The Kings of the Roped Arena

The Greatest Boxing Champions of All Time

In Three Parts. Part II

Who Was the Foremost Middleweight in the History of the Ring?

Famous Title Holders of Former Days—How They Would Compare With More Recent Champions—Changing Laws in the Boxing World—The Greatest of Them All

By WILLIAM A. PHELON

Last month, in a masterly article, Mr. Wm. A. Phelon discussed the problem of the greatest heavyweight champion of all time. To us, there is no more fascinating theme in athletic history, and the evident kindly reception which this article received, leads us to expect for the present installment a no less attentive hearing. Hand in glove with the progress of boxing as a sport of world-wide prominence, goes the remarkable development of the middleweight division. In the following article Mr. Phelon gives us a clear-cut picture of the greatest middleweight in the history of the ring.

JUST when the men who rule the ring began the classification of pugilists by weight is a mystery of the bygone past—something hidden in the lost archives of the game. In the earlier days of the British mills, there was but little time or chance far men of inferior avoirdupois. Heavyweights ruled supreme, the Britons apparently focusing their admiration on boxers big enough to impressively whip ordinary men in fistic combat outside as well as inside the arena. Smaller fighters had either to take their chances against the big fellows, or were simply utilized as trainers and camp attendants. Now and then some little chap would attract so much attention that he would be given a fair show and plenty of good matches against people of his size, but as a rule the men below 145 pounds were not given even common courtesy, while those above that poundage had to meet the giants of the game.

The early records of British boxing are crowded with glorious names of heavyweights, while only semi-occasionally does a little man get his name in type. Nowadays—and for the past thirty years—the achievements of the small champions are given their just dues, and the followers of pugilism, all over the world, remember the deeds of Dixon and McGovern almost as keenly as the thunderous sluggings of John L. The just treatment given the smaller fighters has had proper influence upon the great class of middleweights, and that division of pugilism now has a much better show for its laurels than was the case in the good old prize-ring days.

The middleweight class, composed of men who are too heavy for the smaller boxers, but physically too weak for the huge heavyweights, is of but recent origin. Up to a period within the memory of the veteran ring-goers, the middleweights had to fight the heavies right along, and it is highly to their honor that many of them maintained the one-sided strife with victory and a big percentage of success against their mammoth foes. As the heavies dominated everything, and got the big money everywhere, the unfortunate middleweight had no option except to meet giants, or accept trifling

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sums for bouts against the few fighters of his own size. Hence, for many years, there were very few middleweights of genuine ability. Within quite recent times, several of the 154-pound men developed such class that people began to look at them; presently there were enough of them to form a brigade of their own, and then, year by year, they grew in numbers and in reputation.

Even after he had a class of his own, and could get plenty of matches in it, the middleweight continued to fight the heavies. From the time when there was a middleweight worth noticing, the men of the 154-158 pound standard have been buccanneers, pirates, raiding Arabs, dashing into the crowd of the larger men and doing the best they could. At first, as has been explained, the middleweight had to fight bigger men because he could get no other chances—and yet, when he no longer had to battle with the elephants, he kept right on attacking them. Some wonderful frays have been fought between heavy- and middleweights, and the smaller man, when you think it over, has really the best of the proposition. He can lose nothing. If he is defeated, the fight-lovers all cheer his gameness, accept the excuse that the other man was too big, and give him plenty of future matches. If he wins, he becomes a popular hero, a regular Jack-the-Giant-Killer, and reaps the easy money all around the circuit. Small wonder, then, that the undaunted middleweight will seldom hesitate to attack the heavy champions—the only marvel is that the big men will fight them. A heavyweight gains only the money by beating a smaller fellow, while a defeat by a lighter man makes the big boy a thing of mockery and often starts him on the road to trampdom.

