

JEM BELCHER WAS WHIPPED, NOT DEFEATED

John Jackson did not appear again in the ring after his defeat of Mendoza and his rise to the championship, but held the title for five years through lack of an opponent to it. It was the rise of the contemporary "professors" of the science of boxing that made the street formed the rendezvous for the athletically inclined among men of rank and wealth. Byron was among his pupils, but of whom have included one-third of the peers of the time, and for more than twenty years he upheld the standing and reputation of the sport.

In 1800 the remarkable victories of "Jem" Belcher, the Bristol Youth, made him the logical successor to the championship. His several fights with Joe Berks led him without a competitor until "Hen" Pearce, "the Game Chicken," came to the front around his fight with John Dancy in 1806. Belcher received an injury to one eye while playing at rackets and announced his retirement. Pearce, who had also defeated Berks, was thus in line for the title, but Belcher recovered, his doctor advised him to quit the ring and decided to hold his laurels.

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"Dang it, put down as I say and let me with yapping about my eye," said Belcher, angrily.

Fletcher Reid regarded the champion doubtfully, pen poised above paper. Belcher was walking the floor in some agitation. The two men were the sole occupants of the public house of the Jolly Brewers, Wardour street, Soho, where the pugilist had been mine host for two years.

"Think again, Jem," said Mr. Reid at length. "You sent Pearce word that you would befriend him and aid him in his fight with Berks. You are your fellow townsman and the best in the fields. Here is your chance to retire gracefully."

"I'll fight him myself," said Belcher, with decision. "Since beating Gully he's a swagger and Berks could never pull him down."

"Jealousy, eh?" commented the other, smiling.

"Will you back me? Is it fear I'll lose keeps you holding off?" asked Belcher, coming to a stop in front of his friend.

"No," said Mr. Reid. "I thought only of you. You have earned your laurels and the right man to rest on them. But if you are determined I'll back you for 500 guineas, for well I know Pearce could never stand to you, though you have but one eye."

"Let be about my eye!" cried Belcher again, fuming. "Danged if I can pass the time of day without darning. I showed at me. I'll show some of these chaps. I'm not done yet; no, not if I was to be blind. Put down for your 500 guineas, then, and the time to be within two months, pay or play."

Two days later Pearce himself came to the Jolly Brewers, accompanied by Captain Halliday, his backer. He walked up to Belcher and confronted him directly.

"Is this a way to treat an old friend?" asked Pearce. "Look now, Jem, I never thought to mill a bout with thee except by way of good feeling."

"Do you mean you won't fight then?" asked Belcher.

"No," said Pearce, stoutly. "But I mean it's unkindly like."

"He means he would never have sought to dispute the title with you," interrupted Halliday, coming to the aid of the pugilist. "And I must say the sentiment does him credit. You deliberately chided Belcher and encouraged Pearce here to come up to London and establish his claim to the championship. Now you jump out of retirement and challenge him. He has no wish to fight you, with your game eye."

Belcher went crimson. "There it is now. My eye again!" he cried. "Always it's 'Poor Belcher, he's lost his eye. He'll fight no more.' He done with all that fight of mine. Captain Halliday is ready to cover the 500 guineas."

"I'll send thee word of the time and place within two weeks," he said. And so the matter rested.

Ready to Fight.

The news of a meeting between the champion and the "Game Chicken" stirred sporting circles. Belcher had been formally announced that he had given up all idea of continuing in the ring. The accident and the turn of events came as a surprise. Opinion was divided for the first time, who believed that Jem had lost none of his prowess in losing part of his sight. But many thought that he had made a mistake and were not backward in saying so.

Belcher himself breathed defiance when the affair was mentioned in his presence. Reference to the accident made him furious. He was distinctly one of the type of pugilist which is a disgrace to the name, to feel or recognize the slightest inferiority. To him the battle was already won, and the expression of doubt as to the outcome had no effect. He was never trifled with.

Born in 1781, Belcher had gained the title at the age of 21 years, after a rise of unprecedented rapidity and brilliancy. He was the greatest pugilist in the height of his powers. The loss of his eye had temporarily demoralized him, but he had recovered his man's moral courage and standing in the slightest. Acting on a passing whim he had consented to step aside from his position, but the conviction that he could not hold it now that he wished to could find no lodgment in his mind.

