

All-Round Athletes.

WHO IS THE WORLD'S CHAMPION?

WHEN we come to consider the claims to this honour we find ourselves in the same sort of predicament that

besets us in allotting the sovereignty of the mat and of the "strong man's" empire. Broadly speaking, there is no recognised competition for this title. Among professionals we do not know of any world's competition. In the amateur division, an annual competition, open to the world, is held in America, last year's winner being Martin Sheridan. In the strict sense, however, this can hardly be recognised as the world's championship. It is not promoted by international authorities, but by the Amateur Athletic Union of America; therefore the winner can scarcely claim to be the all-round champion of the world any more than, say, a sprinter could call himself the world's champion in that branch because he won the 100 yards at our A.A.A. championships, which are also open to the world.

In the case of the 1804 all-round championship, won by T. F. Kiely, it may fairly be said that the victory carried stronger claims, as it was gained at the World's Fair, St. Louis, U.S.A., a celebration of the Olympic Games, attended by a number of competitors from various countries. Kiely was also successful in America two years later. The competition is certainly of a varied kind, consisting of ten events. Last year Martin Sheridan scored with these figures: 100 yards, 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ sec.; putting the weight, 43ft.; high jump, 5ft. 8in.; half-mile walk, 3min. 51 $\frac{1}{2}$ sec.; throwing the hammer, 108ft. 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.; pole vault, 10ft. 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.;

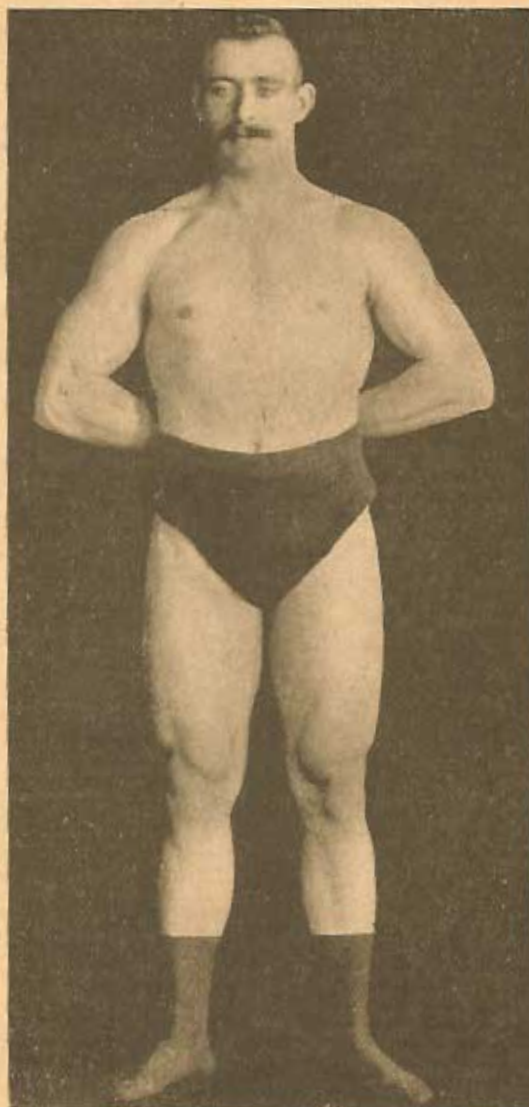
120 yards hurdle, 17sec.; throwing 56lbs. weight, 27ft. 10in.; long jump, 20ft. 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.; mile run, 5min. 14sec.

Sheridan is the world's discus-throwing champion, and Kiely has held the hammer-throwing record. In club events these two athletes have accomplished any number of fine performances, Kiely's list being probably the better. The Pentathlon, comprising five

events (running, jumping, discus-throwing, hurling the javelin, and wrestling) may be held to represent the world's all-round amateur championship, the Olympic Games being specially promoted for competitors from all countries, and on this score the title rests with H. S. Mellander, a Swedish member of the Salford Harriers, who was successful in the 1906 Olympiad. The Pentathlon is omitted from this year's festival, which is a matter for some regret, though, conducted in the half-hearted spirit of two years ago, it is no loss. Among the amateurs Kiely and Sheridan may fairly be said to top the all-rounders.

There is Mr. C. B. Fry, whose admirers designate him England's premier athlete. His long jump of 23ft. still stands as the Varsity record, and he has not only frequently represented England at cricket, but in his Oxford days came close to playing against Cambridge at Rugby as well as Association football, only an injury preventing him from achieving the rare feat of obtaining his "Blue" under both codes. Mr. Fry's credentials have, however, been obtained for the most part in a distinctive field. Speaking of cricketers, calls to mind the case of A. E. Harragin, of the West Indian team of two years ago, who once accomplished probably a unique athletic feat by sweeping the board, his figures for the nine events being:

One hundred yards, 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ sec.; 440 yards, 54sec.;



Alex Munro (Scotland),
(The King of Caber-tossers).

putting the weight, 38ft. 10in.; throwing the cricket ball, 128yds. 6in.; pole jump, 9ft. 6in.; high jump, 5ft. 5in.; and he also won the hurdles, half mile, and 220 yards.

