LOU HOUSEMAN'S GOSSIP

THE PUGILISTIC WORLD WATCHING AFFAIRS AT CINCINNATI WITH KEEN INTEREST

YANGER BOUT FELL THROUGH

San Francisco Now Offers the Best Opportunities for the Game—Dixon to Fight Once More.

CHICAGO, Feb. 9.—(Special.)—Cincinnati is still the cynosure of the pugilistic world, and the proceedings of the courts are watched with more than passing interest. It is not only a question of the validity of a statute of the state of Ohio, nor yet of the moral effects of boxing contests such as are permitted under section 6890, but it is a matter which concerns the rights of the executive officers of the state and the city of Cincinnati. The givernor's threat to send the state militia to prevent the contest taking place is a somewhat unusual one, inasmuch as precedent shows that whenever the necessity existed for calling out the militia the executive of the municipality has been the one to call on the governor for aid, and then only when such means as were at his disposal had been exhausted. Cincinnati is a large city and is amply provided with the necessary machinery for the enforcement of the laws, and it certainly looks strange that the mayor is not in a better position to judge of the necessity for calling in military aid, inasmuch as the powers of the city have not been called on nor exhausted.

However, this is a matter of law, and no doubt the courts will decide as to what should be done. The confidence of the reform element, though, does not appear to be of an over-weening quality, as instead of proceeding under the objectionable statute which in controversy the action has been begun under the common law, and the evidence produced has been for the sole purpose of showing that a "prize fight" is a nuisance. The license issued is for a boxing contest under a statute permitting such exhibitions before regularly organized athletic clubs. That the match between Jeffries and Ruhlin is for a boxing contest there is no doubt, inasmuch as the agreement calls for a bout under the Marquis of Queensberry rules, and those rules were formulated for boxing contests in contradistinction to the then existing prize fight rules known as "London prize ring rules." The conditions are entirely different, and with the rounds limited in number a contest between two skillful men can no more be compared to a prize fight than to tiddle-de-winks.

The Saengerfest people feel confident of their ability to bring off the contest despite the efforts of the opposition. The judgment of the court will probably not be the final act in the controversy in view of the governor's avowed intention to stop the fight by legal or other means.

The controversy over the Jeffries-Ruhlin contest appears to be but a reflex of the sentiment in almost every part of the country. Slowly, but surely, city after city is closing its doors to the knights of the padded mitts, and the course of the pugilistic umpire is taking a westward slant. Driven from New York and most of the Eastern states, stumbling in Ohio, and most incontinently kicked out of Illinois, some more favored territory will have to be found before the game can be considered as secure. But is this doing anything to elevate the sport or reform the communities from which it is barred? As under the favored laws of the past few years the sport was put in a position where the boxer might elevate the game to a point on a level with that of any other sport in which professional athletes engage. But they missed the opportunity, and instead of building up their chosen occupation they killed the sport in certain communities, and as the public at large were treated with long dissertations on "crooked" fights, the howl became general, and the goody-goody element in society seized on this as an excuse for knocking out the game, and have succeeded in many places.

This has had but one effect, and from different parts of the country come reports of "bush" fights, with their pernicious surroundings, and it will not be at all surprising to hear in the near future of a return to the old bare-knuckle game with its attendant brutality. Men will fight and always have done so, and if they are not allowed to engage in mimic contests with the gloves they will not hesitate to enter the ring in a contest with the bare 'uns. Last week there were a number of contests in barns and outhouses, and the governor has taken a hand, but how much better it would be if such contests were permitted under proper restrictions before suitable clubs and regulated by competent officials. The chance of injury is minimized when the sport is properly regulated and such accidents as are likely to occur in barn fights, where the proper appliances are not at hand, are almost impossible.

* * *

The local fighters, in default of matches before any regularly organized club here, are picking up such game as may be offered from other cities. Tommy Ryan has several matches in sight, the first being before the Louisville Athletic club, with Tommy West, on March 4, and afterwards will meet "Kid" Carter, in Hartford, Conn. He says that after that he will take on Jack Root and Jack Moffat, and, if he is successful with them, he will withdraw from the game for good. Tommy has been fighting for almost fifteen years, and has beaten the best men in his class. The only decisive defeats he has met with have been at the hands of his old sparring partner, "Kid" McCoy. He is one of the cleverest men in the ring and thoroughly game. In spite of these facts, however, if he carries out the programme he has mapped out before he quits the game, he will certainly have his hands full. All the men are much heavier than Ryan, and all are clever, hard-hitting boxers, and are likely to give good accounts of themselves, if they do not win. Root fought a draw with him of six rounds' duration, and many who witnessed the go were of the opinion that Root had the best of it. Carter is a sturdy young fellow not yet twenty years of age, but is regarded as a comer, and West and Moffat are too well known to need much introduction. It may be, however, that Ryan's determination to quit the ring may be altered before he finishes up this quartette of middleweights.