The middleweight, therefore, is about the nerviest fighter that puts on the gloves, when it comes to giving weight away. He is also one of the most satisfactory, as he is large enough to be clearly visible in action from all portions of the house, while he is not so big as to be slow and clumsy. He is often a most sensational performer, and some of the battles in this division can justly be rated as among the most glorious classics of the game. At present, the division is crowded with eager athletes, many of them classing well and showing commendable abilities, but brilliant dazzling stars, such as flashed across the horizon a few years ago, seem temporarily missing.

Bendigo (William Thompson) was one of the great middleweights—greater even than his English historians proclaim him. When Bendigo was in the game, some seventy years ago, the middleweights had no special class; and no special consideration. Bendigo fought at 164, without much training, and could surely have done 158 with slight exertion. He was five feet nine in height, and, from his old portraits, must have been built much like Stanley Ketchel. The Pride of Nottingham, however, didn't fight like Ketchel, but more like Tommy Ryan. He retreated before his mastodonic foes, dodging their swings, ducking under their arms, and peppering them as he vanished from view. After many rounds, the big fellows would grow sadly tired, whereupon Bendigo, with a joyous squawk of triumph, would light upon them and make them say Uncle.

When praising Bendigo, all credit should be given double strength when you review the London rules. Those rules read as if made to order for big men with massive arms and columnar legs. Zbyzsco, the Polish wrestler, who has some knowledge of boxing, would have been a champion sure in those golden days of 1843. A thick, wide person who knew how to wrestle could grab a smaller man, bend him double, and then fall on him like a ton of brick. Even the wrestling rules favored the elephants, for they were, practically, identical with the Greco-Roman statutes—they allowed no holds below the waist. Hence a small man could not even duck, seize his burly antagonist by the legs, and put a toe-hold on him. It can readily be seen, therefore, that the fighting rules of the London ring put a premium on size, weight and brute strength, while the little or slender man had as much show as a celluloid ghost in Pluto's subdivision.

Imagine, therefore, the tremendous tasks that Bendigo so often undertook when he calmly faced men from 180 to 230 pounds in avoirdupois—men who

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were allowed to grab him, crush him in their bear-like arms, and then fall on him, without any padding on the turf to break the impact! Yet Bendigo never quibbled about weight—he simply went to them, dodged them, potted them on the lamps and bugles, and finally wore them down. Such was the cleverness, in every way, of Bendigo, that he even developed an art of falling under the big men's rushes without receiving injury. Often he would be seized and overwhelmed by the 200 pounders, and then, as they went heavily to earth, would dextrously writhe free, while the large man thumped the soil with a crash like a custard pie falling from the Metropolitan Tower.

Bendigo showed them all up, lost very few decisions—one defeat on a foul peculiar to London ring rules—and, becoming a minister, died a preacher and evangelist of great ability. The foul on which Bendigo lost to Ben Caunt was a case of "caught with the goods on." If you drop to avoid a blow, you lose, London rules same as any other, but the English fighters had a special way of getting round it. As an enemy rushed, they would make a feeble stall, catch a blow on arm or shoulder, and then drop, the round ending as soon as a man hit the ground. Bendigo had this down to a dot, and used to exasperate his huge rivals to frenzy by the neatness with which he would fake the reception of a drive and then seek the sod. When he fought Caunt, the referee had a watchful eye upon him. Caunt rushed, feinted, and swung, but pulled back the arm without landing. Bendigo dropped like a flash before the swinging fist, and the referee at once disqualified him. It is on record, though, that he put the same trick over on Caunt at another battle, and won out, for Caunt, madder than a hornet, took a poke at him while he was resting on one knee and was ruled out immediately.

Tom Savers, who was king from about 1855 to 1861, was undoubtedly one of the grandest middleweights that ever lived. Many close critics believe that Savers, all points considered, was absolutely the best 158-pound man that ever faced a foe. Fitzsimmons, no doubt, could hit harder and faster—but how far would Bob have gone against some of the big heavies under London rules, with his pipestem legs to support him when a 230-pounder was wrestling him? If there ever were middleweights who were as good as Sayers, and could have been as good under the London rules, those men were Tommy Ryan and Stanley Ketchel.

