

Larry Foley Schooling Would Have Helped Fred Fulton

BY J. B. SHERIDAN
THE recent death of Larry Foley in Australia and the Labor Day victory of Fred Fulton over Carl Morris at Canton, Ohio, turns one's fancy to thoughts of the boxers. The baseball season is over, the football season is not yet good and ripe, and it may be pleasant to cogitate a little on the exponents, past and present, of the manly art of self-defense.

Larry Foley was one of the makers of modern boxing. He conducted a boxing hall in Sidney, what the French call a "salle d'armes," in connection with his saloon and restaurant. He was a clever chap, with a head on him. Likeable, a good manager, a thinker, and he turned out some great boxers.

When all is said and done Foley's school was the connecting link between the old and the new in boxing. He taught what was best in the old school and invented many things that are now in the curriculum of the new school. He helped Sullivan to take boxing out of the slums and put it into the drawing rooms.

Thinking about Fulton, the newest thing in American pugilism, you think about Peter Jackson and Bob Fitzsimmons, and are once more driven to Foley's school of boxing. For it was there that Jackson, Fitzsimmons, Griffo, Dawson and a host of other celebrated boxers got their first lessons in the art of boxing. They were proper lessons, too. Out of that little boxing school came two of the greatest fighters and boxers the world has ever seen. Right here we may stop to say that the white man has no great cause to boast pugilistic excellence of his race. The greatest boxers have been negroes. If Peter Jackson was not the greatest of fist fighters, Jack Johnson undoubtedly was. The question of fist supremacy of all times lies between these two black, very black, men. There can be no doubt of that.

Jeffries Was a Leader.

Some years ago I went into pugilistic history as thoroughly as possible, and, using all available data to guide reason and logic, I was forced to arrive at the conclusion that, up to that time, James J. Jeffries was the greatest pugilist that had ever lived. Peter Jackson was a close second. This was before the day of Jack Johnson.

Later came Johnson with his decisive defeat of Jeffries. There are those who insist that Jeffries was far from being himself when Johnson beat him. There are others who insisted, long before Johnson and Jeffries ever met, that the black man was the white man's master in any number of rounds up to twenty. They figure that while Johnson would outpoint Jeffries in a short fight, James J. would wear down the negro in a long bout.

Granting that Johnson could beat Jeffries for twenty rounds, there has not been anything in Johnson's subsequent fights to lead anyone to believe that the negro would have failed to beat Jeffries in forty, fifty or any other number of rounds. This sets Jeffries back and fetches Johnson forward as the chief of all fist-fighting men.

I base my opinion of Jackson's greatness on Fitzsimmons' estimation of the black man. The world knows that Fitz was the greatest man of his weight the ring ever held. He was an utter stranger to fear. He met men 60 pounds heavier than himself, and took two cracks at Jeffries, the giant of them all.

Fitzsimmons, though, freely admitted that he would not enter the ring with Jackson. He took on Corbett, Maher, Choyanski, all the good men of his day, without a thought. He always conceded Jackson best.

"I'll fight any of them but the big smoke," Fitz cried in the early '90s when Jackson, Sullivan, Slavin, Goddard, Maher and other heavyweights were striding up and down the land.

Sound Style of Boxing.

Fitzsimmons knew Jackson from Larry Foley's school, and he did not wish any part of him.

Foley taught a sound style of boxing, the Mace, old-English school, the straight left, with the right cross, and no such thing as a swing, a hook or an uppercut. It was a beautiful and perfect style of boxing. The point of it was that you must be careful when, how and where you hit a man lest you hurt your own hands worse than you hurt him. That style made for clean, careful, accurate hitting, grace and finish.

Jackson was one of the prettiest hitters the ring ever saw, a long, perfect straight left, a sound right cross. Jackson acted like a master in the ring. He was a big, dignified negro, always deferential and polite. In a man-to-man way, not the servile Southern darky style. He seemed to dominate the ring when he entered it. He boxed pretty much as a hospitable

host serves dinner, with a dignity, a desire to serve, a grand air. He was always erect, cool, precise. He never missed with a wild punch, never fell into an ungraceful or undignified attitude, but was quite the fine gentleman through it all. The man was naturally well bred, a descendant of some African chief, no doubt, and he learned nothing that was to his disadvantage in Larry Foley's boxing school.