* * *

Again has the Yanger match fallen through. This time the contest arranged for between the "Tipton Slasher" and Ole Olson is to be declared off. The fight had been scheduled for Minneapolis, but Benny got vaccinated, and his arm is too sore to admit of his engaging in a boxing match. Olson is a good, clever man, and perhaps better able to meet the little Italian than any who have met him in the past, his stocky build probably giving him an advantage that none of Benny's taller opponents have possessed. It is, therefore, a little bit unfortunate that it should necessary to call this go off, as there is no doubt of its being an interesting affair if it takes place. With all the challenges and matchmaking that has taken place in connection with the "Tipton Slasher" it certainly seems peculiar that it is impossible to get him in the ring in recent days.

* * *

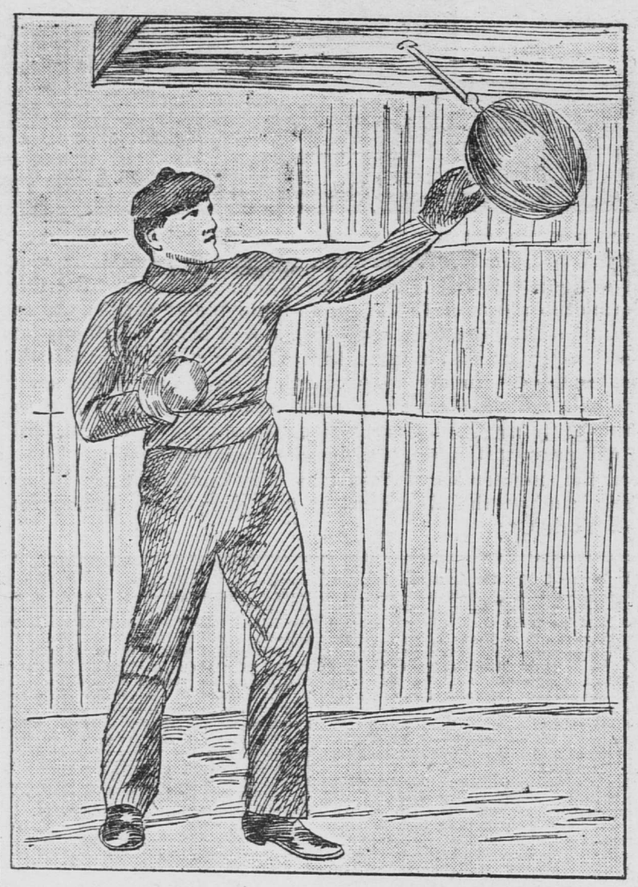
On Thursday last Jim Kennedy, accompanied by George McFadden, the lightweight, and his trainer, Billy Roche, stopped off in Chicago on their way to San Francisco. McFadden goes to the coast to meet Dal Hawkins before the Twentieth Century Athletic club. McFadden is a tough proposition for anyone to handle. He is within one or two men of the championship of his class. But Dal, too, is a good one, and should be able to stand off the heavy-hitting Brooklyn boy with his superior cleverness. Dal is a graceful and willing fighter, as scientific as anyone in the ring. In all his fights in Chicago he has won the admiration of the followers of the game by his gentlemanly and courteous behavior. McFadden is not so well known in the West, but has earned a splendid reputation East, and appears to be a quiet, unassuming young fellow with a determined jaw and sturdy build. He looks the fighter, and no doubt will give Dal all he can do to attend to his knitting.

* * *

San Francisco appears to have become the Mecca of fighters these days. Frank Erne, the lightweight champion, is the latest addition to the pugilistic colony. He is heavy now, but is looking for a go with Terry McGovern. The chances of a contest between the two at this time, however, are remote, as Harris, Terry's manager has announced that the Brooklyn boy will not meet anyone at over 126 pounds. There may be a chance for Erne getting on a match with McFadden, another Eastern addition to the boxers at the Golden Gate. McFadden lost a decision once to Erne in a twenty-five round fight, and Joe Gans afterwards beat him, but he has been improving of late, and a match between Erne and he should be a good one. As they are both on the coast it might be well to match either him or Dal Hawkins, whichever may be the winner of the fight of Feb. 28, before one of the 'Frisco clubs.

—L. M. Houseman.

CHAMPION JEFFRIES AT HIS TRAINING WORK.



WHILE PREPARING FOR HIS MATCH AT CINCINNATI THE BIG BOILERMAKER HAS HAD PLENTY OF HARD LUCK, BUT IS GETTING INTO FINE CONDITION. MUCH OF HIS WORK HAS BEEN DONE INDOORS.

SCORES OF THE BOWLERS.

Excitement in Pfister League Contest Is Increasing.

As the season progresses excitement becomes more intense in the Pfister league. The Kangaroos, who have been having hard luck, have found the "groove" and are now bowling in excellent form. Friday night they defeated the St. Anthony hill team by 342 pins. E. Jharkin making high score, 206, and high average, 189 1-3.

