



Name: Mike Donovan

Alias: Professor

Born: 1847-09-27

Birthplace: Chicago, Illinois, USA

Died: 1918-03-24 (Age:70)

Nationality: US American

Height: 5' 8" / 173cm

Boxing Record:

http://boxrec.com/list_bouts.php?human_id=088547&cat=boxer

After his active boxing career ended, he became a boxing instructor at the New York Athletic Club.

He taught United States President Teddy Roosevelt and his sons how to box.

Also said to have been 73-years-old when he died.

His will indicated that his last name was actually O'Donovan.

His silver championship belt was bequeathed to his son, [Arthur Donovan](#), who was in the 105th Field Artillery at Spartanburg, North Carolina, at the time.

His also had a daughter, Katherine, and another son, Henry.

Young "Mike" Donavon a Boxer at 63

Lithe and straight as a young tree, pink as a boy and with keen gray eyes as snapping as the eyes of one, Professor "Mike" Donovan, instructor extraordinary in the art of boxing to those of the New York Athletic Club, slapped a six foot young man upon the shoulder. He had belabored that, young man sufficiently during the four smart rounds of the lesson, and that lesson was over. Five following young men then did he proceed to belabor—for his position is no sinecure—when he, in turn, became the victim of another art. The reporter was waiting, and what was there for Professor "Mike" Donovan but to be interviewed?

"Mike" Donovan? One closes one's eyes as one thinks of him. One thinks of the champion that he once was, of the furtive chase in coach and train that man might meet man in the staked, circle, of the rough roped ring, of the hasty crowds scampering through fields toward the place when men would struggle, of the attendants with whip and club to keep clear the space about the ring, of the stripped gladiators, of the naked fist that panted and fought in sun and sleet and rain—of the old days of the prize ring, that lived with Coaches and crinolines and the things of yesterday.

And "Mike" Donovan is one of the few men who living through them, are fitted to speak competently of the fighting records of those old times. Philosopher as well as fighter, he can touch with reflection the deeds of the old days, and, recounting them, make them live. And in those deeds he took a great part.

No fight was complete which lacked that inevitable announcement—" 'Mike' Donovan, the champion middleweight of the world, challenges the winner of this fight to fight him to a finish."

For "Mike" Donovan did not pick and choose his opponents then. In his prime he was willing and ready to fight them all and to a finish. His fights were usually with bare fists. He fought men out of his class. He went over his weight. For eight years he was the middleweight champion of the world; and though to-day time, the immutable, has dulled his edge a little, that edge is apparently yet keen enough for the young giants of the New York Athletic Club. Rugged old sixty-four is yet younger than, rugged young twenty-five. To be sure, his muscles are knotted a little and his pink scalp shows through his frosted hair, but the talisman of his skill and vitality is yet there.

In boxing he seems to have discovered Ponce de Leon's fountain of youth and his secret has given him famous acquaintance. He claims one time President Roosevelt for a friend, - he claimed him for a pupil. He has shaken hands and exchanged blows with judges, Senators and statesmen great and small. But at Colonel Roosevelt's name the old man's eyes light with a glow that no other reference can call, and to him he pays the ultimate compliment of an old ring champion - "he would of made as good a prize fighter as he did a President".

Upon remarking which he turned to reminiscence. "How did I break into the game" he began."Well you see, I think that two things were largely responsible for me becoming a prize fighter. I had a funny habit when I was a kid on the lots of Chicago. I always took up with boys that were physically weak and deficient. I had a weakness for weak boys. I made friends with fellows that had one arm or one leg or were blind of an eye or were humpty backed. The lots of Chicago were tough pastures in those days, and many of these cripples had been hurt in battles there.

"I used to fight for them. One of the worst fights I ever had for a kid name of Cavanaugh. He was blind of an eye - someone had kicked him in it when he was fighting one day. He got in a scrap with a kid, Scranton, and I took his part. How well I remember both names !".

The old man smiled as he looked in the Gymnasium and beyond it, and the shadows of the other days came before him, and touched to softness the grim old lines on his fighting face. "That was the toughest fight I ever had" said he. "None of my regular ring fights ever equaled it. The other kid and I fought all over the lot for two hours. Once he got me down and nearly kicked my head in. See that scar ?." "Mike" Donavon pointed to the sign of his battle scarred face. It is hard to distinguish separate and individual scars there. The many marks show the battles that he has been through. At last a long scar, jagged and irregular, over his left eye, was identified. It was almost half a century old.

"I got that from the tough kid of the Chicago lots. Stanton," "Mike" went on. "Finally I managed to get up and I licked him, but I was all in myself. Those were the days when a 'lickin's a lickin', and no one was whipped until he yelled, 'I'm licked.'

"It was the same as the second throwing out the sponge nowadays. And I thought the kid Stanton was never going to give up that day. When he finally did the other one—the one

blind of an eye that I had been fighting for—helped him home. So I fought my way through the Chicago dumps by taking the parts of physically deficient boys. Finally someone wanted to put me on in a regular fight—bare fists, you understand.

There were no mollycoddles in the prize ring in those days. Then I decided to make prize fighting my business until someone licked me. I beat all the professionals that they put me up against. I had a good name for it. You know, I believe that name Mike Donovan, has scared half of the ones that I have gone up against. You see, I was born lucky. A kid born with a name like mine comes into this world with a boxing glove in his mouth instead of a silver spoon. That was the second thing responsible for me becoming A prize fighter—my name.

"Well, I started to fight when I was eighteen years old and I am still boxing. Of course, you know I have been licked, but it was some time before I knew how it felt. It's thirty-two years now since I have fought to a finish. I count that the end of my prize fighting career. Of course I have fought several four round bouts since then, but I don't count them as fights. A man can't get warmed up properly in four rounds These fighters to-day call four rounds a fight, but I never could see it. Four, round fights are only miniatures."

The reporter Intervened.

Politeness in the Ring.