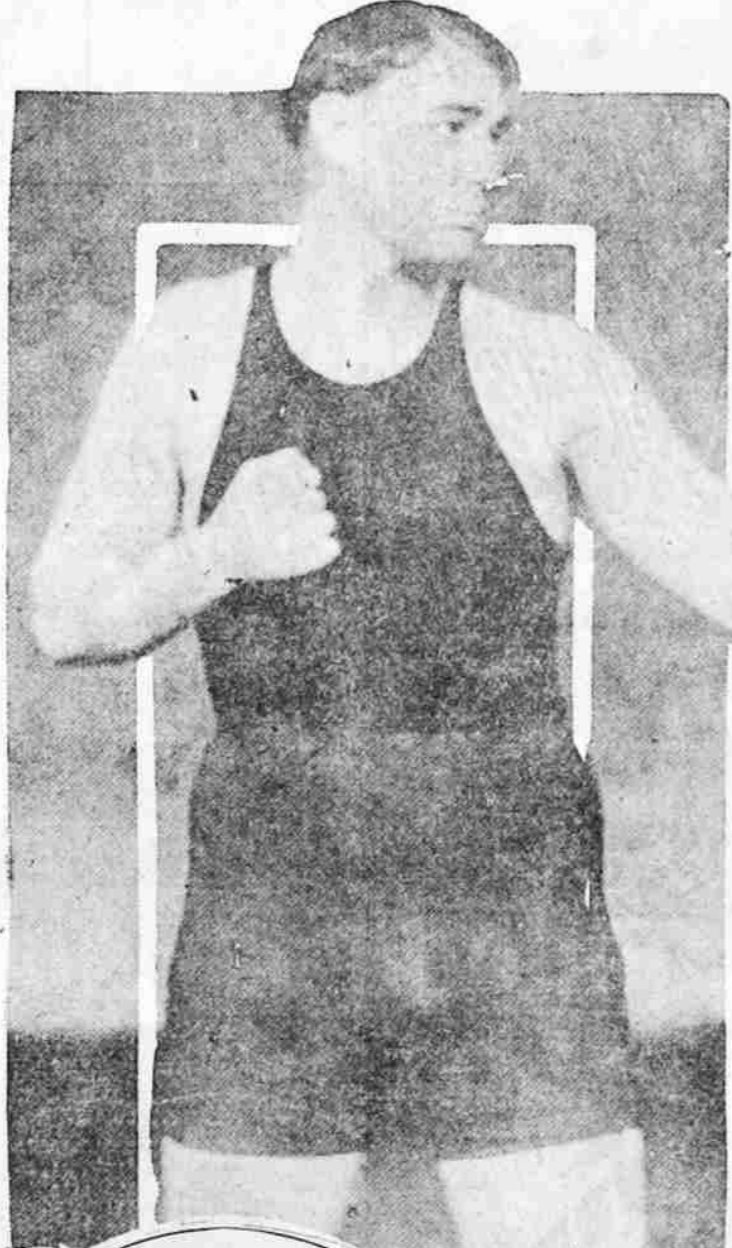
Fitzsimmons was not by nature adapted to the Foley methods, as was Jackson, but there was one thing that Foley always taught his pupils. That was to fight Fitzsimmons learned that as perfectly as Jackson learned the straight left and right cross. But Fitz never was a clean-cut Queensbury fighter that Jackson was. He was a straight-left and right-cross man until he came to the United States and picked up the wild swings made popular by John L. Sullivan. Fitz, who was an open-minded sort of chap, adopted the swings, more as fads than anything else. It was his straight left and right cross that saved him when Peter Maher caught him that unholly wallop under the ear at New Orleans in 1892 and almost destroyed

That the public exhibitions and

To turn out four such pastmasters inside of four years, or practically at the same time, was, indeed, a feat for one boxing school. Yet in the middle or early 90s Larry Foley practically supplied the champions of the world, and they were all in America, too. He had Jackson among the heavyweights Fitzsimmons among the middleweights, Dawson for the welterweights and Griffo among the light and featherweights, for, if he could have been got fit Griffo could have done 122 pounds. As it was, he fought at about 140, and beat all comers up to that weight. Then there was a chap named Abe Willis, from Foley's school that went a long way among the banquets. In fact, it took a good boy of the class of Cal McCarthy to take Willis' Australian law.