The following are the scores in detail:

Kangaroo—

	1	2	3
Larkin	206	161	201
Cole	160	140	192
McKay	127	149	164
Bither	177	180	191
Frost	105	190	149
Totals	775	820	897

Grand total, 2,492.

St. Anthony Hill—

	1	2	3
Mahler, F.	144	150	123
French	103	133	179
Dorsey	136	182	169
O'Brien	105	115	152
Reilly	149	136	163
Totals	637	716	787

Grand total, 2,150.

Standing of Clubs—

Clubs.	Played.	Won.	Lost.	Per Ct.
Crawfords	8	7	1	.875
Amateur A. Assn	7	4	3	.571
Khaki	8	4	4	.500
Gophers	6	3	3	.500
Kangaroo	8	4	4	.500
Golden Rule	9	4	5	.444
Capital City	9	4	5	.444
St. Anthony Hill	7	1	6	.143

The next game will be bowled Tuesday night between the Gophers and the Amateur Athletic Association club.

BOXING FOR CLUB MEMBERS.

Amateur Athletic Club Arranges Entertainment for Thursday.

The Amateur Athletic club will give a boxing and wrestling entertainment on Thursday evening of this week, exclusively for its members. The programme is nearly completed, and includes the following numbers: Wrestling, between Whitmore and McAuley and Koen and McAuley; boxing between George O'Brien and John Moe, and Jack Daly and Charles Williams; horse and buck work by George Sudheimer and Frank Perkins; bag punching, George O'Brien; club swinging, John Moe; class work, under direction of Prof. B. Low.

The Twin City Mandolin club will furnish the music, and the programme is in charge of Porf. Jack Murphy, boxing instructor of the club.

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PROGRESS OF PROCEEDINGS IN JEFFRIES-RUHLIN INJUNCTION CASE AT CINCINNATI

MADDEN AGAIN ON THE STAND

Boxing Impressario Tells a Few Things About the Repeal of the Horton Law in New York.

CINCINNATI, Feb. 9.—William A. Brady took the stand today in the hearing for an injunction against the proposed Jeffries-Ruhlin boxing contest in this city Feb. 15. He was the last witness for the defense, and at the conclusion of his testimony the defense rested its case. Lawrence Maxwell at noon began a closing argument for the plaintiffs. It was the understanding that each side should have four hours for closing their cases.

When the hearing was resumed today "Billy" Madden was recalled by the defense and further elucidated the alleged difference between boxing contests and prize fights. He declared that a prize fighter, or a West Point cadet used the bare knuckles, while boxers wear gloves.

William A. Brady was then called to the stand. As Jeffries' manager he declared that the would-be contestants were the best of friends and would not injure each other. He told of the Fitzsimmons-Corbett fight at Carson City, showed how Corbett dropped to his knees, sustained no injury, and "was not knocked out." He vouchsafed the statement that Corbett

"IS A MODEL GENTLEMAN."

Audiences at boxing contests were of as high a class as at the theaters, adding he had seen Vice President-elect Roosevelt at a sparring match in New York. Cross-examination on this statement brought out the fact, however, that Gov. Roosevelt afterwards signed the bill repealing the Horton law. Brady insisted, however, that the Horton law had been repealed because the staff of a New York newspaper had been refused tickets to the boxing contests.

In dilating on the statement that Jeffries and Ruhlin are big and strong, but scientific boxers, Brady illustrated his talk with an exhibition of the various points of boxing, including a clinch and breakaway with one of the attorneys, much to the amusement of the crowd which packed the room.

ARGUMENTS BEGUN.

Lawrence Maxwell, in opening the arguments for the injunction, cited many authorities on public nuisances and defined the greatest of all nuisances as that of the premeditated violation of law in defiance of the governor and the whole power of the state. He insisted that the mayor could not give a legal permit for a nuisance or any unlawful thing. He ridiculed Madden and Brady in their distinction between a prize fight and a boxing match, and he insisted that at any such event at which a prize was offered was a prize fight. Maxwell was very severe on the members of the Saengerfest Athletic association, under whose auspices Jeffries and Ruhlin and Martin and Childs are to meet next Friday night. He showed that three of these members were presidents of national banks, one a Sunday school superintendent, and others members of churches and leading business firms, and insisted that the high standing of these men could not be held in justification of crime or any violation of law. Maxwell referred to the Debs strikes in 1894, when these same men favored so-called

"GOVERNMENT BY INJUNCTION,"

and now bitterly opposed it. He referred to the action of Judson Harmon, who was attorney general of the United States in 1894 and was now associate counsel for this injunction. Maxwell insisted that the Saengerfest Athletic club was simply getting 50 per cent for their "pull" with the mayor. Otherwise, Managers Brady and Madden would simply have rented the hall.