"So much has been written and spoken about the tricks of the trade," said he; "that is, talking and dipping gloves in resin etc. Do you know any of these?" "Pshaw!" said "Mike" with disgust. "Listen. I'm going to tell you that I have seen just as much politeness In the prize ring as at a tea in the Ritz-Carlton, and I have been both places. "I was fighting Jim Murray at Delaware River, just outside of Philadelphia. There is his picture up there, and a fine man he is, too. He gave me that picture, and I wouldn't part with it for anything in the world, not even Rockefeller's millions. You know money doesn't bring you so much, anyway,"

The old prize fighter and present philosopher pointed to a picture on the wall in the boxing room of the New York Athletic Club — his room. He looked at it with reverence. It was a large half tone of a powerfully built man, with muscles standing out all over his naked body. "That guy," said "Mike," "gave me, the hardest fight of my life. Because we were afraid of the authorities

we could not have a ring and were fighting in a cleared space on rough ground, with nude fists. In one corner of the lot was a stump—an ugly thing which had been splintered by lightning. Murray rushed me and had me going for a minute. He was backing me into the stump. I didn't know that it was there and was giving ground. The crowd separated and Murray's backers shouted "Rush him, "Jim." Now you got him. Knock him over that stump" "Did he do it? No. He stepped back away from me.

"Come back here "Mike," he said. "There's a bad stump behind you and you may fall over it and hurt yourself." "I looked around, saw it for the first time and walked away from it. He could have rushed me and won the fight then. I never received so much punishment in my life as I did in that fight. He is a great man. There was decency in the prize ring among the old school ."

The old fighter gave by a brief silence the need of fitting reverence for the knightly old opponent that had once striven with him. Then he fixed his eye upon a leviathan young

member of the New York Athletic Club who was fraternally trading blows with another in a distant corner, and came back to the present.

The Scar Murray Made.

"No, I don't, like to talk about the tricks in the ring," said he in response to a question. "What's a glove dipped in resin? The worst that it can do is to scratch a man, and what's a scratch? What's conversation? It's the blow on the jaw that counts, the square jolt on the point of the chin which shakes a man. It is said that 'Terry' McGovern was beaten by 'Young Corbett' because the latter made him lose his temper by talking to him. That may be so. But I believe in the blow on the jaw. And I repeat that I would rather have Murray for a friend—the man who punished me more than any other fighter ever did—than have Mr. Rockefeller's money."

He's a queer blend of man, this "Mike" Donovan. Born in Chicago and raised in the lots, he has been through some of the roughest parts of life. Yet, as has been suggested, he is a philosopher of no mean acumen. His philosophy is based on his experience in the prize ring, and it has no hollow sound.

"See that worst scar " asked "Mike," pointing proudly to a ragged gash in his cheek. "That's the one 'Jim' Murray gave me in our fight. And you may talk of tricks, but the punch that closes an eye or shakes the jaw is the best trick that I know."

"Which scar did Colonel Roosevelt give you?"

"Mike" Donovan just smiled, put up his guard and worked a shift. He did not answer.

"To show how much decency there was in the ring in my time." went on "Mike." "I'll tell you about an incident in the fight between 'Fiddler' Neary and 'Mike' Gillespie at Delaware River, just outside of Philadelphia. The two men were rated to be the toughest in the game at that time and were fighting with bare fists. Gillespie spiked 'Fiddler' in the third round. Neary called him a hard name, which gave a sketch of some of his ancestors.

"By God, Fiddler, I didn't mean to do that," said Gillespie. They both stopped right there and shook hands in the middle of the ring. They were supposed to be out to get each other, too, that time. And they talk about the foolish tricks of the prize ring nowadays: I'll tell you that I have seen as much politeness in the ring as at a pink tea and more genuine and sincere courtesy.

"You hear men talk about never having been in any danger of getting whipped. Every fighter who has fought men worth anything at all has been nearly licked many times. Three times while I was middleweight champion I just licked my man when I was almost gone myself. I thought each time that I was beaten my man went down. I didn't believe that he was so near through. I never expected to be able to put him out, and on each of these occasions it seemed as if a miracle had been performed when I did. Every fighter has been nearly licked before he has received his initial beating—that is, if he has fought any good men. I hate to hear these later day pugilist's say, 'Well, no one ever came near putting me out.'

"And then the fighters of to-day don't think that we old timers know anything. They want to be considered original, but of course every man has to learn from the preceding generation of fighters. I'm not ashamed to say that I learned the game from the men who came before me. I taught Fitzsimmons the shift and body blow, but he won't admit it. He thinks that he invented it. I taught Corbett in the old New York Athletic Club gymnasium, but he won't say so. When he came to me he was a clever boxer, and that was all. He wasn't a fighter, no matter how you looked at him."

"Mike" Donovan smiled and chuckled to himself. And when he smiles he shows his teeth as a famous pupil of his does. The front ones are all gold—he lost his original set in the prize ring. They are part of his tribute to the game. Picking up again the theme of modern fighters. "Mike" continued. "And I didn't go to Reno, no sir. It was hot weather and I didn't think the fight would be any better than it was. I went up to the farm where it was cool." He reflected a moment:

"And anyway I don't like to talk about the fighters of to-day. They think that I am old and don't know anything about the game now. Maybe they are right. But I know that they have a lot easier time than we used to have. In the old days we would take a train and ride for three or four hours and go to some farm house to dress. The fights would almost always be held out of doors. It would give a man the creeps to think of taking his clothes off and going out into the cold and snow sometimes to fight. Then we would start with our knuckles cold and a blow would hurt. These fighters of to-day have a nice warm dress room and rubber and all the conveniences. It is a good thing."

"Mike" nodded his head to emphasize his final remark and answered another question. "No, I don't train now," said he. "I have always smoked since I was twenty-two years old, but I have never been what you might call a tippler. I have drunk, but not much. I don't care for it. I used to spend all my money on clothes and save the rest to travel around and see fights. You know how I came to smoke? Captain John Best, of the Illinois, a lake steamer, gave me a meerschaum pipe after I had won a fight and I had to show my gratitude by smoking it. I had a tough go with that pipe—as hard a battle as I ever had."