Influx from Australia Felt.

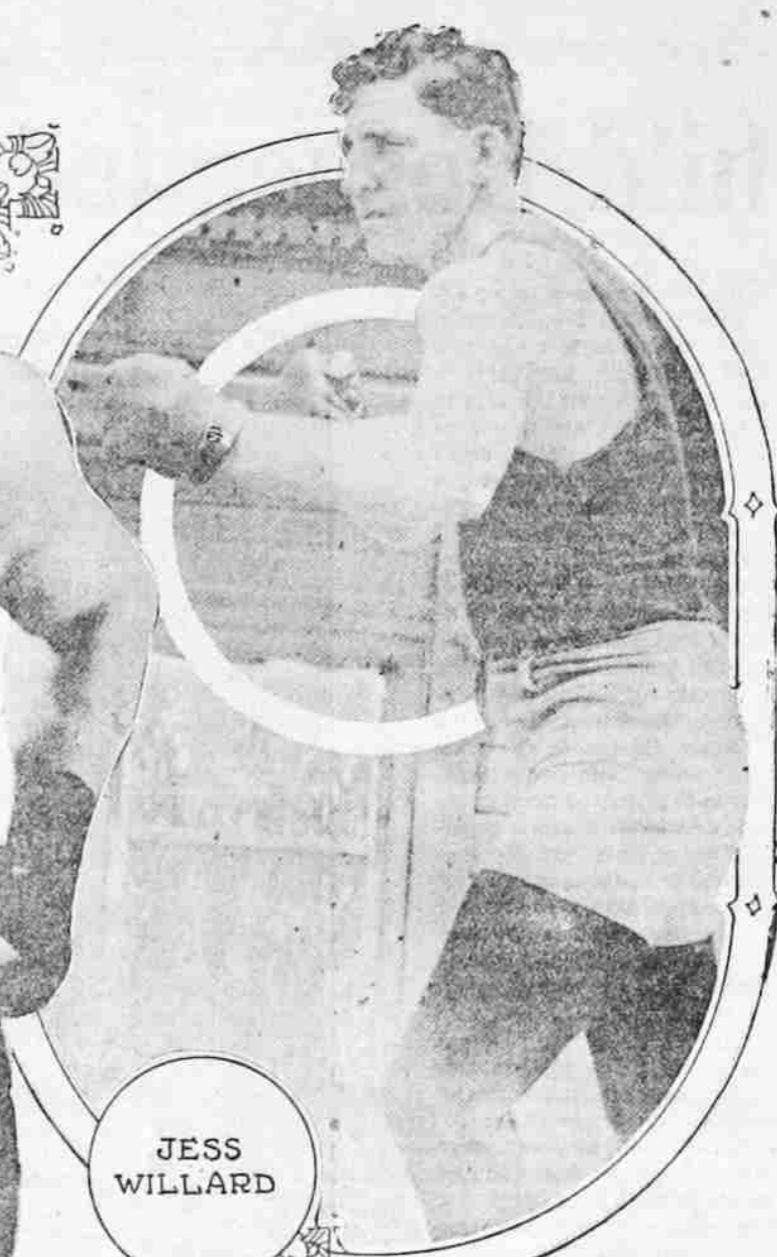
The immigration of Australian boxers of the first quality left its impress in the American ring. The first American city to feel the effect of the influx was San Francisco, where the Dingo boxers landed. So Corbett, Choyanski and scores of other Americans learned from the Australians who came out of Larry Foley's school in Sydney.



CARL MORRIS



FRED FULTON



JESS WILLARD

the most famous fighting career of all time.

Griffo never was a fighter, and I doubt that he was in any sense a true pupil of Larry Foley. Griffo was a wonderful boxer, a slipper with his head and a truly wonderful blocker. Griffo did not block with his elbows or his forearms entirely. His best block was one at arm's length, when he would reach forward, and, by touching the arm of his opponent block, smother or deflect a punch just as it started. Griffo was an uncanny boxer, undoubtedly the cleverest of all time, but he never could hit hard, and he never could really win a fight. Then his only ambition was to tinkle, in which art he attained a pre-eminence far beyond his feats in the ring.