Tom Sayers had almost the uncanny skill of Bendigo in dodging, ducking and evading heavier men, and was just about as clever in the trick of slipping down without being either damaged or disqualified. In his immortal fight with John C. Heenan, Tom slid lightly to the sod perhaps thirty times, and did it so neatly that not even Heenan's seconds could make a protest on the way he did the trick. Sayers was a harder hitter than Bendigo, especially with the right, and had also surprising speed with the left. Few fighters have lived who were able to jab perfectly with the left, and yet put over a deadening right. As a rule, a man is all swinger or all jabber, and those who can mix the two styles seldom have the KO punch at hand. Sayers could jab like an Attell, and his judgment of distance was something bewildering, while his right carried such a swatsome soak that all England lovingly called it "The Auctioneer."

There were no middleweights in England fit to face Tom Sayers, and he made himself heavyweight champion by force of arms. Unlike Bendigo, Sayers loved to mix and mingle. This boldness cost him one great battle—when Nat Langham met him toe to toe, and outslugged him to a finish—and almost cost him the fight with Heenan. Ignoring John's height and bulk, Sayers impetuously hurled himself upon the great American, and was hit down in a heap by crashing drives. Tom took enough square knockdowns and thudding falls from Heenan to end a dozen ordinary fighters. Then his good sense took command of him; he began to dodge, duck, counter and slip down, and waged equal war from that time till the ring was broken in.

Jem Mace, it is said, could fight at 158 when young, but scaled round 172 in his more famous days. The last of the great British middleweights, in all fairness, was Charlie Mitchell, who could do 158 almost up to the end of his career.

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Mitchell dawned in the transition period, between the bare-knuckle game of the London ring and the padded-glove epoch that has lasted ever since 1885. He was a great man on the turf, able to wrestle, mix, jab and duck as few could do before or since his time. Then, taking up the gloves, he proved himself equally proficient with the "thick uns," and for several years did remarkable things under both boxing codes. His battle with John L. Sullivan—39 rounds, London rules—was his last great struggle. When he met Jim Corbett in 1894 he had grown fat and careless, and the old fire had departed.

Australia developed some wondrous middleweights along towards 1890. Bob Fitzsimmons, Jim Hall and Dan Creedon were sterling performers, while Fitz and Hall had great natural advantages in their height and reach. They were as tall as the average heavyweight, with spidery arms and punching power that took its foundation in their muscular shoulders. Tiring of home, Fitzsimmons came to San Francisco, and soon became a sensation. He defeated a few second-raters in lightning order, and then encountered the middleweight idol of America—Jack Dempsey. After the Dempsey fracas, Bob cleaned up his old Australian rivals, Hall and Creedon, and, from that time on, had no more middleweights to work on. He bowled over the heavies, became heavyweight champion, and held the job till overcome by the gigantic hulk of Jeffries.

Fitzsimmons was the best man of his weight that ever lived: under the Queensberry rules. As previously remarked, it is a question whether he could have ever reached the summit under the old London laws. The Queensberry rules are built to order for a fighter of the Fitzsimmons pattern—the London rules are built to order for his overthrow. Fitzsimmons, fighting most men of his weight, had a vast advantage in height and reach, while the same height and reach equalized him with the larger boxers—under Queensberry laws. He could whang the big man and then shuffle into a clinch, with the ready referee to split them out, and no chance for the big man to do the grizzly bear upon his skinny frame. Under the London rules, the big man would receive Bob in a clinch, lean upon him, and squash him Bob's only chance, under London rules, would have been to nail the big man at the first exchange of blows—if he missed his first wallop, he would have been overpowered. He peppered Tom Sharkey and finally sunk the ship with a few well-directed blows—but how far would he have gone if the rules had allowed the mighty tar to shoulder into a clinch, get his arms round the redtop and throw his weight upon the champion?