"Pshaw!" and "Mike" had veered back onto an old siding. "They talk about conversation in the ring nowadays Here's the way they used to talk in the old times. Tom Allen was fighting Charley Gallagher on a bitter day in the snow. The fight was at St. Louis. Gallagher had knocked Allen down and everyone thought he was done. "Pretty near copped you that time" said Gallagher. "It was a stiff punch and shook me up some Charley" answered Allen, "but I bet you a hundred that you don't get me". "Your on" answered Gallagher .

Allen's Finishing Punch

"Gallagher knocked Allen down again at the end of the round, and the bell was all that saved him. He had to be carried to his corner. Everybody thought that he was done. But he came up in the next round and Gallagher was all in. That punch which had knocked Allen down took the last bit out of Gallagher, and Alien finished him with a punch on the jaw. Until years

afterward Allen thought that he had hit his opponent on the jugular vein. Tom came to New York three years ago. He was still talking about that punch.

"That was a vicious one I hit Gallagher on the jugular, "Mike," ' he told me. 'Did you mind it.

"You didn't hit him on the jugular, Tom, but on the jaw,' I told him.

"I believe you're right, "Mike." Look at that knuckle.

"He showed me his knuckle, and it was all broken. And he thought that he got that from hitting a man on the jugular! He was down and out—right on the ground—when he was here, and I sent him on to New Orleans."

The old man made one of his thoughtful pauses "The game is a hard one," said he. "I have a son who would be a better man than I was, but I don't want him to be a fighting man. It's too dangerous Would you like to see my middleweight championship belt" "Mike" Donovan led the way to his dressing room, and from a leather case produced a steel belt, significant of the middleweight championship of the world.

It is "Mike's" proudest possession, and well it might be. No prima donna is more careful of her Jewels "How does it feel to be knocked out?" he was asked. The old hair, what there is of it, stood up for a moment the old love of battle flashed in the eyes—the eyes that must have been wonderful at twenty-two.

"I never was knocked out," replied "Mike." "I have been put down and made unconscious, but no referee ever counted ten while I was asleep. And I have fought men out of my class too. John L Sullivan and I had a great fight in Boston."

"I had been here twenty six years at the New York Athletic Club on the first of last February." he continued. "But I wish that you wouldn't lay so much stress on the fighting end of it Most of the boy's who fought in my time are dead now. They were the real fighters. Why, I saw a fight once when one man felt sorry for the other and lost out of kindness The man had his opponent all done. His nose was broken and he was cut to pieces. The other man let up. He was sorry. Then I saw the mangled one set himself for one last shot. " 'Look out!' I yelled, but too late. "The blow landed, and the one on Easy street went down as if he was dead. So you never can tell about a prize fight until it is all over."

So this old man, once started, lived again the fights that he had fought and wove his narrative in his own way into the story of the olden days of the prize ring He stopped with a sort of start as a man wakes from a pleasant dream. For the barest moment he had forgotten that he was old and he was fighting the old fights over again, living once more the days of his youth and playing the game that he has always loved Then, suddenly as it had come, the touch of the old days went. He was the old man once more 'Print my picture in a frock coat," he concluded. You see, if you put me in fighting clothes some of these later day fighters might think that I was still in the game and challenge me. And I would hate to have to turn them down.

PRESIDENT AND OTHER MEMORIES OF FAMOUS FIGHTING MEN

BY MIKE DONOVAN

EX-CHAMPION MIDDLEWEIGHT OF AMERICA AND BOXING-MASTER OF THE NEW YORK ATHLETIC CLUB

[EDITED BY F. H. N.]

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CHAPTER I

THE ROOSEVELT THAT I KNOW

ALL the world knows Theodore Roosevelt, the statesman; the man who turned the light on the corporate highwaymen. He has made the "Big Stick" respected. But the "Big Stick" must be guided by law, not so the fist; wherever you see a head hit it is the fighting rule ; a word and a blow, but the blow first the reverse of legal practice.

In the following pages I propose to describe Theodore Roosevelt, the fighter, untrammelled by legal restriction ; the lover of fistic encounter, as I know him; the man of brawn and muscle, with a genuine fighting spirit and the courage of two ordinary men to sustain its promise. I intend further to describe his methods of attack and defense, and to note the analogy between the spirit he exhibits in boxing and that which has urged him on in those political encounters which have made him famous.

A succession of glove-fights with him, covering a period of more than ten years, in which we have met as man to man, where it was give and take, with no restrictions, gives me the right to speak authoritatively, and I wish to say here that, whether or not he was champion of his class in college, about which there has been some discussion in the press, it is admitted that he was an able fighting man then, ready to take his medicine and try again. I can say that he is the same man now a man who asks no favors, cool in a fight, determined, aggressive, consumed with the purpose to overcome resistance, to win; a glutton for punishment, as the ring phrase goes. It is no exaggeration when I say that, in some mix-ups with him, I have been compelled to resort to all the arts and devices that have come to me from years of serious fighting, often to slug right and left to save myself.

I have noted his career in politics, seen him go for the mark there with the same pertinacity that he shows when boxing. Resistance, discomfiture, hard knocks in one domain as in the other serve only to make him keener, to whet his appetite for the fray. Had he come- to the prize-ring, instead of to the political arena, it is my conviction he would have been successful. The man is a born fighter; it's in his blood. There are some who are easily diverted from their purpose, some who go impetuously forward with dash and spirit which

will not be denied, but once the attack seems hopeless they hesitate and fly panic-stricken in hopeless disorder. A few only remain; these, with conviction imbedded in their very souls, cannot be stayed, even though they themselves would will it. They go tumultuously forward, even to the death.

Theodore Roosevelt is of them. He reminds one of the biblical general who, his men faint-hearted, wavering, at sight of the overpowering on-rush of Philistines, faced the tide undaunted, so firm was his purpose that he furiously laid about him till the last. Even in death, the Bible tells us : "His sword clave to his hand." That is to say, the hilt of his sword was found to be imbedded in his palm, a sure indication that he never wavered from his purpose of attack.

