

A Man Must Eat

By EDGAR WALLACE

BETWEEN the Kentish coast and the town of Ashford is a large, square green field bordered about with a white fence, and in the center of the field, picked out in stones which are limewashed every month, are the words:

CON-LACTO
IS STRENGTH

Giles Broad had often zoomed Z. H. L. M-Q into the clouds that he might avoid that offensive sight. However, on clear days Con-Lacto was plainly visible for fifteen miles at 10,000 feet, and Giles had got into the habit of flying low so that he might pass this evidence of Mr. Conway's shame and complacency so rapidly that the words could not be read.

At least he did until one day when he dropped so near that he narrowly escaped touching the spire of Linthorpe Church.

Not that his passengers knew anything about their danger. They were usually so busy being sick, or praying for Croydon, that death seemed a pleasant alternative route to comfort and stability.

Four days a week Giles piloted the London-Brussels air packet of the Cloudway Route. It was a dull life compared with those thrilling days of war, when you might not cross the Belgian coast line without inviting permanent disablement.

Sometimes he would make a wide detour, and cross the old battlefields, barging into the salient in his endeavor to pick out such of the places as had immediate interest for him: the old farm where Willaker crashed; that patch of undamaged wood which sheltered the most vicious of the German "Archies"; the little town where he brought down Müller, the German ace, after an epic fight which lasted twenty minutes.

Müller was not killed; he sometimes met that stout and smiling German, and they forgathered in a low Brussels estaminet and drank confusion to all soldiers who walked on their feet. Müller piloted a bus which plies daily between Amsterdam and Cologne, taking in Brussels en route.

GILES drew so many pounds per month for his services. He often wondered whether Mr. Josiah Conway had planted that infernal advertisement in his path out of sheer malice and spite. Certainly it was not to convince this skeptical air pilot of the value of Con-Lacto. Giles was beyond conviction. He had expressed his views with such force that he had expected to be forbidden the house.

"And you're really marvelously lucky that you're not," said Leslie Conway reproachfully. "Why on earth didn't you keep off the subject of Con-Lacto, darling? It is fearfully difficult for me as

it is. Daddy sent for an Almanach de Gotha last week, and he's been hunting up Filitera's pedigree."

Giles snorted. But this fair-haired and pretty daughter of Josiah Conway was used to snorts. Her father was one of the most effective snorters in the canned-food business.

"If he's in the Gotha—I'm a Dutchman!"

"He is in the Gotha," she said sternly. "He's the Count of Filitera and the Marquis Walmer-Rotalio."

"What's the idea? Is he to be the Duke de Con-Lacto?" asked Giles savagely.

"Daddy's very partial to him," said Leslie, with something of the family complacency. "He speaks well of Con-Lacto, anyway, and he is translating some of our labels into Italian." Giles laughed sardonically.

And yet the matter was a very serious one for him. The fact that Leslie Conway was the only daughter of an extremely rich man scarcely counted.

HE DID not seriously blame Mr. Conway for thrusting down the throats of helpless invalids and innocent infants a slimy, shivery, creamy fluid that contained the concentrated values of the best cream plus the stimulating qualities of the finest cane sugar, plus Vitamin A, B or C. And Con-Lacto was the daily food of thousands—hundreds of thousands. It stood by many an invalid's bedside and reconciled him to his dissolution; it appeared in babies' bottles; it had been recommended by doctors, and formed the staple diet of infantile royalties. And because of this Mr. Josiah Conway had a castle on one of the upper reaches of the Thames, a great red-brick place that stood on a high hill and overshadowed a bend of the river. It gave him the right of warning trespassers that they would be shot at sight; it filled his massive marble garage with cars of a delicate breed, and enabled him to fish in Scottish rivers and shoot on Yorkshire moors and sleep beneath the roof of a flat in Carlton House Terrace.

"I merely stated—" began Giles.

"Giles, my darling, you talk too much. I suppose you really talk all the time you're flying, but the noise of the engine is so loud that you're hardly aware of the fact. What harm would it have done you to have told Daddy that Con-Lacto once saved your life? Instead of which you said that the only time you'd ever used it was to drop a tin on to the head of a German staff officer, and as if

that wasn't enough, you told him that immediately everybody in the neighborhood put on their gas masks!"

"I cannot lie—" began the virtuous Giles.

"You lied on one side, why not lie on another? Giles, dear, I'm terribly afraid that unless something can be done, I shall wake up one morning and see my picture in an illustrated weekly—'The beautiful Miss Leslie Conway, who is to marry the Count of Filitera.'"

Giles sighed.

"The next time I come to dinner I'll try to make amends," he said.