Under the Queensberry code, Fitzsimmons was the star of all time. He was as tall, as wide in the shoulders and as long in the arms as a heavyweight, and his trade of blacksmithing had given him fearful vigor in every blow. Despite his ungainly shape and ridiculous legs, the man was fiendishly clever. He had a way of shuffling those clumsy legs and comical feet that took him out of danger with most antagonists—excepting the wizardlike Corbett, who easily outfooted and outboxed him only to fail through lack of broadside metal. His hands and arms were developed in speed as well as in murderous power, and the freckled shoulders had a full share in all that was going on. Fitz could hoist a shoulder so rapidly that a blow, started for his unguarded chin, would find the shoulder cushioning its force when it arrived. He could also lift one shoulder so deceptively that the enemy would prepare for a swing on that side, only to have Bob shift the feet and the other arm so suddenly that a KO punch crashed home.

A ring general, a dreadful hitter, and as game as a lion, old Fitz was one unique figure in our fighting annals, and one figure, also, who can never be forgotten.

Hundreds of stories have been told of Fitz's quaint ways, of his almost numberless battles, and the kindly disposition which showed uppermost in his acts, even while in the ring. His infinite patience, his pathetic assimilation of terrific punishment to get in one of his famous crushing finishers, and his freedom from any taint of that dissipation which mars the record of many boxers, have made him a favorite character to that public which appreciate a man, be that man a bishop or a boxer. At an age

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when most fighters have vanished into ancient history, Fitz was battling heroically with the gigantic frame of Jeffries, for he was forty years old when he battered the giant's face into a shapeless pulp, and was self-defeated by his own superhuman efforts. Fitz was certainly an extraordinary anomaly in boxing, and his like has never been seen.

Jack Dempsey, whom Fitz overthrew at New Orleans, was another great figure in the galaxy of middleweights. Born in Ireland, but learning to fight around a Brooklyn cooperage, Dempsey was a lightweight for several years, and, though still able to make the weight, entered the next class rather than bar the way of his best pal, Jack McAuliffe. Dempsey grew a little in later years, but was always light for a real middleweight, 147 pounds being about his average figure.

Dempsey was not a slugger. Comparatively few of the men of those days were wild swingers—the fights with bare knuckles or with skin-tight gloves were bad stuff for a swinging blow that might bump full tilt against a concrete head. Jack, even after the fat gloves had superseded the skin-tights, fought carefully, artistically, and took his time. He trimmed almost all the stars of his period, and then fell before George La Blanche, "the Marine," in one of the greatest flukes of history.

Dempsey, who had once beaten La Blanche, met him in San Francisco, and proceeded to jab him as full of holes as a colander. He took his time about it, for the Marine was a powerful 158-pounder, with a killing punch, and it was well to take no unnecessary chances. Finally, when La Blanche was apparently about done, and people were putting on their coats, the Marine leaped up and spun madly around like a whirling dervish. His glove, flying blindly and with not a particle of aim, landed flush on Dempsey's jaw, and the Nonpareil was finished.

That fluke defeat broke Dempsey's heart. He was not the Nonpareil of old when he faced Fitzsimmons, and was cut to pieces by the tall Australian. At that, Fitzsimmons would have been too strong, too stupefying with his awful blows, for Dempsey at his best—small doubt about it.

Many men battled among the middleweights during the ten years that followed the passing of Fitzsimmons into the bigger grade, and there were a platoon of champions — fellows who claimed to be the best 158-pound people on earth, and who rated pretty much even up in actual ability. Out of the lot, two shone forth conspicuous—Tommy Ryan and Jack O'Brien. These two fighters have never been equaled, perhaps, in uncanny cleverness with the gloves—or in picking soft spots to light on. Both had a long, hard row to hoe before they reached the top—a row of real fights for diminutive money—and both became "practical men" of unparalleled skill in picking the good things after they attained the summit. Both of them would give away weight to a heavy dub—and both were keen on the exact scaling when a dangerous man was to be dealt with. Ryan used the same marks again and again, nursing them along and "defeating" them in town after town. O'Brien's course was different—he didn't care who met him, if—according to his own confessions—the "fight" was understood and mapped out ahead of time.