I have a vivid recollection of my first fistic encounter with Theodore Roosevelt. The Governor left me in the old billiard-room of the Executive Mansion at Albany, which he had fitted up as a gymnasium for his boys, in order that they might begin their physical education under his eye.

He then went downstairs to don his boxing clothes. In a few minutes he returned. It was the Governor of the State of New York who had left me. It was a fighting man who entered the room. He wore a sleeveless flannel shirt, his khaki rough-rider uniform trousers and light canvas shoes without heels. First, I was struck by the expression of his eyes, which are large, light blue, placed well apart, aggressive, fearless, persistent . He is about 5 feet 8 inches in height, but his great breadth of shoulders and bulk of body make him seem shorter. His arms are short, but heavy and well-muscled. His head is that of the typical fighter. It is broad and symmetrical, poised on a powerful neck. A plumb-line could be dropped from the back of his head to his waist. That formation shows not only the fighting spirit, but the physical vigor to sustain it. His short, thick body, with its high, arched chest, is sturdily set on unusually strong, sinewy legs. I noticed he wore no belt, and told him he had better put one on.

He borrowed one from my brother Jerry. After pulling on his gloves he stepped forward on to the mat. Most men, on coming to box for the first time with a champion, present or retired, show some trepidation. There was none of that here. After we shook hands I studied him carefully. Then I led a left jab, following it up with a faint-hearted right that landed like a love-tap high up on his cheek. He dropped his hands and stopped. "Look here, Mike," he said indignantly; "that is not fair." I was afraid I had done something wrong. "What's the matter, Governor?" I asked. "You are not hitting me," he said, shaking his head. "I'd like you to hit out." "All right, Governor," I said, thinking to myself, this man has a pretty good opinion of himself.

We started in again, and I sent in a hard right to the body as he rushed in, and then tried a swinging left for the jaw. He stepped inside and drove his right to my ear. It jarred me down to the heels. I realized from that moment that the Governor was no ordinary amateur. If I took chances with him I was endangering my reputation.

From that day I have taken no chances with Theodore Roosevelt with the gloves. I've hit him many times as hard as ever I hit a fighter in the ring, without stopping him, and thousands

know how hard I can hit. I want to say, now, that I never saw him wince or show even by an involuntary sign that he was discomfited in spirit, no matter how severe the bodily pain. On the contrary, it met with only that characteristic turning of the head a bit to the side, a grim smile and a determined setting of the bulldog jaw, followed by another rush. Theodore Roosevelt is a strong, tough man; hard to hurt, and harder to stop.

From the very first I was struck with the kindly nature of the man. Though pressed with business as he always was, his mind full of problems, with a crowd of importunate office seekers and would-be advisers forever at his heels, he hailed my appearance with genuine delight, and always found time to inquire after my doings and welfare. Sometimes I thought it was the getting away from the exactions of office, the temporary respite from official cares that my coming signaled, that made me so welcome ; again, that diplomatic intrigue, the wrangling of officials, intemperate attacks of the opposing party, all of which must be settled with words, mere words, stirred his impatient blood to the boiling point. A box on the ear here, a smash in the wind there, I could readily guess, would have suited his impulsive nature far better. In most of his affairs it is the diplomatic "Having the honor to be" but never doing anything. He must hit somebody, hit him hard, and I thought I turned up opportunely to get what was coming to somebody else.

This was my first impression. A mistaken one as I soon learned. However he might have settled political discussions in the ring, or let rivals for a post-office wrestle it out best two out of three falls to get the job it was never in his mind to hand out to me the punishment that was theirs. He had come to like me, because he found me an authority in a domain that particularly interested him, because I represented the straightforward method of the real fighting man, who fights because he loves to fight and brings no hard feelings, no animosity into the game.

Many's the time I have been passed through a throng of waiting politicians of high rank, often enough summoned by the sudden bobbing around a door of the President's head, with a: "Hello, Mike; come right in!" It seemed to me that though immersed in political conflicts, that kind of fighting never sufficed to warm his blood, for I never saw a man more willing to take a good jolt just for the pleasure of giving one back.

One day while I was waiting in the office for my turn to see the President, I witnessed an incident which proved the truth of my belief that under his rugged, aggressive exterior there lay a vein of kindness and sympathy. The last of the long line of visitors was a woman accompanied by a young girl apparently her daughter, who had been introduced to the President by a man whom I took to be the Congressman from their home. She was importuning the President for a favor which, for some reason, he was unable to grant. The thought flashed through my mind that this woman was trying to get a pardon for her son perhaps a deserter. The President listened attentively, then shook his head emphatically. "I'm sorry, madam," he said, "but I can't do it."
"But, Mr. President," she urged, "won't you"
"Madam," he replied, stepping came toward him, "I can't do it. I cannot do it."

As she turned away, very sorrowful, he came toward me. His eyes were sad. The corners of his mouth drooped. His face was flushed deep red. The veins on his neck stood out. He was a picture of distress. The incident proved the truth of the old rule that a man cannot be a good fighter unless he has a good heart. The first time I was invited to the White House to box with the President was in January, 1904. I found him the same enthusiastic, simply democratic, kindly man I had boxed with four years earlier at Albany. I have learned, in my association with the President, though it has been confined solely to sparring bouts, that the really great are never pompous; but, on the contrary, simple and sincere.

Though he has a quiet dignity that brooks no familiarity, the genuineness of the man, his directness, earnestness, at once puts you at your ease, and the consideration, which seems bred in his bone, warms you to him at the very start. "Why don't you stay for the reception tonight, Mike ?" said he one afternoon after a ten round bout.

"Why, Mr. President," I replied, "I haven't the proper clothes for anything like that."

"Oh, you mean a dress-suit. Say, Mike, I'll lend you one of mine."