Belcher was a natural fighter, endowed with the physical and mental qualities that bring success in the ring, and had been able to master the best of men of the time with little or no training. On his mother's side he was a grandson of the redoubtable "Jack" Slack, second champion of the world and conqueror of the great Broughton. It was part of his heritage something he had never learned. The word he never learned.

"Hen," or Henry, Pearce, though four years older than Belcher, always regarded the younger man as his master and his model. Belcher practically made him, had brought him from obscurity in Bristol and had him his reputation as his place of his cognomen of "the Game Chicken" through the great resolution and agility he displayed in the ring; possibly, also, as a play upon his nickname of "Hen."

Pearce chose a small common about three miles from Barnby Moor and nine miles from Doncaster as the place of meeting. It was the required 150 miles from London, a precaution made necessary by the fact that the authorities were holding of public prize fights. Here several hundred enthusiasts gathered on Friday, December 5, 1805. Lord Searle, the Honorable Berkeley Craven and other distinguished followers of the sport were present.

Betting ran high, five to four being offered for Belcher. The ring was staked out on the turf, a traditional stage for pugilism. It was 20 feet square to prevent crowding and hindering in support of a custom which had recently found favor the partisans of the rival boxers were colors and indications of belief. Adherents of Pearce wore blue silk handkerchiefs with white spots. Friends of Belcher wore the little yellow striped flag with the champion had adopted some years before as his emblem.

The combatants were driven over from the Blue Bell inn, Barnby Moor, and arrived about 11 o'clock under a chill gray sky. At half-past twelve the arrangements had been completed and they climbed through the ropes. Pearce was seconded by "Will" Ward, with "Tom" Gibson at his back. "Joe" Ward and "Dick" Whale performed like services for Belcher. The fighters immediately stripped and advanced to the center of the ring, while the throng cheered and displayed the rival colors.

In the Ring.

The gladiators presented a magnificent picture of manly strength and grace. The champion was five feet eleven inches tall, his weight about 170 pounds. He was slender and of such fine proportions and mould that he had frequently been called the Apollo of the ring. He followed Mendoza's style closely in attitude and tactics, relying upon great swiftness of action, a clever guard and an effective right drive.

Pearce was about five feet nine inches in height, of a stocky and muscular build. In appearance he resembled "Tom" Johnson, and, like that hard-hitting champion, possessed great strength and endurance. He was capable of taking heavy punishment and relied upon technique so much upon his fists, and was a terrific biter, particularly with his left.

The champion moved to battle with his customary eagerness. Few fighters ever showed themselves so confident and willing in the ring as Belcher. His fighting expression was calm and his gait was no affectation, for the man rejoiced in the sport and his proficiency. The sight of his adversary stung him like a whip and he sprang to the handclasp with a word of greeting and a defiance on his lips.

Falling on guard, the boxers sparred for an opening. Belcher led off with a feint and sent in a tap with his left, but Pearce was not to be tempted. They circled slowly, guarding the position of fast and skillful work that brought roars of applause from the spectators. Pearce seemed to be cautious and a little uncertain in his attack, rather on the defensive. The champion maneuvered in conquering style, forcing the pace and warming to his work in a way that cheered his friends mightily. If he bore himself like a master it was because he felt himself no more than grazing the other's arm before he struck. Here Belcher could not find that it inconvenienced him in the least.

Noting "the Chicken's" caution, he decided upon a spurt of aggression and led with an immediate and decisive advantage. Sparring lightly, he feinted thrice with his right at the body. Pearce, however, was not to be taken in. The third time the champion drove in with a swift right-hander that passed over Pearce's guard and landed heavily on his right eye and drew the crimson. The blow staggered Pearce for an instant, but he came back with good will and swung savagely with his left. Belcher warily dodged and was able only to break the blow, not defeat it. Pearce followed up by rushing in and closing.

This department of the game was the champion's pet study and he welcomed the grips. They struggled desperately, spinning against the ropes and back to back, until Belcher slipped his thigh over for a cross but took. Belcher failed to see the move in time and was caught off his stand. Belcher's right foot more firm in the foot, he was able to keep his balance, but returned hardly to the exchange, reeling on Pearce's forehead. "Hen" seized close quarters as an opportunity to grip, but Belcher was not to be taken in. He planted a solid smash, but could not get beyond the champion's guard.