Judge Peck replied vigorously to what he termed "Maxwell's tirade upon public-spirited citizens," such as the members of the association, who had been the promoters of various things for the city and who were recognized as leading business men. Judge Peck insisted that the athletic association was organized in good faith and not solely for the purpose of securing the mayor's permit for the Jeffries-Ruhlin contest. He argued that his clients had carefully proceeded according to law in organizing the Saengerfest Athletic association, in securing the permit of the mayor and in all their arrangements and that they would continue to do so and hold the boxing contest next Friday night. He showed the history of boxing from the earliest days of the Anglo-Saxons and insisted that his clients were proposing an exhibition of the ancient art under modern laws. He denied that any property or personal rights were or would be interfered with.

COURT'S AUTHORITY DENIED.

Judge Peck, in denying the jurisdiction of a court of equity, asked why the plaintiffs did not proceed in the criminal court, secure the sheriff's posse, arrest Brady, Madden, Cook and others connected with the training, as well as the contestants. Maxwell argued for an hour. Peck argued for almost two and a half hours, and was followed by Attorney General Sheets, who appealed for the honor of the state that an injunction be issued against the fight. He cited the action of other states and other courts and insisted that the same pleas for boxing contests had been made in other states when prize fights were really intended, and he hoped the law would not be violated under such false pretenses in Ohio.

It was almost 6 o'clock when Judge Sheets concluded and court adjourned until 10 o'clock on Monday. It was decided that each side would have four hours for arguments. Maxwell and Sheets consumed one hour and a fourth for the plaintiffs and Peck two hours and one-fourth for the defendants, leaving two and three-fourth hours on Monday for Judge Harmon, and Gustavus Wald, who will deliver arguments for the state, and one and three-fourth hours for Hertenstein and Bettinger, who will deliver arguments for the defendants. As there remains four and a half hours for arguments on Monday, it is not expected now that a decision will be reached before next Wednesday. Meantime, all the preparations, as well as the training, are proceeding for the contest the same as if no injunction proceedings were pending or no opposition from the governor was expected. The sale of tickets continues as brisk as if no obstruction was expected. The hall is completed, so that a big performance will take place in it tonight, under the auspices of the German singing societies and the turners.

ONE MORE WEEK OF HANDBALL.

Tourney Is Nearly Over—Winners Are Already Known.

The handball tournament which has been in progress at the Amateur Athletic club for the past few months will close this week. Over 250 games have been played up to date in class "A." Swanson and Jennings practically have first place, having won ten straight games, while Fitzgibbons and Nelson are a close second, having won ten series and lost one.

In class "B" Cornig and Stout have a "cinch" for first place, their percentage being 1,000, and Berthal and Laird for second place, having won all the games played but one.

The scores for last night's games were as follows:

Class "A"—Fitzgibbons and Nelson won from Murphy and Heidenrich by a score of 21-13 and 21-10.

Class "B"—Corning and Stout won from Burroughs and Barron by a score of 21-6, 21-13 and 19-21, and from Dodds and Snyder by a score of 21-12 and 21-19.

Still More Counterfeiting.

The Secret Service has unearthed another band of counterfeiters, and secured a large quantity of bogus bills, which are so cleverly executed that the average person would never suspect them of being spurious. Things of great value are always selected for imitation, notably Hostetter's Stomach Bitters, which has many imitators, but few equals for disorders like indigestion, dyspepsia, constipation, nervousness and general debility. Always go to reliable druggists who have the reputation of giving what you ask for.

NATIONAL REPORTER'S TOURNEY.

Parnell and Taylor Were Winners in Last Night's Whist Game.

Parnell and Taylor won high score at the third game of the National Reporter Whist club last night, with 7 2-9 points above the average. The score and players follow:

East and West—

Cakey and Olson	177
Nelson, F. C., and Dehzer	186
Blodgett and Brouillett	183
Hart and McKernan	177
MacLean and Corfe	183
Strong C. D., and Francis, J. H.	176
Nelson, C. E., and Renstrom	181
Ives and Strong, W. L.	179
Richards and Templeman	171
Totals	1,613

Averages, 179 2-9.

North and South—

Morey and Hajeck	178
Parnell and Taylor	179
Stierle and Welters	168
Deggendorf and Brandhorst	165
Koempel, F. P., and Sutton	173
Borscht and Jansen	168
Koempel, W., and Francis, J. H.	173
Stutsman and Friend	171
McNamara and Salmon	171
Total	1,546

Averages, 171 7-9.

EASY FOR THE GOPHERS.

Iowa Basketball Team Beaten by 38 to 5.

The University of Minnesota basketball team won from Iowa yesterday by a score of 38 to 5. The game from start to finish was the cleanest and hottest contest that has been seen on the armory floor this season. Iowa put up a hard fight, but was no match for Minnesota. She was clearly outclassed and outplayed, but took defeat well.

In speaking of the game last night, Williams, the left forward for Iowa, said:

"Minnesota has the fastest team I ever saw, and every members is a perfect gentleman. Their massing is superb."