"If there is a next time," she warned him.

There was a next time, as it happened. Mr. Conway might despise the views of Giles Broad on the nutritive values of Con-Lacto, but he had a high respect for him as a pilot, and since business took him abroad every month, it was, he argued, very desirable that he should travel with the greatest assurance and safety.

"BUT you quite understand, Leslie, my dear, that there is to be no nonsense with this fellow? Naturally, I do not wish wholly to determine your future to meet my own views of what is right and best for you. There must be a certain independence of selection. Just as in our business we choose only the milk—"

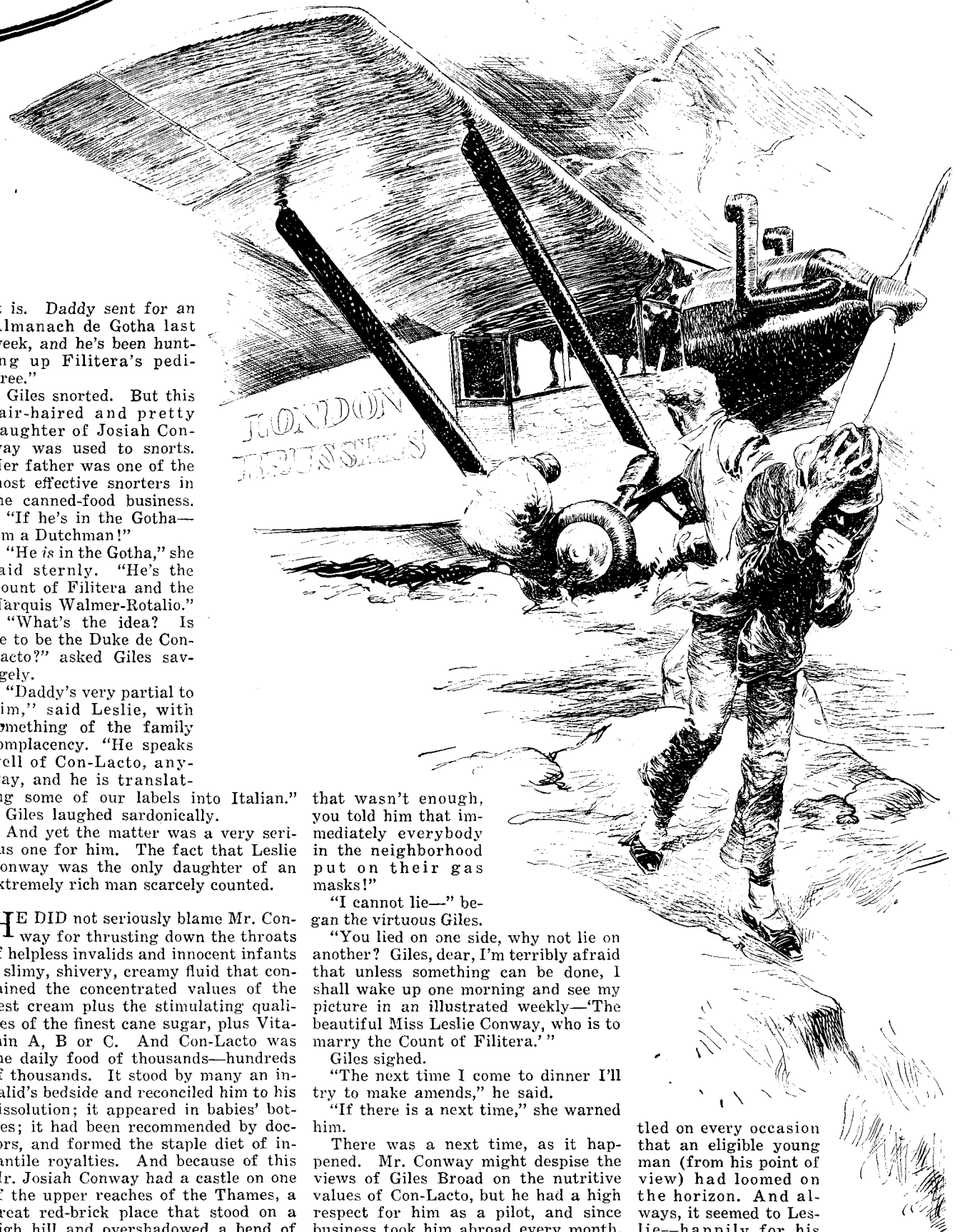
"Daddy, let us keep to our subject," she interrupted gently. "Whatever Giles is, he isn't a cow."