I caught his eye as, with the characteristic movement of the head to one side, he grinned encouragingly at me and, seeing that he really meant it, I looked from his full figure to my own slender outlines and burst out laughing. "Why, what's the matter, Mike!" The words were scarce out of his mouth when he caught the reason for my hesitancy the same ridiculous figure appeared in his mind's eye that I had pictured myself, as wearing his clothes, and he caught the infection, and for some moments we stood facing each other and laughed ourselves hoarse.

"I'll tell you what I'll do, Mr. President," I said, when I had recovered, "I'll hire a dress suit." So I did, and a disappointing fit it was, though the best I could do a pinch in the waist and shoulder, and too long in the sleeves and legs. For a moment I determined to give over the idea of the reception, but on second thought I remembered that I had promised to come and that he expected me. I put on as good a face as I could, and feeling very uncomfortable about as much at home, in fact, as a sheep in a lion's skin presented myself at the White House and edged timidly into the background, an uncertain and inconspicuous shadow in the gay throng.

I would shake hands with the President and fade away. I thought I would be a temporary, rather than a permanent, exhibit. He motioned me toward him. As I advanced, the major-domo stopped me and said, "Name, please." The President heard him and called, "Oh, there is no need of introducing Mike to me," at the same time reaching out and drawing me toward him. But the President's sharp eye caught me unawares while I was trying to push my shoulders further into the coat, thus to make the sleeves seem not so ridiculously long. "Hello, Mike!" he exclaimed. "I'm glad to see you." He must have noted my discomfort and embarrassment, read it in my face; for, leaning over, he whispered, "It's all right, Mike. You look first-rate". It was a great relief; my features relaxed and I breathed freer. Indeed, I stayed for some time, enjoying it thoroughly. I could not observe that I attracted any unfavorable attention and, concluding that my appearance was not nearly as bad as I thought, gave the matter no further concern.

On the evening of March 3, 1904, the day before the inauguration, between five and six o'clock, the President and I had a "go" of some ten rounds. He was as happy as a schoolboy

as he stripped for the fray. "After the inauguration to-morrow," he said, "I go out to the Rockies on a hunt for four or five weeks and live the simple life." He loves the Western mountaineers and plainsmen. "Now, Mike," he said, "we must have a good, long bout this evening. It'll brighten me up for to-morrow, which will be a trying day."

We boxed the ten hard, long rounds. He had improved so much in his practice with me that winter that I had to resort to all the strategy that my experience had taught me. After the fifth round I felt like calling a halt, but did not want to appear to be a quitter. We were having it hot and heavy; in an exchange I tried to land a right-hand body blow, ducking to avoid a left-hand counter. Instead he struck me a flush right-hander on the top of the head, knocking me sprawling to the mat. The blow jarred me quite a bit. As I got to my feet, he said :

" That's a good make-believe knock-down, Mike." Evidently he did not realize how hard he hit me. "Mr. President," I rejoined, "I would not let even you knock me down if I could help it." I felt a bit nettled. We started in again, hammer and tongs, and I kept a sharp lookout for his clever play with the left and follow with the right.

I will say right here I never was more extended with any man I ever boxed with than in this go. At the close he was perspiring profusely, but seemed fresh enough to go much longer. I sat down and began to puff. He was sitting beside me and said, "Mike, did I understand you to say you are going to march in the parade with the Catholic Protectory Band of New York to-morrow? If so, I would like to have you ask Mr. Ryan, the bandmaster, to have his band play 'Garry Owen' as it passes the reviewing stand."

I said, "I will certainly do so, Mr. President, with a great deal of pleasure."

This is the great Irish fighting air, which was played by Irish bagpipes at the famous battle of Vinegar Hill, in Ireland, against the British troops. The air so inspired the Irishmen that they repulsed the regular British soldiers with their musketry and cannons, although they had nothing in their hands but pitchforks and pikes ; and gained them the victory. It was to this same tune that Ouster led his valiant troop of cavalry to death in the battle of the Little Big Horn.

The next morning I went to the band headquarters, which I had found after an all-night search, and delivered my message to Bandmaster Ryan. He said, "Did the President say that?" I replied, "You may rely upon it."

"Well." said he, "I'll play it as he never heard it played before."

That afternoon we marched down the avenue, turned the corner at the Treasury Building, Fifteenth Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, and the eighty buglers which comprised the boyband began the first stanza of " Garry Owen." The President, hearing them coming, clapped his hands, saying, "Here they come! here they come!" He was so delighted that, when they were passing, he shouted, "Well done, boys! well done!" As I came along in the rear of the band, the President spied me and called out, "Hello there, Mike! How are you, old man?" Vice-President Fairbanks was on the reviewing stand, and, as I was informed

afterward, he inquired, "Who is this Mike?" He was told that it was Professor Mike Donovan, who had been boxing with the President. He said, "Very interesting, indeed." The bandmaster and the boys were extremely proud of the greeting they received from the President, and so was I.

Mike Donavon
The Making Of A Man
By Marshall Stillman – 1918

NEW YORK
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TO THE READER

This work is written as an affectionate tribute to one who has come up out of brutal associations and who rejoiced in that he was surrounded by children of whom he was proud and by friends whom he loved.

The author hopes that in the lack of minute detail in certain of the Professor's fights the reader will not be unduly disappointed. Those who have seen prize-ring bare-knuckle contests can fill in the lapses and those who have not been at the ring side are saved the knowledge that man descends to such brutality.

To the innate integrity of Mike Donovan's character and to the fortunate occurrence that he married early in life a woman of sterling worth who always retained his utmost respect and strongest love, is due the fact that he is alive, well and enjoying good health and life to-day.

A FOREWORD

"Some as good citizens as I know are or were prize-fighters. Take Mike Donovan of New York. He and his family represent a type of American citizenship of which we have a right to be proud. Mike is a devoted temperance man and can be relied upon for every movement in the interest of good citizenship. I was first intimately thrown with him when I was Police Commissioner. One evening he and I—both in dress suits—attended a temperance meeting of Catholic Societies. It culminated in a lively set-to between myself and a Tammany Senator who was a very good fellow, but whose ideas of temperance differed radically from mine and as the event proved, from those of the majority of the meeting. Mike evidently regarded himself as my backer—he was sitting on the platform beside me—and I think felt as pleased and interested as if the set-to had been physical instead of merely

verbal.