When his second's knee Belcher was still smiling and cheerful. He explained to Ward in an undertone that he must not be taken in by Pearce's good sign when an adversary was so ready to clinch. He counted that some of his earlier blows had left their effect upon "the Chicken" and that it could not be long now before he had the fight all his own way. He added that another blow to the eye would make them even as to sight, for Pearce would be blind of an eye.

Pearce led off the fourth round as he had the preceding, driving in with a jab to the body and a ripping hook that grazed Belcher's chin. Jem covered himself with a notable display of science against the shower of blows which the other forced the pace, bringing shout after shout from the crowd by his agility and speed. Pearce seemed bent upon planting a solid smash, but could not get beyond the champion's guard.

Two Miss.

Twice "the Chicken" seemed to have found his chance and launched a tremendous drive, but Belcher was out of distance each time. The champion showed great care, swabbing and retreating, and brought all his skill into play. He joined in with some stiff body punches and again cut Pearce about the head, making receipts, however, in the form of several swings that he stopped with his face. He fought away from clinches, though Pearce attempted to close several times. At length "Hen" caught him and brought all his powers to shift the result of the struggle, but his opponent's great strength told in the end and he went down, without damage.

At this stage of the battle the champion adopted the policy of allowing his arms to be bottle-holder to half carry him to his corner. He had found this of great assistance in a keenly-contested and wearing fight, when every ounce of energy would be needed. Although he was still strong, he did not move until the two picked him up, and in the interval the veteran Ward nursed him with great care, swabbing and retreating him. Belcher's wind was plainly bothering him, but he was not conscious of any great distress.

When they came together for the sixth round the champion had decided to play cunning with Pearce's evident desire for aggression. There was nothing to be gained by waste of strength in meeting the attacks which were sure to cost "the Chicken" dear. He therefore remained on the defensive. Pearce was willing and resumed his hammering. He appeared to have lost his confidence and to be much sorer of himself as a result of having won the one of each round. He forced the champion to give ground continually and it was only at the expense of continual watchfulness that Belcher was able to avoid telling blows. "Hen" drove frequently with his left and Belcher's arms were torn and swollen with stopping the smashes.

The champion's caution served him well, and while Pearce's fists were flying he found several opportunities to slip in blows. One of these shot through such an opening as he could scarcely have asked. Pearce was carried far around

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"HEN" PEARCE, "THE GAME CHICKEN" From "Fugitives, the History of British Boxing"

CHAMPION Fought His Last Great Fight with Pearce When He Had Only One Good Eye, and, Battered to a Standstill, Did Not Know He Was Beaten.



DODEST STEIN

Then He Went Over to Shake Hands with the Prostrate Belcher



JAMES BELCHER From "Fugitives, the History of British Boxing"

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"The Chicken" was now decidedly improved in strength. He landed several effective blows at the beginning of the twelfth round, but overreached himself in a drive and lay on his back. Belcher twisted away and struck to the face. Pearce closed again and threw his man cleverly. This round, though Belcher had no snap left, he won the victory. Pearce came and went with his inability to land at a crucial moment. Pearce's power was coming back, while Belcher used the terrific nervous strain of poor eyesight, had exerted himself to the limit and now began to weaken fast.

End of the Struggle.

In the twelfth round "the Chicken" resumed the offensive. He went after Belcher hard and the champion suffered two smashes to the face and a body blow that he was not quick enough in warding. To the watchers his weakness was apparent, though not to himself. There came now a short lull. Twice "the Game Chicken" raised his hand and twice he dropped it, the heat of battle urging him, friendship and kindness restraining him. "No, no," he said, "I will not let you take advantage of me; no, I will not hurt the other eye." With that he turned and walked to his corner. Belcher slipped to the ground and the ropes closed on the generous act until it could cheer no more.

This incident, though he could not remember, hurt Belcher more than anything that had happened. There it was, his eye again. He determined once more, savagely, that he would get his spite. The resolution lent him new strength and after a brief rally in the next round he closed and threw Pearce a masterly cross, which he caught, but a flash of his old form, however, and in the fourteenth round Pearce battered him terribly before sending him down in grips.