Early in the game Minnesota took the lead, and the ball was in Iowa's territory most of the time.

The first half closed with Iowa having 2 points, both won on free throws, and Minnesota 13. In the second half it was even easier, Minnesota running up 25 points to Iowa's 3.

SCRAP AT 'FRISCO.

Tanforan and Oakland Tracks Will Both Run This Week.

SAN FRANCISCO, Feb. 9.—There will be racing at both the Tanforan and Oakland track next week. The only feature of the war between the two tracks today was the address of Prince Poniatowski, president of the San Francisco Jockey club, to the horsemen at Tanofran. He defined the position of his association, and told the owners that they must choose between the two tracks. Horses racing at Oakland would not be allowed to run at Tanforan. He further said that no agreement between the two associations had been broken, as the contract between the Western Turf association and the Pacific Coast Jockey club was not binding on the San Francisco Jockey club. President Williams, of the Pacific Coast Jockey club will address the horsemen and jockeys tonight, setting forth the position of the Oakland track officials. The Tanforan people issued their entry card for Monday tonight, but entries for the Oakland track will not close until tomorrow afternoon.

Tod Sloan an Owner.

SAN FRANCISCO, Feb. 9.—The hurdle event today was marred by an accident. Lomo fell at the last jump, breaking his back. He was destroyed. Jockey D. Henry escaped with a shaking up. Credo won the race for his new owner, Tod Sloan. The Lady also started in the colors of Sloan, but was beaten by Vulcain. Janice took the California Oaks from Maesa, who led most of the way. Four favorites won. William Cahill today sold Rolling Boer to Sam Hildreth for $7,500, with the provision that he will receive $1,000 more if the colt wins the California Derby. Summaries:

First race, six furlongs, selling—Torsina won, Boundless second, Highhoe third. Time, 1:17¼.

Second race, mile, selling—Wyoming won, Handicapper second, Ownesboro third. Time, 1:47½.

Third race, hurdle handicap, mile and three-quarters—Credo won, J C C second, Nestor third. Time, 3:27.

Fourth race, the California Oaks, mile and an eighth—Janice won, Maresa second, Edna Brown third. Time, 2.00.

Fifth race, mile and a sixteenth, handicap—Vulvain won, The Lady second, Scotch Plaid third. Time, 1:51.

Sixth race, seven furlongs, selling—Ada N won, Dandy Jim second, Benota third. Time, 1:31.

No More Fights in Illinois.

METROPOLIS, Ill., Feb. 9.—Gov. Yates' action regarding prize fights has put a stop to the sport here. A fight between Jack Smith, of Paducah, Ky., and Tounie Walsh, of Chicago, which was to have taken place in this city tonight, was stopped by the sheriff. The managers immediately secured a boat and went across the Ohio river to Kentucky, where the fight was pulled off without further molestation.

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HOT GAME OF STUD POKER

WAS PLAYED TO ACCOMMODATE AN AMBITIOUS STRANGER IN ARKANSAS CITY

ONE MAN'S USELESS EFFORT

Tried to Do Up the Town in Various Ways, but He Had the Customary Finish.

"It sure is miraculous," said old man Greenhut, "that Arkansas City hain't been wiped out years ago; there's been so many good men tackled the job one time or another. I never knowed just why it was nor still less I couldn't never understand how 'twas none of 'em ever got away with the proposition, but somehow or other, just as things looks the darkest come capable citizens always jumps in, just at the nick o' time, an' comes to the help o' the Lord against the mighty, an' the very cleverest buccaneers that ever comes here goes down like mullein stalks in a cyclone.

"Whether it's fightin' or hoss-stealin' or poker is their game, they gets beat ignominious an' either leaves town for the buryin' ground or some other place where there's less excitement than there is here, or else they makes up their minds to stay here an' grow up with the town. Some o' the very best citizens we has in the place come on a errand o' plunder an' destruction when they first arrove, but they settled down here after they'd learned the great natural advantages o' the city.

"There ain't no crossroads gambler ever come here an' got away with the town's money, though some of 'em has made a powerful stagger at it at times, an' sim'lar, there ain't no bully ever traveled the river but what he stacked up against a little harder proposition than he was lookin' for when he tackled Arkansas City, an' we sure have had calls from some o' the best equipped fighters on the hull Mississip'.

"Seein' that all this is true, an' all the oldest citizens o' the place knows it sure is true, it does seem cur'ous that fellers will keep tryin' it from time to time. Take the matter of poker, which I reckon is the leadin' industry o' the place, leastways it brings more money into the town than any other, an' it's prob'ly true that the very best poker that's played anywhere on the river is played right here in this town. That's what brings good players here, I reckon, for every blamed one of 'em is just yearnin' for the distinction o' doin' up Arkansas City."

The old man paused after this, says the New York Sun, and looked meditatively out of the window for a few moments before saying anything more. Then he chuckled to himself as if at some particularly amusing recollection, and walking slowly around to his favorite seat he pulled out a fresh cigar and, lighting it, smoked until it was burning satisfactorily.

