided it was better to be "pleasant and congenial".

The A. P. (Assoc. Press) this a.m. chronicles the death of "Cyclone" Johnny Thompson. The writer had the pleasure of a long talk with Johnny in Vancouver in the autumn of 1911—after he returned from his Australian boxing tour. It was at the Woods Hotel. He beat the great middleweight Billy Papke, a mid-western fighter who was in Stanley Ketchel's class and had beaten all the good middles. Papke was touring Australia at the same time.

Noticing a pretty badly cauliflowered ear, I ventured the observation, "You've been boxing quite a bit in your day". "Yes," he said, "my name is Cyclone Johnny Thompson". There were some gray hairs in his head then, and he said he was thirty-four years old.

I expressed surprise when I looked him over, knowing that he had made his great record in the lightweight division (135 lb. limit). He then weighed 174 lbs. in light suit. I naturally asked him how it all came about. He told me the strangest story of physical change and development I ever heard. He had gained one and three quarters inches in height and thirty pounds weight during his trip to Australia—believe it or not—and there was the living evidence, a fait accompli (as it were). It would be a man's sized problem for the physiologists and dietitians to account for the vagaries of nature in Johnny's case.

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