Ryan had more than featherweight speed in evading an attack, and could cover ground backward faster than most men can go forward. He used to run backwards for miles along the country lanes, and thus trained his leg muscles till they would take him out of a danger zone as if possessed of individual instinct, independent of the brain. While he loved to avoid a beating, Tommy was by no means shy of punishing power and could hit savagely with either hand if the occasion required. Few men could corner Tommy Ryan, and those who did soon found that they had picked up a handful of hornets. Only once was Ryan thoroughly trimmed, and that was by Kid McCoy—a dainty piece of trimming, and no mistake about it.

McCoy had been a chopping block and second assistant sparring partner for Ryan, who, never gentle with his hired help, used to wallop him plenty. The Kid, seeing far ahead, took it all, made no attempt to fight back, and let Ryan accept him as a hopeless dub. By and by, a club was hypnotized into giving a purse for Ryan and McCoy. The chopping block wrote to his master, begging

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him to be gentle and only let him make a good showing; Ryan, full of grins and happiness, did no training—and McCoy simply beat him even as the hired man beats the carpet in the gloaming.

Ryan lasted a long time, beat the welterweights, beat the middleweights, acquired much money, and retired with only that one good, thorough beating on his register.

Jack O'Brien handled his men and his finances with the skill of Ryan, though his fighting methods were rather different. O'Brien had height and reach to help him, and tincanned less than Ryan. He usually attacked, while Ryan waited for the foe. After a few quick exchanges, in which O'Brien usually had the best of it, Jack would break ground, skim along the ropes, and then suddenly attack again with straight, driving punches, while Ryan's way was to lead his man round and round the ring and cross him with short hooks if the opening offered. Both ways were effectual, and saved these two masters of the game from many a walloping.

Ryan depended on his legs to tire his men. O'Brien, coming to the front in an era of six-round bouts, where legwork wasn't so much, depended on his showering blows. When the available middleweights were done, Ryan retired, but O'Brien, who came in much later than Tommy, stayed in the class awhile, then became a heavyweight, and lasted till he was double-crossed by Tommy Burns. Burns and O'Brien were to "fight" a pretty, even battle; Burns fooled Jack, tore into him, bulled him round by superior strength, and ended his career. O'Brien fought a few times since —six-round bouts mostly—but has confined himself mostly to promoting fights since Stanley Ketchel belted him into insibility.

Kid McCoy, who whipped Ryan, and was a past master of the game, might have made himself middleweight champion with ease, but graduated into the heavy division, where he fought with much success. McCoy, as a welterweight, was a tramp fighter, battling wherever he could get the price of a meal; as a middleweight, he contented himself with thrashing Ryan and a few of the minor lights, and, as a heavyweight, he lasted several seasons, one of the showiest figures in the game.

Although of comparatively frail build, even sickly in his younger days, he had two things which combined to give him an ability in his own peculiar line which has never been excelled. His phenomenal reach, almost always two or three inches greater than that of his opponents, was a physical advantage which he never failed to make the most of, while his surpassing cleverness, and exhaustive study of boxing as a profession, finally evolved the famous corkscrew punch. This was suggested to McCoy by a glance down a rifle barrel. The twisting turns which made the bullet all the speedier he applied with telling effect to his blows. And by an adroit use of this repertoire he became one of the most coolly, craftily, coldly scientific boxers in all history. His blows never failed to damage when they struck and he was often called cruel in his bouts. He did do fearful execution particularly in his meeting with Ryan. But there was a personal feeling in this bout which apparently excused much of the Kid's strenuosity.

