

Links with the Past.

IN previous issues we have dealt with strong men of ancient times and of the Middle Ages. A glimpse of later athletes, some of them within living memory, and a few still surviving, links up the past with the modern revival of strong men.

The feats of Thomas Topham, who flourished in the eighteenth century, have been already dealt with, and then follows an interval before we come upon another Samson of note. Tom



F. Robinson (See Page 19).

Johnson and "Gentleman" Jackson, two heroes of the earlier prize ring, are, however, deserving of mention. The former could swing a heavy sack around his head after a long contest, and "Gentleman" Jackson, the "corporeal master" of Byron, as the poet calls him, could write his signature on the ceiling with an 84lb. weight suspended from his little finger.

It is something like half a century since Professor William Harrison was considered a prodigy in physical power. The manner in which he swung enormous Indian clubs earned for him the sobriquet of "the strongest man in the world." A periodical of the time, in recording a *fête* at Holland Park, London, has these remarks upon Harrison's exhibition: "Mr. Harrison's Indian club exercise must not be omitted from the list of performances. The clubs he now wields are large and heavier than those of last year, yet he whirled them round his head with the greatest ease. We learn that Mr. Harrison first began to use the clubs three years ago, at which time his muscular development was considered very great, his measurements being then: Round the chest 37½ins., round the upper arm 13½in., round the forearm 12½in. The clubs with which Mr. Harrison first commenced weighed 7lb each. He has advanced progressively until he can now wield with perfect ease two clubs, each weighing 37lb., his heaviest clubs being 47lb. each. The effect of this exercise on the wielder's measurements was as follows: Round the chest 42½in., round the upper arm 15in., round the forearm 14in. At the same time his shoulders have increased immensely, and the muscles of his loins, which were weak when he first used the clubs, are now largely developed and powerful; in short, all the muscles of the trunk have been much improved by this exercise."

Ireland, too, has been prolific of strong men, and very few Celts could cope with such powerful personages as James Daly, the Irish giant, and Tom Lynch, whose record for straight dumb-bell lifting was rarely surpassed in his time.

The brawny sons of Auld Scotia have put forth many claimants for championship honours among the modern Goliaths, and the feats of such athletes as Donald Dinnie and Duncan Ross will compare favourably with most of the achievements of the greatest athletes of foreign countries.

Across the Channel many sturdy Gauls were to be found, but few could compare with "Mons. Achilles," whose feats of strength, performed thirty or forty years ago, long remained the admiration of the younger generation. Herr Hygster, the "Oak of the Rhine," was a veritable giant both in strength and stature. Some of the records given to this athlete are marvellous, but the best authenticated one is that of picking up a bear and throwing it on its back.

Professor William Miller, the Australian, was a model of strength, and many of his dumb-bell performances stood pre-eminent for years. He was a man of robust frame, and engaged in a Græco Roman wrestling match with Tom Cannon, then considered the world's champion in that style, the Englishman winning.