Dealing with the professionals, the name of A. A. Cameron at once occurs to the mind, and most Scotsmen regard his claim as undeniable. They are very strong, with fifteen records for the "heavy" events so much favoured by Highland athletes, but some may object that they are all branches of the one sport of weight-throwing. We may add, therefore, that Cameron is an excellent jumper and a fair sprinter, while latterly he has been doing well on the mat.

Nor must his fellow-countryman, Alex Munro, be altogether forgotten. As some counterbalance to Cameron's superiority with the hammer and at putting, Munro is king at caber-tossing. Cameron has, however, the finest record for the various Scottish gatherings.

Another claimant to the all-round championship is the young Welshman, Bert Wickham, who caused something of a sensation last year by his motor-car performance. The "Cymric Hercules" shows marked versatility, the open challenge which he repeatedly issued last year including a great variety of athletics, each man to nominate half the feats, which is about the fairest plan that could be devised. Such a programme as this would certainly be a test of all-round abilities, and would prove Wickham's standing. His strength feats were highly attractive, and he is credited with some good performances on the path and cycle track. At wrestling his record does not appear to be lengthy, his last important match ending in his defeat by a Russian, Waldemar Batzer. His weight is rather under 14st., so that he would be giving away a good deal to Cameron, though in an open challenge to the world weight is understood to be "all in." An interesting contest might be seen if another Scot, "Jock" Mackenzie, Scotland's 14st. all-round champion, were to meet the Welshman.

When Joe Rogers, the "American Apollo," was over here recently, he described himself as the "world's champion athlete." He is a pretty big handful on the mat, has donned the gloves, and is said to be a fair jumper, and a useful shot-putter, which, taking his build into consideration, is not difficult to believe, though his name does not appear among the record holders. Bert Wickham was desirous of ratifying an all-round match with him, but the giant preferred a wrestling match with Hackenschmidt. The "Russian Lion," as also George Lurich, can give a good account of himself in more departments than one. He has held a world's weight-lifting record, and is a good runner, cyclist, and gymnast. It is public performances, however, that form the criterion when awarding an open title. Hackenschmidt, by the way, was much impressed while travelling in Australia with the form of Clarence Weber, probably the finest athlete in the Antipodes. He has beaten Buttan Singh and others for the wrestling championship of the Commonwealth, performs some splendid strength feats, and is a capable exponent of other branches, besides possessing a splendid frame. In the States there is "Max Unger," a German-American strong man, who can render a fair account of himself in most departments of athletics.

Who then is the world's all-round champion? It seems that we are no "forerunner" at the end of our article than at the beginning of it, and for the reason given at the start, viz., that no regular test exists. For the matter of that, it has yet to be precisely defined what the all-round championship is to consist of. As a suggestion, the following might be mentioned—a sprint, a distance race, high or long jump, putting the weight, and wrestling, which comes to pretty much the same as the ancient Greeks followed in the Pentathlon. Rowing and cycling might be included if additional tests are desired. Alternatively, each man should select an equal number of feats, as proposed by Wickham. For the present we have not advanced beyond the proposal stage, and until we do the Scotsman will no doubt swear by Cameron, the Irishman will go nap on Kiely, the Welshman will plump for Wickham, and the American will recognise no champion but Sheridan.

PROFESSOR INCH'S MEASUREMENTS.

As far back as November 1 a wager was entered into between Professor T. Inch, on the one hand, and one who prefers to be unknown, £50 depending upon the Professor answering to these measurements: Chest (expanded), 50ins.; biceps, 18ins. The test was made by Mr. R. P. Watson and Mr. J. Murray, of "Health and Strength." Professor Inch did not expand his chest, but stood passive while the tape was passed round him. Since the wager was made he has wonderfully grown, under a system entirely his own, which can increase or reduce without the slightest impediment to good health. As a matter of fact, with care and discretion, Professor Inch's system is an assistance rather than a hindrance to perfect and complete condition, which means, if it means anything, perfect health. We had an opportunity of seeing Professor Inch going through his exercises, and hearing from him an explanation of how best to do everything he not only preaches but practises. It is certainly a revelation, and may be followed practically by young and old with advantage. We append his measurements, which easily won him the wager: Chest, 53ins.; biceps, 19ins.; forearm, 14ins.; waist, 35ins.; neck, 18ins.; calf, 17ins.; thigh, 27ins.; wrist, 7ins.

THEN AND NOW.

The march of years has worked a wondrous revolution in the financial concerns of sport, as applied to the noble art. Time was when the championship of pugilism meant no more than £200 to the winner of a battle, and sometimes as little as £100. We are referring to a period when fighting men were the salt of the earth, and were fostered and cared for by the flower of English nobility; when the law recognised it as our national pastime, and prince, peer, and peasant rubbed shoulders at the ring side. The condition of affairs, since, for instance, Tom Savers fought Perry, the "Tipton Slasher," and Jem Mace fought Tom King, Joe Goss, and Ned Baldwin is truly marvellous. An offer of £3,500 nowadays goes begging for mutual agreement of the parties in search of. To-day it is quite a matter of commerce. The value of the speculation is on the lines of the manager who rates his artiste according to the receipts of the box office.