Mr. Conway agreed. He wanted to see her happy and settled. But, then, he had wanted to see her happy and set-

tled on every occasion that an eligible young man (from his point of view) had loomed on the horizon. And always, it seemed to Leslie—happily for his peace of mind, Giles did not know this—there was an extraordinarily good reason why her own selective qualities should be brought into play.

"He is foolish," said Mr. Conway, "and a little uncouth. Such a business as ours could not have been built up except on a scientific basis. Eliminate science from Con-Lacto, and what have we? Nil, nothing! When this young man sneers at Con-Lacto he sneers at science. At—er—Faraday and Lister and Newton. . . . Such a man must have an unbalanced mind; such a man is no fit mate for my daughter." *Et cetera, et cetera.*

Leslie never really worried about her father's plain statements of the fact. The



Giles talked too much but only once did he say the right thing

et ceteras were, however, trying. If Mr. Conway had been a sensible creature, he would have kept off his favorite subject that night at dinner; but the narrow-headed and swarthy young man who sat on his daughter's right hand, and who spoke in such excellent English that you might never have dreamt his Levantine origin, was mainly responsible for the introduction of the topic.

Giles listened and was bored. He was not only bored, but he showed that he was bored, which was extremely tactless. He was sitting so far away from Leslie, and so near to her father, that occasionally his interest wandered.

"... Now I never travel without a case of The Food," Mr. Conway was saying, addressing his possible relative of the near future. "So far from being ashamed, I am proud of the universal benefit which I confer upon mankind. Why, you ask me—" (The count had not asked him.) "First—" he ticked off on his thumb, "Vitamin A," and on his forefinger, "Vitamin B," and then rapidly, in succession, the best cane sugar, the product of happy cows, packed under ideal conditions. ...

"Mr. Broad, you will perhaps agree to this: An airman's health is his chief asset. Now suppose, instead of scoffing, you were to make the experiment. A spoonful dropped into a cup of tea. ..."

"I don't drink tea," said the very trying young man.

"Or coffee. ..."

"Keeps me awake when I'm flying," said Giles recklessly. "I take my little nap from Dover to Dunkirk—" and, as Mr. Conway's eyes opened in horror, the girl intervened hastily:

"Don't take any notice of Giles. Of course he doesn't sleep on duty."

Mr. Conway shrugged his shoulders and muttered something about "flippancy."

When they were alone Leslie took her lover by the ear and led him to a quiet corner in a very old-fashioned and earth-smelling

conservatory which was Mr. Conway's idea of a winter garden.

"You deserve to be smacked," she said seriously. "I was simply on pins and needles right through dinner for fear you'd tell that ridiculous story about having blown up a dump with two tins of the wretched stuff! Can't you be good, for my sake?"

Giles shook his head in despair.

"The trouble with me is," he said, mournfully, "I can't be a hypocrite. Every time I see an advertisement of Con-Lacto—'Me for Strength'—I want to shy something at it. If it was beer, it wouldn't be so bad! I could respect a brewer."

A few days later he stood in the airdrome discussing matrimony with Fred.

Fred was his mechanic, tall and thin

and gloomy, with a long, teak-colored face and pale-blue eyes.

"... You can reckon yourself lucky, Mr. Broad, that you're single. I don't know how I come to get married. A good woman, but wantin' me to live her life. She believes in cotton next to the skin—I never have anything but wool. She likes tomatoes—they make me ill... there they are every day on the table—tomatoes! She says I ought to be properly fed. Food's poison to me. Every trip she brings me enough meat sandwiches to sink a ship. I always drop 'em out over the Channel. She means well. Oh, Gawd!"

A stout and charming woman was hurrying across the airdrome, and on her arm was a basket.

"My snack!" groaned Fred; "heavy enough to break her arm."

Giles strolled away discreetly; he wondered if Leslie would come every day with his dinner pail.

THEN he saw the big car run in from the road and recognized his passengers. Mr. Conway he expected, but the attentive young man who walked by Leslie's side was an eyesore.

"Who's your boy friend?" asked Giles, and, when she told him: "Good Lord! Is he going up?" He grinned fiendishly. "I'll tell you the spot where we'll do one of the neatest little crashes—"

"Don't be absurd. He's terribly scared. If he weren't so fond of me, he wouldn't make the trip."

Giles watched with a sardonic smile the careful disposal of a square black case.

"Is that the Fairy Food?" he demanded. "I can't get away from that high explosive!"

Mr. Conway was looking at the sky with an anxious frown. Low clouds were scurrying up from the southwest; it had grown colder since the morning.

"It looks a bit rough, my dear—er—Giles," he said.

