

OUR HOME

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THE POINT OF THE PEN.

WOMEN AND THE PRIZE FIGHT.

"The strangest thing about the recent prize fight to my mind," says a correspondent of OUR HOME, "was the interest so many women took in it. To tell the truth, I read nothing about it myself except the headlines in the papers until my curiosity was excited by hearing two fashionably-dressed and apparently refined women discussing it earnestly in a street car. It was not merely the abstract question they discussed. They were evidently deeply interested in the issue of the fight, and had their opinions as to which of the combatants would win. After that I read the papers, and, listening to conversations, found that many other women were taking an active interest in the fight, and that some of them grew quite excited over it as the great day approached."

It is probable that our correspondent somewhat exaggerates the interest taken by women in the recent prize fight. Many women did show a keen interest in it, but the majority paid no further attention to it than to read the headlines in the newspapers and wish that the space devoted to the fight were occupied by stories or fashions. However, it is not so very strange that women should take an interest in an event which they hear their fathers, brothers and husbands talking about. They do not necessarily approve of a prize fight because they talk about it. The great majority of the men who read

with interest all the news about the prize fighters would vote in favor of the complete suppression of the brutal practice if a plebiscite were taken, and there is no doubt that all the women would vote the same way if they voted at all.

But there was a time when even more bloody battles between men were watched with keen interest and approval by gentlewomen. All who have read Sir Walter Scott's fascinating story of Ivanhoe, must remember how the fairest and noblest women of England looked on at the tournaments in which brave knights to win their favor shed each other's blood in the time of Robin Hood, and while the days of chivalry and the tournament have long passed by it is not so very long a time since men fought with swords in England for prize money before large assemblages of men and women at least as frequently and as openly in defiance of law as the prize fighters of to-day pound each other with their fists.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century a place of amusement called the Bear-garden, at Hockley-in-the-Hole, near London, was devoted to such contests, which were resorted to not only by the lower populace but by the aristocracy, and occasionally by the resident ambassadors. Men, styling themselves professors of the noble art of self-defence, and occasionally assuming the title of champion for particular English counties, were either stationery at that place of exhibition, where they defied all competitors, or went about the country challenging particular