Joe Walcott, little and black, scaling never over 145 pounds, grew tired of battling light- and welterweights, and attacked both middles and heavies on their own ground. Tommy Ryan always found excuses for not meeting the tiny negro; O'Brien fought him a six-round, no-decision affair and quite a lot of big men fell before his gloves. He never got enough fights among the high-grade middleweights to prove his relative calibre, and his color kept him from getting the chance he so well deserved.

Among the husky middleweights of the Ryan-O'Brien perioda stretch of fifteen years or more—can be named Mysterious Billy Smith, a holy terror of a fighter, but unfortunately a foul and unreliable one. Then there was Jack Bonner, a grim and sturdy cuss, not a champion, but tough enough to tire the champions. Tommy West, who gave Ryan the most desperate fight of his life, was a corker, and would have been champion sure under the London rules. Kid Carter was a fast and dangerous fighter, but outgrew the weight after Ryan had given him a fearful beating. Jack Root, of Chicago, showed elegant class, but, like

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many others, grew into the larger division, as did George Gardner, who, for a little while, seemed like the coming master of the 158-pound brigade.

Joe Choynski, of San Francisco, was a most unfortunate fighter. He was just a couple of pounds too big for the middles, and hence too light for the heavies. Nevertheless, Joe confined his attentions almost wholly to the big stars, and they all declare that he hit harder than anyone else on earth. Tom Sharkey told me that Choynski hit him a heavier wallop than he got from even Bob Fitzsimmons. Jim Jeffries says that one of Joe's smashes, driving his lip back between his teeth, was the hardest crack he ever received. Jack Johnson told me, not long ago, that Choynski hit him so heavily that he was sent out of the ring and out of sensibility at the same instant, and Bob Fitzsimmons avers that a biff handed him by Joseph was the one meanest punch he ever endured.

If Choynski could have come down a few pounds, he would surely have been the middleweight champion—if he could have added 20 pounds, he might have been the heavyweight chieftain. Hard lines for Joe!

The middleweight class didn't amount to much for awhile after Ryan quit and O'Brien, Root, McCoy and Gardner went to fighting the heavies. For a few years the middles, in fact, were a lot of tramps, and it seemed as if the once-honored class had fallen into hopeless decay. Then, almost simultaneously, arose two stars of brightest ray, and the old class blazed forth in pristine brilliancy.

Billy Papke, German and Polish mixed, who had spent his youth in putting repairs on the harness of uncomprehending mules around a mine, began to get reputation in Illinois. At the time, Hugo Kelly and Joe Thomas, good, clever fighters, but not sensational ones, were counted about the best middles in active operation. Papke, having whipped everyone within reach excepting his father—who could always lick him in five minutes—hooked up with Hugo Kelly, and battled to a gallant draw. Meanwhile — odd coincidence — Joe Thomas, the western expert—was being held to a draw by another rising star—Stanley Ketchel.

Stanislaus Kiecal—the Stanley Ketchel of more recent days—was, like Papke, of mixed Polish and German blood—a strange coincidence. Unlike Papke, who followed a steady trade till lured by the ring, Ketchel was a rover and a seeker for adventure. Their lives, however, ran in parallel channels when Papke broke even with Hugo Kelly, and Ketchel drew with Thomas. The parallel continued in each getting a return match with his recent foe—and the lines kept on evenly, for Ketchel defeated Thomas and Papke gained the decision over Kelly.

Then they met, and never was there a fiercer, grimmer fight, with Ketchel winning on a point decision. Again they grappled, and this time Papke, after a direful tussle, upset Ketchel. The third time they hooked up, and this time Ketchel won. In their fourth and final battle, both men were all in, and the victory went to Ketchel because he outbluffed a foe almost as husky to the final gong as his weak and wobbling self.

