

Most of the light in the place was concentrated over the roped platform of the ring, and all he got was a vague impression of space. There seemed to be a great many people present. The white-shirt-fronts reminded him of the National Sporting Club.

His eye was caught by a face in the first row of ring-side seats. It seemed familiar. Where had he seen it before? And then he recognized Mr. Bivatt—a transformed Mr. Bivatt, happier looking, excited, altogether more human. Their eyes met, but there was no recognition in the millionaire's. Freddie had shaved his moustache as a preliminary to the life of toil, and Mr. Bivatt, beaming happily up at him from beside that dead game sport, T. Mortimer Dunlop, had no recollection of ever having seen him before.

Freddie's attention was diverted from audience to ring by the arrival of the Tennessee Bear-Cat. There was a subdued murmur of applause—applause had to be merely murmured on these occasions—and for one moment, as he looked at him, Freddie regretted the contract he had undertaken. What Mr. Anderson had said about wild Indians came home to him. Certainly the Bear-Cat looked one. He was an extraordinarily - muscled young man. Freddie was mainly muscle himself, but the Bear-Cat appeared to be a kind of freak. Lumps and cords protruded from him in all directions. His face wore a look of placid content, and he had a general air of happy repletion, a fate-cannot-touch-me-I-have-dined-to-day expression. He was chewing gum.

A shirt-sleeved gentleman of full habit climbed into the ring, puffing slightly.

"Gents! Main event. Have an apology to offer—behalf of the management. Was to have been ten-round between Sam Proctor, better known as th' Tennessee Bear-Cat, and One-Round Smith, at one-thirty-three ringside. But —seems to have been a—naccident, One-Round havin' sustained severe injury to foot. Rend'rin' it—impossible—appear t'night before you. Deeply regret unavoid'ble dis'pointment."

The portly man's breath was going fast, but he still had sufficient for a brilliant flight of fancy, a vast improvement on Freddie's humble effort.

"Have, honor, however, present t' you Jimmy Smith, brother of One Round—stranger to this city—but—well known on Pacific Coast—where—winner of forty-seven battles. Claimant to welter-weight belt. Gents, Jimmy Smith, the Santa Barbara Whirlwind!"

Freddie bowed. The speech, for some mysterious reason, probably explainable by Christian Science, had had quite a tonic effect upon him. The mere thought of those

forty-seven victories gave him heart. After all, who was this Tennessee Bear-Cat? A mere walking repository of noodle soup, weakfish, fried chicken, eggs, corn apple dumplings, lager-beer, and cup-custards. A perambulating bill of fare. That was what he was. And, anyway, he was probably muscle-bound, and would be a slow as a top.

The introducer, however, presented him in another aspect. He had got his second wind now, and used it.

"Gents! The Tennessee Bear-Cat! You all know Sam. The toughest huskiest, wickedest little old slugger that ever came down the pike. The boy who's cleaned up all the light-weights around these parts, and is in a dead straight line—for—the championship of the world."

He waved his hand dramatically. The Bear-Cat, overwhelmed by these tributes, shifted his

chewing gum to the other cheek, and simpered coyly, as who should say, "Stop, your nonsense, 'Archibald!" And the gong clanged.

Freddie started the fight with the advantage that his plan of campaign was perfectly clear in his mind. Rapid attack was his policy. When a stout gentleman in shirt-sleeves has been exhausting his scanty stock of breath calling you a whirlwind, decency forbids that you should behave like a zephyr. He shook hands, and, on the principle of beginning as you mean to go on, proceeded without delay to poke his left earnestly into the middle of the Bear-Cat's face. He then brought his right round with a thud on to what the latter probably still called his ear—a strange, shapeless growth rather like a leather cauliflower—and sprang back. The Bear-Cat shifted his gum and smiled gratefully.

A heavy swing on the part of the Bear-Cat was the next event of note. Freddie avoided it with ease and slipped in a crisp left. As he had expected, his opponent was too slow to be dangerous. Dangerous! He was not even making the thing interesting, thought Freddie, as he side-stepped another swing and brought his right up to the chin. He went to his corner at the end of the round, glowing with satisfaction. This was easy.

It was towards the middle of the second round that he received a shock. Till then the curious ease with which he had reached the opponent's head had caused him to concentrate on it. It now occurred to him that by omitting to attack the body he was, as it were, wasting the gifts of Providence. Consequently, having worked his man into an angle of the ropes with his back against a post, he feinted with his left, drew



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