"Afterwards I grew to know him well both while I was Governor and while I was President and many a time he came on and boxed with me."

From the Autobiography of Theodore Roosevelt.

INTRODUCTION

Good old Mike is gone. In the twilight of life he has passed on. Seventy years young was Mike. None thought of him as old. He was young and, in vigor of manhood, he vied with the youngest of us who loved him. His heart was as fresh and simple as a child's. He came into this world under the most humble, plain, yes, rough conditions, and he rose to be the honored friend of the cultured and refined.

Mike was a patrician by birth. Through his veins ran the blood of Ireland's chieftains. He seldom mentioned that his descent could be traced throughout many centuries. Before he was eight years of age his beloved mother died.

From then on to the time of his marriage Mike wandered over the United States working in all sorts of places and under any conditions. He enlisted when a mere boy in the army and served throughout the war. To hear him tell of the experiences of his early life was a treat. In the old New York Athletic Club house many a pleasant evening was spent in Mike's boxing quarters listening to the interesting tales of his early career. His many fights with the bare knuckles and later on with the gloves were told in Mike's inimitable way and great was the pleasure he gave to his large circle of friends as they fought the old battles over again with the champion middle weight bare knuckle fighter of America. Mike never was defeated either with the gloves or in any of his bare knuckle fights. He retired an undefeated champion.

From the day Mike came to the club to the day he passed on he was an integral part of the institution. His jovial companionship when with us cheered and encouraged us and the memory of the good old friend who has gone will ever be bright in our hearts. Our lives are indeed the richer for his good influence. Many a kindly word of counsel has been given from his store of worldly wisdom and it has helped.

Mike was a great soul. For "Great souls are not those which have fewer passions and more virtue than common ones, but those only which have greater aims." (La Rochefoucauld.) His aim was always high. He lived his religion of purity and brotherly love. Fearless and tireless for those things he considered the right he walked his path of life in simplicity and guilelessness beloved by us all.

Never will be forgotten the evening of November 14, 1914, when the members of the club gave a testimonial in the form of a boxing entertainment to the dear old Professor. The wonderful spirit of affection which brought all together at the passing of Mike Donovan from

his active career in the organization, impelled each to put forward his best. The committee felt the incentive; the gathering entered with keen enjoyment into the spirit; and the boxers, many of whom came from long distances to participate, were carried away by the surcharged atmosphere. Several of the bouts which were supposed to be friendly exhibitions turned into battles of the first water. Blows were given and received with good nature but with great vigor. They had the businesslike kick behind them.

Tommy Ryan, the ex-welterweight champion, who had retired ages ago, and Harry Stone, the then present champion, went at it hammer and tongs. As we looked at Gunboat Smith and Battling Levinsky, we could see no difference in the power of their blows had they been contesting for the light heavyweight championship. The whole spirit of the evening was one of enthusiasm and determination to make the passing of dear old Mike into private life a memorable occasion. To make it an event that he would be proud to look back upon and ever recall with joy. It comes to few of us to be beloved in the manner with which we look upon our good friend who has passed on to the great majority. But we reap that which we sow. Our Mike sowed deeds of kindness and affection, and he has reaped a rich harvest.

Prof. Mike Donovan was a credit to the sport of boxing. To him can be conceded the place of honor as the greatest teacher the game has ever known. He was fired with enthusiasm and imparted that spirit to his pupils. He was a two handed fighter himself and a hard hitter; those qualities were made those of his students. To sit on the side-lines in the boxing room and watch the Professor on his busy days, was a liberal education in the art of hit, stop and get-away. He was as quick as a cat and never lost his keen sense of orientation. Many men, in fact the great majority, in early life lose their ability to coordinate brain and muscle and consequently suffer many accidents which could be avoided if that sense were preserved. The Professor knew boxing could perform that service for men and advised its universal practice. Wherever Mike went he was known. He was as well and favorably known and admired in Newport or Southampton as in Coney Island or Greenpoint. He belonged to all sections and counted his friends in all grades of life. Statesmen and politicians, clergy and laity, were proud to call him friend. To hear him relate his experiences when Colonel Roosevelt was President was indeed amusing. Several times he journeyed to Washington to exchange blows with the hard-hitting ex-President. One evening there was to be a large reception to the army and navy. Mike was asked by the President to remain over and enjoy the event.

"I haven't any 'wedding garment,' " replied Mike.

"You must stay, Mike," enthusiastically urged the President. "If one of mine would fit you I would let you have it, but you can hire one in town and nobody will know the difference."

So the Professor was induced to stay and appeared that evening in the line arrayed in all his hired glory. His astonishment could hardly be imagined when he was ushered out of the line by one of the functionaries and taken to the front of the procession and presented to the President ahead of the venerable Admirals and celebrities of the diplomatic corps. Grabbing the professor by the hand the President drew him over to him and whispered in his ear: "Glad to see you, Mike. You look bully." Mike was very glad he remained over, for he enjoyed himself immensely. And as he walked around that room, chatting with personages of high distinction, we can well imagine his noble head was carried as proudly and becomingly and as handsomely as any within the four walls of the White House. Our Mike was equal to

any environment be it that of the home of culture, or of state, or of more modest and plain surroundings. And he drew all to him. His respectful, dignified and attractive bearing was pleasing to the most exacting in refinement. Mike was a spiritual force. He reacted on his hearers in a manner they could not resist. Mike saw good in every one, because he was pure of heart. He saw God, for "the pure in heart see God." Grant that we may all be worthy to follow in his footsteps and some day meet with him again.

THE MANLY ART

The world is comprised of people who see life from many points of view. The life of a professional pugilist, as a rule, has in it but little to be praised ; to some the thought of prize-fighting or even boxing is abhorrent, but to the athletic, energetic youth, boxing or even a little blood letting is often beneficial. Prize-fighting per se cannot be recommended. However, many men of culture and refinement have seen much to enjoy in the wonderful dexterity, the marvelous science of an expert boxer pitted against a slugging, rushing opponent.