In the fifteenth round the situation was clear. Belcher dragged himself to the center with difficulty, while Pearce was getting stronger. Twice "the Game Chicken" landed the stiffest blow of the battle after a short rally. It was a terrific drive to the liver, which the champion drove like a sledge. To decide many bets the umpire officially credited Pearce with the first knockdown. Belcher was almost paralyzed when he was helped to the center. Ward whispered to him that he had better quit.

The champion turned on him in anger and amazement. What gives in Belcher had the battle won? Here was strange advice, truly. He was calmly and serenely confident that the next moment would bring decisive victory. He literally caught Pearce on the cheek and splitting it, but with little effect. Pearce had pulled himself together and they rallied for a moment, then closed and fell.

The tenth round was brief. In a sharp rally Pearce's friends were encouraged to see that he had still further recovered and that Belcher gave before him. Pearce was on top in the fall.

The champion went into the ninth round to finish the fight. He forced again, while holding himself together for an opening. It came and he delivered, but again he had misjudged, and the blow was spent. He tried desperately to remedy the error and repeated the drive, catching Pearce on the cheek and splitting it, but with little effect. Pearce had pulled himself together and they rallied for a moment, then closed and fell.

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The Childhood and Youth of Washington

CONTINUED FROM PAGE FOUR

tenant-General Dinwiddie, Major and District Adjutant, and in 1752, at the age of 20, he was responsible to the offices of one of the four consolidated districts of the colony, thus foreshadowing the contest between the French and English, which was so soon to ripen into active hostilities and ultimately led to Braddock's unfortunate defeat. Washington was now a man in everything except legal age. He was not yet 21 when the northern borders of Virginia were being harassed and plundered by the savage allies of the French, and when Marquis Duquesne boldly took the decisive step for France, which made it imperative that Governor Dinwiddie should send some trusted messenger to meet the French and attempt by diplomacy to stay the advance of the invaders. The man of the hour was George Washington, and the patriot that has carried the flag of England into and over all lands and seas, and they at once attached themselves to the cause of the American home and country to land in the colony. The family became attached and loyal to the soil of Virginia, and so strong was this trait that it was sufficient to make of them defenders of home against the mother country when oppressed. He had the misfortune to lose his father when he was only 11 years old, but his sorrow and loss brought him under the close guardianship of his elderly brother, and the tender solicitude of the best of mothers. It taught him self-reliance, decision of character, and his poverty and misfortune chastened and sweetened his proud and imperious spirit and gave him that wonderful capacity for leadership among all classes and conditions of men.

Nor was this all. Virginia at that time was comparatively a wilderness, and its people were pioneer settlers, in hearty fellowship and full of human sympathy, with all the gentler virtues

of life. There was nothing artificial or false in the community life, it was a time of character building and of individual and personal responsibility. The young men of his time were, like him, schooled in patriotism, in hardships and in duty. The names of Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Thomas Paine, Benjamin Franklin and others add to the list of the great names and position to the great name and character of George Washington. His merits were quickly and at once recognized, when he was just 21, was sent to left Williamsburg, on November 14, 1753, upon his dangerous mission, and did not return until late in December of that year, he had sounded the depths of French diplomacy, and England and the colonies knew that French aggression was a hand. He was honored by the Legislature of Virginia, then in session, and a vote of thanks was tendered him, every member of the House rising to his feet as Washington, then a young man, was greeted with a variety of things to make up for what they have to handle more dishes and make more trips to the kitchen. Any good waiter had rather serve one meat dinner than two of vegetables, and unless he gets tipped generously he gets ugly."

At Sixteen Years.

She studies "Macbeth" and "King Lear," and the classic of long ago. She thinks they are "perfectly glorious." The teacher she loves tells her so. What she likes is the "old" "Fanny." And stories with "sparkle and wit." Long hours over Kipling and Dickens. She is only a schoolgirl, you know.

She keeps up her "physical culture." Though she's basket ball with her right. Studies Latin and algebra problems. And goes to bed early at night. What she likes is the "old" "Fanny." In ruffles all frilly and pink. To "scout" up the drive in a motor. Or to gaily roll round at the rink.

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She goes to hear "Julius Caesar." With pots, pans, and a wash tub. She visits Greek casts in museums. And sketches bare trees in the park. What she likes is the "old" "Fanny." Gay two-steps that tingle and stir. The resonant chorus of "Boleas." Or the lay of the "Little Chaffeur."

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