The **Fearless Spectator**



NOVEMBER 7, 1963

Charles McCabe, Esquire.

Mr. Cassius Marcellus Clay, who is named after a 19th Century Southerner who kept a cannon by the door of his newspaper (on acount of that's the way he wrote), is the only pretender to the heavyweight throne in my memory who licks ice cream cones during his public appearances of which there is no lack.

The analytically-minded might claim this tan young beauty has been imperfectly weaned. I prefer to believe he has a genius for putting on the squares of the sporting world.

At age 21, Casslus has had 19 professional fights. He has won 'em all, 15 kayoes. Against such memorable maitres of the craft as Tunney Hunsaker, LaMar Clark, Tony Experti, Alonzo Johnson, Alex Miteff, Alenjandro Lavorante, Willi Besmanoff, Sonny Banks, and Dan Warner.

This kind of training might qualify a man to take his wife or his sister, but little else, one fears.

Other times, other manners. For an instance, Gene Tunney had more than 60 professional fights (only one of which he lost, incidentally) before he was allowed a title fight with Jack Dempsey in 1926. He had to beat Georges Carpentier, Tom Gibbons, Harry Greb guys like that.

If Tunney had asked for a title clamber after 19 paydays against bums, he would have been patted on the head and sent down to the psychiatric ward at Bellvue Hospital for observation.

Cassius, after his 19, is the biggest draw in boxing. Yet he is unable to fight. Why? Because he has priced himself out of the boxing market before he has even become a pro fighter of any caliber.

He is the most promising fighter to have come along in years; yet it looks like "promise" may be labeled on his gravestone, because of the curious economics of boxing these days.

He has recently refused to fight George Chuvalo, a Toronto nonentity, in a 10-round televised fight in Louisville, Ky., after having earlier agreed to do so.

Cassius ain't scared, although he does say: "Chuvalo butts and fights inside. I could get an eye injury. Chuvalo is a dirty fighter."

Lord knows, boxing isn't fighting any more, but even Clay would not seriously advance fear of an eye injury or purtative dirty tactics on his opponent's part

as reason for killing a bout, No, these are not reasons. The reason is that ubiquitous one: that ol' debbil dough.

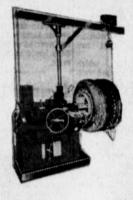
Cassius told a recent interviewer, in another connection, the reason he cannot take on the worthy Mr.

"Now I'm 21 and I got so big I can't fight on TV. Ain't enough in it. They got to have closed circuit. Fighting for \$4,000 would be like fighting for nothing."

This is bang-on true. Cassius, though not a fighter in any professional sense, has raised himself out of the nickel-and-dime class by talents almost wholly unconnected with his craft.

One of the elfin ladies who files things for me has put the following label on the constantly growing Clay envelope: "CLAY, CASSIUS MARCELLUS (boxer

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and spokesman.)

Which about sums it up. He is the spokesman for a single product: the Clay ego. He once denied he was the greatest fighter and the greatest man in the world. "I'm the double greatest," he explained, with some

It does seem sad that this combative and talented young man should be deprived of the privilege of practicing his profession by the harsh economic realities

The fact, at age 21, Mr. Clay has already become too rich for his own blood may provide the reductio ad absurdum of that already absurd game, boxing. The biggest drawing card in the fight world may never again be able to fight simply because it won't be worth his time.

Unless he meets Brother Liston, in the double greatest Battle of the Century, from which encounter he would almost certainly be taken away in the meat

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