Giles cocked an eye aloft and shook his head.

"Absolutely nothing. We'll do Brussels in record time."

The count was already looking yellow.

"I suppose there's no danger, Mr.—er—?"

"None at all," said Giles curtly. He looked at his watch. "Are you the only two passengers, I wonder?"

Mr. Conway looked around.

"There only seem to be us three."

"Three?" said Giles sharply. "Leslie isn't traveling?"

"Of course I'm traveling."

He hadn't carried her for two years. Usually she was in the habit of coming to the airdrome to say good-bye to her father, and the knowledge that she would now be behind him was not very comforting. He hurried over to the office and met his immediate chief halfway.

"They're your only passengers, Giles. The weather report has scared the other people away."

Giles looked up at the sky again.

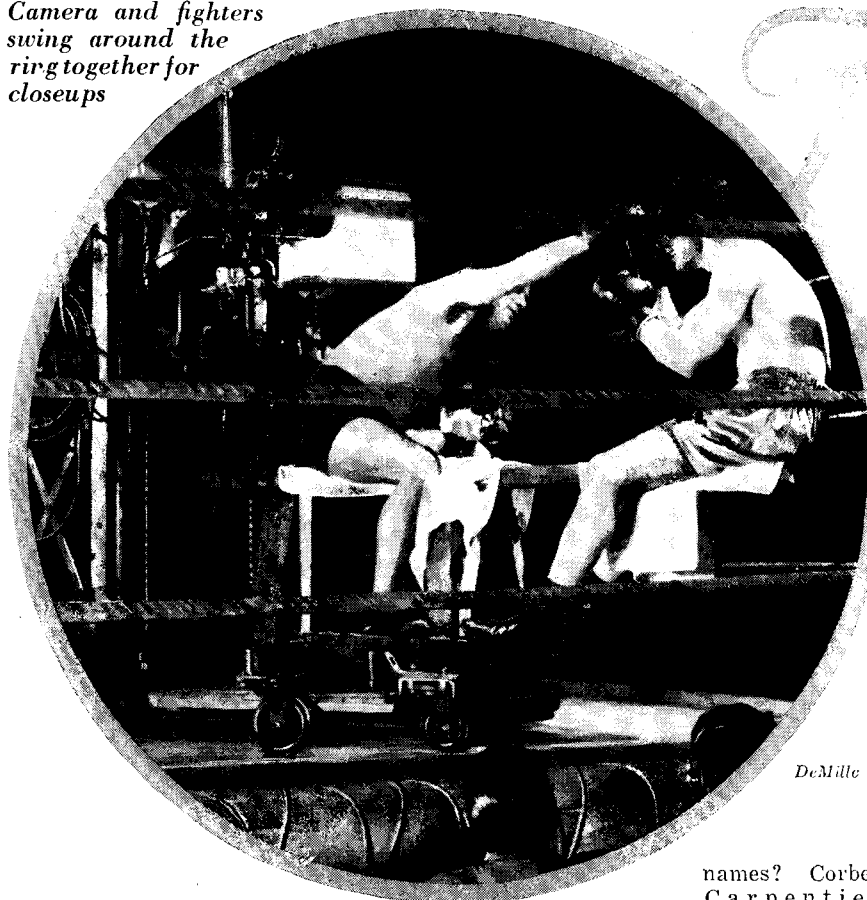
"Do you think it will be (Continued on page 30)

Illustrated by
FRANK GODWIN



The force of the wind was so terrific that they could scarcely keep their feet

Camera and fighters
swing around the
ring together for
closeups



DeMille

Hollywood is the world center for ungentle gentlemen. "All fighters now figger on endin' up their days in Movieland"

A GROUP of our Nicest People were sitting on the porch of the country club and deploring, as all nice people do, the "violence" of the movies.

"By the way," I said, "did any of you see the films of the Dempsey-Tunney fight?"

Every one of them had! That is, all but Mrs. Sterne-Sensor—she had listened in over the radio at the woman's club. The original fight was nothing compared to the brawl I uncorked among those charming pacifists regarding that glorious seventh round.

For a peace-loving nation we are the fight-maddest people on earth. Furthermore, we like our fights good and rough.

Nor is our love of the rough stuff confined to the prize ring.

Here's a Battling Cast for You

FIVE thousand people go to a baseball game while fifty thousand attend football. And those gentle automobile races!—everybody parked at death curve hoping for the worst! Can you imagine tennis pulling a \$2,000,000 gate? Not until the players begin to bash one another over the heads with their rackets.

No, don't tell us of the movies that Americans object to violence. We know they simply can't wait to see the hero and the heavy mix it in a good bluggy brawl.