George Dawson, for twenty-five years boxing instructor of the Chicago Athletic Club, was another of Foley's pupils. Dawson had some good fights to his credit. He beat Danny Needham, then second to Tommy Ryan among welterweights, and he was good enough to scare Ryan himself into tonsillitis when they were to have met at New Orleans. The nickname, "Tonsillitis Tommy," was affixed to Ryan after that fiasco.

Dawson beat Needham, Tommy Tracey and hosts of other good men before he retired to his natural habitat, the berth of a boxing instructor, for which he was eminently fitted by skill and nature. Dawson, like Jackson, was a beautiful fighter, with the straight left and a right cross. It was Dawson who brought the often-barred kidney punch into prominence by using it to beat Needham in the early '90s.

matches of the Australians had its effect upon the American style of boxing may be imagined.

So, in the light of the past, the present is interesting, and thought of Larry Foley and his salle d'armes gives us a better understanding of the overlords of the ring of today.

Since the days of Jackson, Corbett, Slavin and Fitzsimmons, Fred Fulton, the Kansas-born bricklayer, is the most distinctively American boxer. The big conqueror of Langford, Morris, Weinert and many other good men is American all through, in looks, lineage and temperament. He is big enough and good enough to whip any living man. That he can, or cannot do so, is a question of gameness, stamina, fighting instinct, general temperament.

Since Fulton put Morris, the pet of the fight trust, out of the way, he is the only possible opponent of Champion Willard, who has been, the world will agree, a mush champion. Willard is some 36 or 37 years old. He never was and never will be an attractive fighter. He is a great whale of a man who can fall on his opponent and smother them. Willard is no Queensberry champion. Therefore the best that can happen to the good old game, which, for all its faults, is a man's sport, is that Willard shall retire, or better still fight Fulton and get out.

White Whipping Was Good.

It is as certain as most things that Willard never can be got into condition for a good fight. He is immense,

he is ancient, he has been fed up on hog and hominy until he is a very mountain of a man. He cannot be got fit for a fight and it is by no means certain that, if he could be fitted, he could, the best day he ever saw, whip Fulton. True, he did whip Johnson when Johnson was old and fat and when it was advisable that Johnson should be whipped. For Johnson was no longer a tool whereby money could be minted. It is well to understand that Johnson could make more money by being whipped than by whipping, that he was broke and needed the money that could be made by being beaten.

It is no secret among followers of the P. R. that its major motions are controlled by a syndicate consisting of three major officials and many minor officials. These major officials once managed Johnson. When their tool broke the laws of the United States and was obliged to flee the country or spend a long term in prison his value was done. He was no more good to himself or to them. Lawyers had plucked the unfortunate black clean of his money. He was a stranger in a strange land "stone broke."

The syndicate was not making any money. Neither was Johnson. Both needed money. How was it to be got? Clearly not by Johnson beating any other fighter. Johnson could not show

in the United States after the fight. Pictures showing a black man beating up a white man were not popular, especially in states below the Mason and Dixon line. The syndicate had found that out when they tried to show the pictures of Johnson beating Jeffries in Southern states.

Manifestly, the way to make money was to beat Johnson. To that end Willard was selected, a big, strong, cumbersome, healthy sort of a cowboy. Johnson was old, he did not train and he did not care very much about winning.

So Willard became champion of the world.

Forced fruit never has the flavor of the naturally grown article. A forced, hand-made, raised-under-glass champion, never has the flavor of a natural, obstacle-overcoming, gallant-fighting champion. Willard proved a dismal failure as a money-maker for the syndicate.

Cut Loose from Syndicate.

Not only that he proved himself a tightwad. He made some money, but so soon as he found himself in a position to go it as an independent he told the syndicate to go to, that he had bought his own circus and would not

fight or divvy any more.

Clearly it was up to the syndicate to do something. In the first place it had to protect its prestige or else it could not hope to dictate or to own fighters in the future. So it was its business to get Willard licked or make him relinquish the money-making title of champion.