Then he said: "There was a feller come here about ten years ago that provided all the excitement we wanted for somethin' like a week. His name was Blenkinsop, or leastways he said it was, an' there didn't nobody take pains to find out the truth. He was sure a stayer. I don't remember any other stranger inside of a good many more years than that that lasted for a week, but Blenkinsop was sure a sandy cuss, an' he had a wad with him when he came that was thicker than his leg.

"He struck the town some different from the most that comes. Most gen'ly they comes in quiet, and makes acquaintances sort 'o gradual, keepin' their eyes peeled for chances, an' lookin' out for the best men to know, but Blenkinsop didn't. He comes off the boat a hootin' an' a hollerin' like a nigger preacher at campmeeting. 'Peered he'd been loadin' up for two days on the boat an' he had a most genteel jag right along with him when he got off.

"He grabbed the first man he met and shook both his hands like he was his lost brother an' told him who he was an' asked him to drink before the feller knowed what had struck him. An' inside o' fifteen minutes Blenkensop had twenty-four o' the best citizens of the place ranged up alongside o' my bar drinkin' red liquor as friendly as kittens over a pan o' milk.

"He kept that up all night the first night, an' just about sun-up he said he wanted to go to bed. 'Taint that I'm anyways sleepy,' he said, sort o' like he was apologizin', 'but if I don't get some sleep once in a while I ain't no good.' So there was a delegation took him over the hotel an' put him to bed. He ordered up a couple o' rounds while they was undressin' him, an' made 'em all promise to meet him later in the day when he'd had a little slumber.

"I don't reckon he slept much, for the landlord said he called for a drink about once an hour after that, an' he had a free an' easy way o' callin' the nigger that was a little unusual even in Arkansas City. Wouldn't ring the bell. The rope hung right alongside his bed, but he said 'twas too much trouble to reach for it, so he just fired his gun when he wanted anything. They didn't like it much in the house, but he said he'd pay for everything, so everything went.

"Well, he kept that sort o' thing up for about three days. He'd come over here to my place, 'long about noon, or a little later, an' keep things going till daybreak, payin' for everything like a real gentleman, an' puttin' away more red liquor than was really good for his constitution. It didn't seem to have no great effect on him, though.

"He was good and drunk when he came, but he didn't get no drunker, an' he knowed what he was doin' an' sayin' all right, all the time. Some few of the boys was seein' bugs by the end o' the three days, but Blenkensop wasn't no nearer to them than he had been at first an' toward the end o' the third day he 'peared to get a little discouraged like.

"At last he came to me an' called me one side, an' he says: 'I reckon 'taint no use, Greenhut, I started in to get the hull town drunk,' he says, 'but I hain't laid out more'n twelve or fifteen men, an' I reely believe the strain is beginn'n to tell on me. I don't reckon I c'd keep this up more'n three or four days longer, an' there's men here,' he says, 'that seems to stand it as well as I do. I reckon I'd better try somethin' else. Does anyone around here play poker?'

"Well, when he said that, I seen his game all right. I'd been a thinkin' up to that time that he was just a blowin' hisself on the strength o' havin' made a good stake somewheres up the river, for I knowed he was a gambler, well enough. I'd heer'd of him afore, an' besides that I c'd tell by his looks an' ways. But when he as't about poker I was lookin' straight at him, an' I could see that all this bottle play was a part of his little scheme, so I answered him sort o' crafty.

"'I just says to him, 'I don't reckon I'd give in for a day or two yet,' I says. 'It's true enough that the hull town ain't drunk yet, but several o' the most responsible citizens is done for, an' if you're half as husky as you 'pear to be you'll have a lot more of 'em on the run in a couple of days.

"'Just nat'rally I was wil'in' to see him keep a goin'. It made business good an' I knowed he must have a reasonable wad left, on account of his wantin' to play poker. Besides, I knowed the capacity of some o' the men in Arkansas City better'n he did, an' I was lookin' to see them knock him out over the bar. It wouldn't ha' proved much, perhaps, but it would ha' been a credit to the city.

"'Twarn't no use, though. He was wide awake, even if he was loaded, an' he insisted that he wanted to switch off from liquor to cards. 'Course,' he says, 'if they ain't nobody here thet plays a good game o' poker, why, there won't be no fun a playin', but I'd kind o' like to set into a good stiff game.'

"Well, just naturally that stirred me up some. I wan't likely to let no stranger make little o' the fair name of Arkansas City, even if it did interfere some with trade. Besides the game was likely to be played in my place an' I always look after the kitty myself. So I says:

"'There is poker played in town sometimes, an' if you're really hell-bent on playin' I reckon there's some o' the boys will accommodate you with a game.'