Thus it is that the fight becomes the important sequence in most of our film dramas; it is the Big Punch. In order that we may make the fight plenty rough, we have rounded up the greatest aggregation of pugilists, wrestlers, strong men and dare-devils who ever beat up their fellow men. Hollywood today is the fight center of the world.

How are these for man-mauling

names? Corbett, Carpentier, George Godfrey, Al Kaufman, Kid McCoy, Leach Cross, Tom Kennedy, Joe Rivers, Frank Hagney, Jim Jeffries, Ed Kennedy, Phil Salvadore, Kid Broad, Bob Perry, Phil Bloom, Jack Renault, Vic McLaglen, Jimmie Kilgannon, Frankie Burns, Kid Wagner (no relation of the writer, unfortunately), Bennie Leonard, Dick Gilbert, Frankie Dolan, Joe and Jack Herrick, Gunboat Smith, Dempsey and Tunney. This is but a partial list of the ungentle gentlemen who have been lured from the realities of the squared circle to the make-believe of the flickering triangle to provide fights for our peace-loving film fans.

There's a battling cast for you! But how about their pictures? Take the case of a world's champion. Obviously he must be played as the hero, and right here the trouble begins, for a film hero must have some other qualification than ability to punch his neighbor's nose. If he hasn't physical beauty—which few fighters possess after years of battering—he must at least have screen charm. This, however, is a rare and elusive quality, and howsoever charming a champion may be

Lickering Fists

in real life, he is rarely that in the films. Gene Tunney, for instance, is a most delightful playmate around the house, but on the screen he registers what is known as a "dead pan." Jack Dempsey, on the other hand, screens better than most fighters, as his charm gets over and he registers a most winsome smile. Victor McLaglen is about the only other fighter who has been able to screen enough charm to be played as a hero.

Another great handicap for the hero-champion is the dramatic necessity of planting him as a weakling who must battle his way up against superior forces to ultimate victory. Knowing that the hero can at any moment knock the block off the heavy renders the villain's opposition ridiculously unconvincing. Even the physical excellence of an actor is often a great dramatic handicap. Doug Fairbanks' athletic

prowess makes it necessary for him to fight a whole regiment of villains in order to call forth cheers from the crowd. Thus the success of a world's champion on the screen must depend almost entirely on the fellow's personal popularity and a natural curiosity on the part of the public to see the great man in action.

The Pug is Only Human

IF WE must play the champions as heroes, we can at least cast the lesser fistic gods in the only rôles they shine in: that is, as heavies, for the villain is better off without personal charm or physical beauty. In fact, the tougher and meaner he looks the better he fits the part. With a horribly sinister "pan" and the reputation of a terrible fighter, he presents an opposition worthy of the handsome film god's supermanhood.

In motion pictures we have light heavies, heavies and dirty heavies, and the ex-pug of the cauliflower ears and broken nose is usually cast as a dirty

heavy. In these rôles weight is a great asset, for if he is a big fellow like Tom Kennedy or Frank Hagney he will be given a character part opposite the hero, whereas if he is small he must be content as a roughneck, a rat or a gangster. In either case it is necessary that he forfeit all personal glamour for mere pay, but as most of these fellows are in the twilight of their fight days the pay outweighs any possible vanity.

It is one of the ironies of this upside-down Movieland that men who have tasted victory all their lives find themselves taking humiliating beatings from weaker men so that a dimpled hero may win the battle. Frank Hagney, for instance, came into pictures bearing the glorious title of heavyweight champion of Australia, a land of fighters, and this is his deplorable record on the screen: he has been beaten for the "world's championship" by — Dempsey twice, Tunney three times, Monte Blue twice, Bill Fairbanks three times, and once each by George O'Brien, Bill Russell and Fred Thompson. Fourteen ignominious defeats and not one victory! It takes a lot of pay to compensate for such effacement.

Enter here a perfectly human weakness: a repressed desire to let go just one punch—"accidentally on purpose"—that will let Ronald know who is *really* the master. And, humanly enough, such blows have been released on several occasions. A battered young lightweight working opposite Jack Pickford was warned to play an obviously defeatist rôle, a rôle, considering Jack's size, that was most humiliating to the ex-pug's ego. The script called for his delivery of just one good blow, and of course that blow was to be pulled. But the urge was too overwhelmingly strong, and how that battler cherished his one lonely sock! When his time came he nearly ruined the sequence by pasting the juvenile favorite into Goofyland.



Rough work in *The Rough Riders*: Charles Farrell hands Fred Kohler (right) a sock and a "K. O." that flail the fans

Paramount