To lick Willard the syndicate picked Carl Morris, the Sapulpa giant, who was already one of its working men. Morris is just a big fellow who can take a beating, a sort of a much magnified edition of one Battling Nelson, only not so fast nor so attractive a person as Nelson, just a whale of a man who could take a punching. Morris can't give much of a clean punch. He can maul a man, crowd a man, roll on a man, weary a man, but he can't cut in with a swift punch and hurt a man.

In a word Morris is a good-natured big chap, but the last man in the world to attract the admiration of the people. So he was a bad man for the picking of the syndicate. But the syndicate could not see the difference between a fast, attractive, shining chap who could put up brilliant fights and shine in the newspapers, and a sodden hulk of a man who was about as attractive in the ring as a fat porpoise.

However the syndicate wanted a tractable man and they found him in Morris. He could be depended upon to split his earnings with the men who control fighting—for no one else cares to control it—in the United States.

In order to qualify Morris for a match with Willard they matched Morris against Fulton in New York. Fulton would have made a good man for the syndicate but for one thing—he was too keen an American to hand it 80 per cent of his earning. Which was more good reason why Morris should whip Fulton. A syndicate cannot be a syndicate unless it can make its people behave.

To the end that Morris should whip Fulton no pains were spared. In these affairs it is most important that the referee shall be "right." This does not mean that the referee shall be crooked. Not at all. It means that he should be the style of man who will stand for the peculiar style, or styles, of the boxer you want to win.

When the syndicate chose a referee for the Fulton-Morris fight they chose a man who was famous for his fancy for rough work, clinching, pulling, hauling, butting, elbowing, palming, the thousand and one tricks that enable strong and heavy men to overcome a slighter opponent.

Morris fought in total violation of all Queensberry rules. He clinched, hugged like a bear, butted like a bull, pulled like a wrestler and kicked like a steer. Fulton did not like this sort of fighting and got back in kind. For which he was promptly disqualified.

But the American people never have fallen for a made champion. They refused to take Peter Maher when Corbett "resigned" in his favor. They re-

fused to take Luther McCarty when Jeffries handed him the belt. They refused to accept Morris when a referee made him champion.

The syndicate did not profit much by the decision which gave Morris the victory on a foul over Fulton. But this decision had its peculiar psychological effect. Having won in the eyes of the referee, the syndicate fancied that Morris might really and truly whip Fulton in a fair, square match under a real Queensberry referee. So do the prejudices and passions of men delude them.

So the syndicate matched Morris to fight Fulton at Canton, Ohio, on last Labor Day, Matt Hinkle of Cleveland referee. Morris fought as always, foul, and was promptly disqualified after Fulton had given him a very nasty cutting up.

In Grip of Syndicate.

Now Fulton is the man that Willard must fight or resign to. So far the syndicate has no hold on Fulton. Probably the syndicate will get some hold, if not on Fulton, then on Fulton's earnings. Fulton will want to fight, will have to fight to make money. Now comes his harvest. It is easy to "queer" a prize fight. The syndicate is adept in that art. So, in order to fight and to make a living, Fulton will have to stand for what amounts to blackmail.

There are things about Fulton that I do not like. He does not seem to care for an uphill battle. It does not appear that he is a deadly game, cool man. He has been up against the "brace," it is true. So has many another good man. The trouble is not with being up against the "brace," but with the fight that Fulton put up against it. Fulton did not "go good" when Morris had the referee with him in New York. He acted peevishly. Nor did Fulton go well when he had a square referee and got the decision at Canton. He walked out of the ring because Hinkle would not disqualify Morris for fouling.

Morris fouled all right and should have been disqualified. Hinkle was the best judge of when to do it. Fulton has no business acting pettishly and quitting, for that is what he did when he walked out of the ring. Walking out of the ring would have been taken as cowardice in the old days, and it merited disqualification for Fulton at Canton. Hinkle had not disqualified Morris when Fulton walked out of the ring, then he should have disqualified Fulton.

The fact was that Hinkle wanted to give the spectators a run for their money, which is right after all. But what is the use of having rules if these rules are not enforced. Hinkle should have disqualified Fulton, and left him to settle with the disappointed crowd.

It is rather a pity that Fulton was not reared in the school of Larry Foley, where men were taught to take the worst of it, hit hard, fight cleanly and then win.

When Things Go Wrong With Our Neighbor It Is Easier to Cheer Up Than When They Go Wrong At Home.