An exhibition given by a master of the art of self-defense revealing astonishing coordination of brain and muscle is most fascinating to those who know. In the heat of the contest blows which apparently are severe are really but little felt. A man in good condition and with mind intent on victory knows no pain. The boxer who suffers is he who has mentally conceded defeat and who winces under every attack. Such men should be taken from the contest at once.

An experienced referee can always tell when the heart has gone. Then blows hurt. Then it is brutal to continue. Another feature of boxing matches is the mental state of the spectators. Unthinking men resolve all contests to a fight. The more gore the better the fight. That is merely the distorted view of brutal thinking. So can dancing be debased. So can art be debauched. So can the sight of a beautiful woman be made the occasion for sin. It is all in the angle from which we look.

Mike Donovan, boxing instructor emeritus of the New York Athletic Club, embodied all that is best in the manly art. His life can be read by the refined and cultured as well as by others, and profit may be gained. The youth can learn the advantage of a stout heart and active body. Mike's life was rich in kindness of heart, generosity of nature, and high ideals maintained under adverse circumstances, and nurtured and encouraged by his beloved wife.

Living in most unpropitious environment the golden thread of an honest, sturdy and noble heart can be seen interwoven with threads of a darker hue. From the nature, in his early youth, of an Arab— his hand against every man and every man's hand against him—he evolved gradually into the Philistine and then his later years were ones of soberness, gentleness and peace.

The Professor heartily agreed with Maeterlinck, the Belgian writer and philosopher, who is reported as saying: "Boxing is not degrading. It is the discipline of violence. It is violence

civilized by conventions that are almost courtesies. The Boxer is not a rowdy. He is confident in his knowledge. Combative instincts are an integral part of our nature. They who lack them, lack mental energy."

The Professor rightly contended that every human being should know the art of self-defense with the weapons nature has given him. When one becomes expert in boxing and cares for that form of exercise, he will find it a most delightful pastime; freeing the mind from gloomy thoughts, relieving the tension of the nerves; strengthening the muscles; helping circulation and aiding all the functions of the vital organs.

No more delightful pastime in athletics can be imagined than the good-natured bout with the gloves. The manly art of self-defense must not be misconstrued into the idea that it is the unmanly art of making oneself offensive. Kind words and a kindly thought are often more effective than fists or weapons and when trouble arises should always be first employed.

MIKE DONOVAN CHAPTER I EARLY YEARS

Here are the incidents of Mike Donovan's remarkable career and his reminiscences of many well known men. Written by his friend and admirer Marshall Stillman, as an affectionate tribute to a dear friend and talented instructor in the manly art of self-defense. He considers Mike Donovan one of the most exceptional and interesting characters he has ever met.

Mike Donovan was made Instructor Emeritus of the New York Athletic Club. The Board of Governors generously and affectionately voted him a sufficient stipend to keep him in comfort during his last days. His wife, who was so great an influence for good, was the beloved mother of twelve children, of whom nine are living. They were well brought up and are now succeeding in life. Recently Mrs. Donovan passed on, but she still lives in the hearts of those that knew her.

The Professor was surrounded with a devoted family that loved him. Mark the contrast between his late life and the sad conditions of his early youth. What must strike the reader most forcibly is the wonder of it all. Wonder that such a character could spring from such adverse conditions and influences. The evening Mike and I selected for the telling of his tale, he met me at my downtown club where we could talk without fear of interruption. Before he arrived I cautioned the hall boy to be sure Prof. Donovan was escorted to the room where I was and to take good care of him.

"Yes, sir," came the ready answer. "We'll take care of him. We want to see what kind of a man he looks like." As a reward for the boys, when the Professor was announced, I came down to meet him and introduced all the attendants who had crowded near the door. Mike shook hands with them all and said: "Well, boys, here I am, you don't see much." A good laugh followed and the broad smile of welcome that greeted the Professor was assurance of his immediately filling the bill of their expectations. With quick Irish sagacity he said, looking them all over

"Yes, all good Irish boys. Nothing like the Irish boys." This sally evidently confirmed the cordial admiration and all was well.

As Mike sat in an easy chair in a cozy corner of the club library, running over the history of his life, the thought occurred to me time and again what a miracle it was that he should be there with me; comfortable, happy and prospered ; wasting no time in regrets for the past and facing the future with a brave Irish heart that has never been conquered by fear. A noble exponent of all that is manly, clean and Christian. A devout Roman Catholic. A firm believer in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of Man. A Christian of the highest type.

Yes, I wondered ; and you too, good reader, will also wonder, when you learn of the incidents of this remarkable career. If perchance you have no God you will feel a stirring within yourself, a heart's desire to know and be known to some power outside yourself that will give you comfort in your hours of trial and protection in your moments of need. Mike's faith was that of a little child, sweet and simple and full of the joy of living and knowing. Mike's good mother established this faith within him that through the changes of his life never seemed to desert him. Although at times in touch with the rubbish of humanity this jewel of a simple child-faith in God ever showed forth in his manly character and protected him in his moments of peril. Through the leading of this protecting Guide, he selected the life partner of his joys and trials, taking' as his beloved wife one who in her sweet and strong motherly way was as extraordinary a woman as he a man.

Mike lighted a cigar and with his finely formed head moving at times in emphasis to his remarks, he commenced his reminiscence. I wish every good reader of these articles could have heard the tale from his own lips; as my retelling of this history could not possibly interest the reader as much as would the engaging manner of this grand old man. He said very simply and earnestly, "Now, Marshall, I will, of course, pass over the dark spots. I cannot tell them in the presence of this young lady" (referring to the stenographer). The stenographer and I laughed. "Well," I said, "if they are not too dark let 'em go. We want everything of interest."
"All right," said Mike, "here goes."

"I was born in Chicago, September 27th, 1847, of Irish parentage. My grandparents were among the earliest settlers of Chicago. "My mother was a lovely woman, beautiful and with a skin as fair and soft as a lily. We kept a dairy, and were in a fair way of becoming rich, owing to the good management and frugality of my mother. Then she died.