"It didn't look like a very hard proposition to go against a man that had been drinkin' like Blenkinsop had, an' I wa'nt as particular as I'd oughter been in makin' up the party that night. There was three or four pretty good players in the room an' I just passed 'em the word an' in a few minutes they was settin' comfortable in the back room wtih cards an' chips, makin' up a game to suit. There was some talk of a limit, but Blenkinsop wouldn't listen to it.

"'I used to play a limit game at school,' he says, with a nasty sneer, 'but I left that an' marbles behind me when I growed up.'

"One or two of 'em was willin' to play sky high, but Jake Winterbottom he said he wan't feelin' very well, an' table stakes was rich enough for him, so table stakes was fixed, nobody makin' no great objections to that. They flashed up five hundred apiece, an' the play began. There was six in the game, so that made three thousand to play for.

"Well, it sure did seem sinful the way that Blenkinsop got away with them five Arkansas City men. Mind you, I ain't sayin' he played crooked, even after all that happened. I never say anything about a man when he ain't present that I wouldn't say to his face, an' no man never ought to make that statement 'thout he's ready to back it up in case the other feller takes it up as o' course he will if he's anything of a man, an' takin' all things into consideration, I don't reckon I'd hanker for a fight with Blenkinsop. I ain't as young as I was.

"But, without casting no reflection on the character of his play, I must say that Blenkinsop was one o' the best dealers that ever got off at Arkansas City. He were more than a match for them five, even if they did understand each other's game better'n Blenkinsop, bein' a stranger, nat'rally would.

"He was crafty, too, an' he never did no plungin' on a good hand 'thouten he'd dealt it himself, an' 'twan't no good givin' him a full house when he hadn't no means o' satisfyin' himself that there wa'n't four of a kind out against him.

"Just naturally he didn't get away with the whole three thousand that night. The boys was cunnin' enough to see they was up against it, 'thout droppin' all they had, but he won close onto fifteen hundred before they saw 'twas no use, an' one by one reckoned they'd had enough. Jake Winterbottom he come to me after the game broke up an' spoke quite nasty. I don't reckon I'd ha took it f'm everybody, but Jake an' I was old friends.

"'Pears to me,' he says, 'that we was led like lambs to the slaughter, an' stead o' feastin' on this here Blenkinsop, like we had a right to expect after you proposin' of a game, we was merely seemin' to provide him with means for continuin' his carousin'.'

"There wa'n't no use quarrelin' over it, so I spoke gentle to Winterbottom. 'There's no denyin',' I says, 'that he is one o' the toughest propositions that struck Arkansas City for some years. But this here game,' I says, 'will just naturally whet his appetite an' by tomorrow night,' I says, 'I think we can manage to make him see the error o' his ways.'

"Well, o' course, there wa'n't no difficulty in gettin' Blenkinsop to play the next night. He were just hungry for it, an' when he see that none o' the men that was in the game the night afore was showin' up, he grinned pleasant enough. I knowed what he were thinkin' o', but I didn't say nothin'. It were too serious a matter for jokin' an' I didn't feel altogether sure o' the game, even if the five best players in Arkansas City had gotten together to meet him.

"I might ha' knowed, though, that there wa'n't no player on the river could got away with that proposition. It took about four hours, for Blenkinsop was a man as could play as well with a jag as he could plumb sober. I don't know but he could play better that way, but anyway he was a good one. The boys had him, though, an' when that game broke up he had dropped his fifteen hundred velvet an' about four thousand more. It were a most satisfactory sittin'.

He didn't squeal. Peared like he had more sense than most, even if he did keep pourin' in red liquor 'most amazin'.' He didn't get no drunker, nor yet he didn't seem to sober up on it, but the next night when somebody said somethin' about cads he spoke up just as frank an' open as he had to me about his drinkin'.

"'Pears like I ain't strong enough f r this crowd,' he says, and we couldn't help likin' him for the way he talked. There wa'n't no false pride about him. He says, 'I started in to get you all drunk, an' I found you could outdrink me. I thought I could do you up at poker, an' I ain't one, two, three, six with the outfit, but there's one thing about me, I know when I'm outclassed an' I don't run in any race when the handicap's too heavy. But,' he says, 'there's one thing I will do. I've got about two thousand in my jeans yet an' I'll gave a go at stud poker, table stakes, with anybody in town.'

"Well, now, as a general thing when anybody comes to Arkansas City an' talks about stud poker he doesn't rouse no enthusiasm. I ain't sayin' nothin' against the game as a game, but 'tain't the game. It's good trainin' for those as is studyin' the reel principles o' draw poker, an' a man can pick up a good many p'ints of a first-class eddication f'rm studyin' the cards as they come in stud.

"But when it comes to reel scientific play, it stands to reason there ain't nothin' that goes in the same class with draw. An' as Arkansas City feels a proper pride in the scientific character of her card playin', it also stands to reason that stud poker ain't a popular pastime.

"When a dead game sport like Blenkinsop, though, talks the way he did, an' owns right up like a man that he's outclassed in the reel scientific game an' asks for a show at something else, it stands to reason that he'd oughter have a chance, that is, if there's anybody 'round that thinks he can beat him.

