

Dempsey Scores Another Knockout

Dorothy Day

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Dempsey Scores Another Knockout When He Calls Dorothy Day “Little Girl”

The main trouble with meeting celebrities at the station to get an interview is finding and recognizing them in the crowd of travelers. But there was no trouble in finding Jack Dempsey as he got off the train at the Union Station Sunday noon. The trouble was in getting at him. You could see him from one end of the platform to the other, plowing his way along through admiring throngs who collected from all sides at the sight of him and tagged along at his heels, beaming with enthusiasm. He overtopped them all.

There was any number of questions we'd planned on asking him, for instance: “Do you get many mash notes from women?” “Are you engaged to be married?” “Do women ever propose to you?” “Do you think women ought to go to prize fights?” “Whom do you like best, Ring Lardner or George Bernard Shaw, and isn't Charlie Chaplin a greater man than Nicolai Lenin?”

About 6 1-2 Feet

And then we elbowed our way through the crowd and fell brazenly into step beside him, he knocked all the questions out of our head by calling us “little girly” (in spite of 5 feet 10 1-2 inches) and helping us through the station by clutching our shoulder, the elbow being too far below him.

For the benefit of those girls who do not read the sporting page or the Police Gazette and therefore have not kept up with the thousands of pictures of Dempsey therein, but have only caught occasional glimpses of him in the movies, a description follows There are no accurate figures to hand such as they publish before a big fight, as to the girth of his neck, waist and calf, height, reach and the size glove he wears. We can only say impressionistically that he is somewhere's about 6 1-2 feet high, has brown hair and brown eyes, white teeth and a mouth that isn't big enough for the size of his grin.

A “Gentleman Boxer”

He has an exquisitely tanned complexion which the French blue silk shirt he wore only emphasized. He wore a black suit, with a tiny stripe running this way and that way in it. His hands are huge, well shaped and well cared for, with never a bulge or twist at the joint to show that he used them for anything beside shaking the hands of admirers.

Surveying his face critically there is no sign that he has ever been battered in the ring. One ear stands out a little perhaps, accentuated by the fact that the other is so close to his head, and his nose might have been broken.

We were about to ask him what was the secret of his beauty, but remembering whom we were speaking to, modified the question.

“Nobody gets hurt nowadays in a fight,” he pooh-poohed. “Once in a while a black eye or a bloody nose, but that does you good. Kids get those every day in the week. But fighting isn’t what it used to be. And that reminds me, you wouldn’t call me a prize fighter. I’m a gentleman boxer.” And he laughed and everybody else laughed, but nevertheless we’ll still think of him as a prize fighter.

Carpentier Decent Fellow

“Prize fighters used to fight without gloves,” he instructed us. “And when they were fighting with gloves, the fights were really fights which lasted for 18 or 20 rounds. Nowadays they last three or four.

“Sure, I knew Carpentier. Met him a dozen times before we went into the ring and he was a real decent fellow. I didn’t know Firpo, though. Didn’t even see him until we got into the ring.

“What do I think of George Bernard Shaw?” “All I can say, he doesn’t know a thing about boxing. The other stuff he writes may be all right, but when it came to his surmises as to who was going to win the Carpentier fight, he was all wrong. Why, gosh, he said I had one chance in a thousand!

“Naw, I don’t get many mash notes,” and he became very bashful. “Hardly any.

“If I did get any I wouldn’t know anything about it, because my manager opens all my mail. And as to whether I’m in love, I may be if I stay in New Orleans long enough. I understand the town is full of southern beauties. But I’m only going to be here three days. Otherwise I’d like to go out and make a speech at Newcomb as to how to keep physically fit.”

But in spite of his own physical fitness, we decided that his beauty hints to the girls at Newcomb wouldn’t do them any good, because he confessed an overwhelming weakness for French pastry and pie.

“But gee, even a prize fighter—a gentleman boxer—must have some vices,” said he.