"I was about seven years of age. My father, who did not understand the nature of a lively but good-tempered boy, treated me wretchedly, and as my brothers and sisters, who were all older than I, left the house as soon after my mother's death as they possibly could, I was left alone with my father. He at last left me, after selling all his holdings, and wandered away to New Orleans, leaving me in the care of an aunt who lived in the country. "My aunt was a fine type of woman: religious, and a good woman. She treated me all right, but my uncle and I couldn't get along. He didn't understand me. I suppose I was mischievous and bothered him. Anyway, we didn't agree, and I made up my mind to run away. I was then eight years of age,

without a cent in the world, so I started to work for strangers. I was ill treated by these people, and went from one place to another, working on farms during harvest time and being expected to do a man's work.

"I remember at one place I had seven boils on my back, and, oh, how they did pain me and how I did want my mother to comfort me and take care of me. I tell you, it makes me feel like crying to think of it. To imagine one of my dear children thrown out in the world the way I was and subjected to the sorrows and sufferings that I had to endure makes me feel very sad.

"The wife of the farmer for whom I was working was a kind woman. She put cream over my back and laid a cloth next my skin. But I had to go to work with the men every day and pitch hay, and do just as they did. "After the harvest time was over, I decided to hunt up my only brother, Jerry, who was in Chicago. He was ten years older than I and always liked me and I liked him.

"I was some fifty miles from Chicago without a cent in my pocket, as all I got out of the farmers for whom I worked was my board and washing, and the boils on my back, which were the result of the poor food. How to get to Chicago was the question. I thought of the canal. My former experience of beating it on the railroad when I first ran away rather cooled my desire to tackle that again.

"Oh, yes. I forgot to tell you about the first time I ran away from my aunt's where my father left me. "I wanted to go to Chicago to find my brother Jerry, and went down to the railroad and got aboard a train going in the wrong direction. Poor little kid, only eight years of age, and without a penny in the world. "The conductor put me off at the next station. I waited for hours for another train, boarded it, and was again put off at the next station. But I was happy. I felt all the time I was getting nearer my brother Jerry.

"Then I tackled a freight train, and, sneaking between the cars, I rode on the bumpers for miles and miles. Just think of it—only eight years of age and riding in a place like that. The good Lord took care of me or I would never be here to tell you this tale."

"Yes," I thought, "the Good Lord was surely your protector and the spirit of that good mother was over that boy and doing her utmost." The passage from Scripture occurred to me : "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers." The heart's desire, which is true prayer, was always pure and strong in Mike's nature. He couldn't help it. His nature was so simple and unaffected, with a keen sense of honor, fair dealing both for himself and to others, and cleanliness of thought, he couldn't possibly desire anything but what was good. The pure in heart see God, and Mike was pure in heart.

Mike lit a fresh cigar and continued his story:

"Well, after traveling all those miles on that freight train, I finally landed about five miles from my aunt's home, where I originally started. I was no nearer my brother Jerry. You see

how ignorant and helpless I was. I didn't know which way was north or south. I felt blue but not discouraged.

"You know, it's hard to down the Irish." [The stenographer being Irish, and there being Irish blood in my veins, we all three laughed heartily and agreed. The laugh was not so much occasioned by the statement as the delightfully refreshing manner of putting it.]

"I set to work," continued Mike, "to scheme how I could beat my way to Chicago. I thought of the canal. I went there and hung around thinking up some plan to help me on my way.

"I saw a pair of horses being driven into a stable by one of the canal men, and, noticing they were all covered with mud, I said to the man, 'Say, Mister, I want to go to Chicago, and if I clean your horses will you take me as far as you go?' " 'Sure,' said the driver. 'Git on the job and I'll see you git there all right.' "Gee, but I felt good about that. I started right in, and how I worked on those horses. It took me two hours of hardest kind of work to get them into shape, but after emptying the last pail of dirty water, I felt fine and hunted up my newly found friend.

"I asked a man who was around the stable where I could find the driver of that team I had been cleaning, saying that he was going to take me to Chicago. 'Say, sonny,' replied the man, 'don't you believe it. That man can't take you. He is nothing but the driver of that team and could only take you walking. He's been asleep for the last couple of hours that you've been workin', and if you don't git out of here he'll give you a licking when he comes down.'

"You can imagine how I felt. Cry? Oh, my, how I cried ! But I was too proud to cry in front of him. I went away and got behind the barn and, leaning up against the side, I cried as if my heart would break. "Well, I had to get to Chicago, so, after drying my eyes, I started to walk. I didn't know how far it was, but I thought it would take me a lifetime to make the distance. So when I met with a canal boat going the same way, I asked the boss of the boat—this time I made sure he was the boss—if I could do anything for him, as I wanted to get to Chicago.

" 'Can you pump ?'

" 'Sure.'

" 'Come on then, kid.'

"I jumped aboard, and how I did pump ! It was a leaky old boat, and about as fast as I pumped, the water ran in. After pumping an awfully long time, I said " 'Say, Mister, I'm tired. This old boat is just as full of water as when I commenced. I can't pump any more.'

" 'Well, then, get the hell out of this !' "That was all the thanks I got. So, as I noticed I could walk faster than the boat could go, I started to beat it to Chicago. It must have been at least forty miles that I walked. "On my way I begged something to eat. I remember one old woman was very kind to me. She gave me my dinner and let me sleep with one of her sons. "In the morning she gave me a bully breakfast of ham and eggs and coffee, and, by golly! I felt fine. "I walked that day with a light heart, and, on arriving at Chicago, I hunted up a sporting house where a friend of my brother's told me I would find him. Pat McBride was his name. I remember him well.

"Jerry was very much surprised to see me. He was kind to me and took good care of me, but shortly afterwards he was compelled to go to New Orleans."

That finished the first evening's installment of the story.

As we left the Club we received a cheery goodnight from all the attendants, and I could easily see that in the future I would be considered one of the distinguished members.