These fights established Stanley Ketchel as middleweight champion, and Ketchel was one of the best-loved champions that ever lived. Handsome, laughing, generous, a gambler and a spendthrift, he recalled the joyous days of John L. Sullivan—and he fought like him, too. There was no dodging or evading when Ketchel was in the ring. He fought like a gladiator of old Rome: he stormed and showered his blows, and, through the tempest, he bore himself with generalship as well as a furious hand. He could shift and slap in the unexpected whack as well as Bob Fitzsimmons ever could, and he was a hard, free hitter with either hand. The Fitzsimmons of 1897 and the Ketchel of 1909 would have made the greatest battle ever staged.

Ketchel, like so many other middleweights, took a flyer into the guarded territory of the heavies, and hurled himself upon the great black citadel, Jack Johnson. He was defeated after a fight in which he bore himself gallantly to the last, and then returned to the middles, where he reigned supreme, unquestioned, till his untimely death at the hands of an assassin some two years and a half. ago.

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Ketchel in life was a type of the old world of myth and knighthood, reckless, careless, a prodigal spendthrift of time, talent and money. His meteoric career was one blaze of lavish expenditure, a carefree existence which never took thought of the morrow. His faults were merely exaggerated virtues, an exuberance of youthful vitality, a boundless generosity which became in his case mere wanton wastefulness. But these evidences of abounding life but served to endear him to the public. There was nothing small or petty in his nature. He was fair, open, honest, straightforward and generous. And his death was like his life.

While rusticating at a ranch near Marshfield, Mo., a ranch hand named Dipley, inspired by jealousy over a woman, approached Ketchel with a revolver while the boxer was at the breakfast table and told him to throw up his hands, Ketchel was unarmed but he made for his antagonist, and the latter shot him through the lungs. Dipley claims he did not intend to shoot. He thought Ketchel would throw up his hands. He did not know the man and he is atoning for his error by a life sentence in the State penetentiary.

After the death of Ketchel, a flock of middleweights appeared, some of them, it must be said, extremely good. There are several men now grabbing at the championship who would have been well up in the "off season" of some years ago, but who would look very weak if forced to fight a Ketchel or a Fitzsimmons. Papke, though still young, has never fully regained the speed and fighting fury of his ante-Ketchel days. Billy has been boxing with credit in Paris, but his showings in America and Australia have been very poor. Papke is a handsome, well-knit chap, with a short uppercut that wreaks fearful havoc, and marvelous mixing ability in the clinches.

Frank Klaus, a sturdy German, has shown well in many battles, looks as if he should at least be given a fair chance for the honors, and, like Papke, has done some of his best fighting in France.

Jack Dillon, of Indianapolis, is a veritable fighting machine—a human bull, advancing like a landslide, and raining blows with either glove. Dillon lacks footwork and a defense from straight jabs, but can take care of himself with any mixing, mauling adversary.

Eddie McGoorty, of Oshkosh, Wis., is the cleverest of the modern middleweights, and has of late been showing a far heavier punch than he was formerly credited with. He really looks about the best of the 158 pounders now in the game, but cannot logically claim any pre-eminent honors till he has beaten the other fellows in elimination tourneys.

Jimmy Clabby, a second McCoy in in looks and fighting style, may yet prove a star in the middleweight division, and there are a few others here and there, who are rising to the surface. The class, however, one of the most glorious of all the divisions, is still without an actual leader, and has no Ryan, no Fitzsimmons and no Ketchel in its platoons.

The greatest middleweight under London rules: Tom Sayers.

The greatest middleweight under Queensberry rules: Bob Fitzsimmons.

The greatest middleweight of all: Take your choice between them.

(In the next installment of this great series Mr. Phelon will discuss the greatest Lightweight of all time.)

This is a type of article which we believe should appeal to all red-blooded lovers of athletic sport. Boxing has been much criticized, and it has many defects which should be and, we believe, are being overcome. But whatever its defects, there is a fascination in the exploits of the old ring generals which will always exert a strong appeal.

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