"Anyways, the boys thought they'd give him a throw for his money an' they started a game of stud, with five in the game an' say, it were the swiftest game I ever see played. Somehow the devil himself seemed to be in the cards, an' all of the surprisin' hands that ever showed up together, them that showed that night was the most amazin'.

"The first clash that came was when Jake Winterbottom had two pairs, kings up, showin', with a king buried, an' Blenkinsop had three fours exposed. It were Blenkinsop's bet an' he passed the bet. All the others was out.

"Well, just naturally, Jake he bet a hundred dollars, thinkin' he had the pot, anyhow, an' Blenkinsop would call him, supposin' he was bluffin', but that w'an't what Blenkinsop did.

"He studied the two hands for a while as if he was in doubt whether to bluff or not, an' then he raised a thousand. Jake only had nine hundred in front of him, an' feeling' morally certain it were a bluff he called for a show for his money. Then Blenkinsop showed up the fourth four an' Jake was out o' the game.

"The very next deal Blaisdell was handlin' the cards an' three aces showed up on the second round, George Masters held the first, Blenkinsop the second and Blaisdell the third. George put up $5, an' Hanway, he was settin' next, he chipped in, havin' a queen showin'. Blenkinsop an' Blaisdell both come in, o' course, havin' aces.

"On the next round Masters he got a ten, Hanway got a seven, Blenkinsop a king an' Blaisdell caught a deuce. As it turned out, Masters had a ten buried an' Hanway had a seven, so when Blenkinsop put up $10 they all come in except Blaisdell. He figgered that he had no show for another ace, an' 'twan't no place for him.

"On the next round Masters caught another ten, Hanway caught a queen an' Blenkinsop a five. It were Hanway's bet, an' he put up ten. The others come in without raisin', an' Blaisdell give out the other cards. Masters got an eight. Hanway a trey an' Blenkinsop a six, so Hanway had first say.

"He passed the bet an' so did Blenkinson, an' Masters havin' three tens bet a hundred, Hanway with queens up called, an' Blenkinsop raised it a thousand again. His four cards in sight was all clubs, an' he was either bluffin' or had a flush.

"Masters thought he was a bluffin' an' he called. I don't say it was good play, but three tens look pretty big against a four flush. Anyhow, Hanway was out o' the game after that deal, for he was ten shy on the thousand dollar raise.

"That left three in the game an' there was four or five deals before there was any play. Then Blenkinsop was dealin' an' some more puzzlin' hands showed up, Blaisdell had aces an' sevens in sight, Masters had eight, nine, ten, queen, an' Blenkinsop had three trays, an' a nine spot. It looked like a place where he could be froze out by a little judicious betting, an' the boys went for him.

"It were his bet first, o' course, an' he put up 100. Both the others raised, Blaisdell putting up 200 and Masters 300. Blenkinsop studied a while an' then saw the raise. Then Blaisdell raised 200 and Masters 200 more, an' Blenkinsop did some more studyin'. Finally he come in, an' they both raised again.

"By this time there was a good bit o' money on the table, an' Blenkinsop didn't stop to study. He just shoved his pile into the pot.

"It was too hard for 'em, an' they both laid down, so we never knowed whether Blenkinsop had anything more than his three trays. My own belief is that he hadn't, an' I know that Masters had his straight all right, but I reckon I'd ha' laid down just as Masters did against that play. It were a good one whether it were a bluff or not.

"Anyhow, Blaisdell an' Masters was both pretty weak after that hand, not havin' more than seven or eight hundred between 'em, an' in twenty minutes more Blenkinsop had the hull o' that on showdowns, an' Arkansas City was fair beat on stud poker.

"Twa'nt so bad as if it had been draw, for there wa'nt the same discredit attachin' to it, as there would ha' been if it had been the regular game, but it was gallin' for fair to have a stranger do the town up like that, even after he'd throwed up the sponge like he did on drinkin' an' draw, an' we felt sore.

"Anyways, I don't think he would, an' he'd most likely ha' got away with his winnin's whenever he made up his mind to leave town if it hadn't happened, somehow, that he got mixed up in a fight inside of the next hour.

"I don't know just how it happened that the fight started, but there sure were a scrap. When the shootin' began, I got behind the bar, havin' a heal hy dislike for a shootin' scrape, 'thouten I get the drop first, an' somehow or another the lights was all out before anybody got shot much. But after the fight was over an' I'd lighted up again, Blenkinsop was the worst licked man I ever see that wa'n't shot nor stabbed.

"I doctored him up as well as I could an' he come to in about half an hour, but he hadn't no money on his person an' we never knowed what become of his wad, only that it didn't leave town when he did. He borrowed his fare to New Orleans from me, an' sent it back about two weeks later with a letter, sayin' that he didn't think he'd stack up against Arkansas City again."

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