AUGUST 27, 1921

A TEMPERAMENTAL JEANNE D'ARC
OF THE TENNIS-COURTS

"THE WILL TO WIN."
That is the greatest factor in tennis championships, says Mlle. Lenglen, now here to play in champion and exhibition tournaments, and incidentally to add to the fund for devastated France.

SHE IS THE ATHLETIC JEANNE D'ARC OF OUR
time," said a Paris newspaper correspondent, one of the several French correspondents who accompanied Suzanne Lenglen to this country; and an admiring American correspondent, one of the "thousand or more," as he says, who met her in New York Harbor, writes that there is in her manner "some of the same spirit that caused an American crowd to cheer for Carpenter at Jersey City on July 2." Paris reports indicate, we are told, that there is "probably more interest taken in her visit here than was shown in Carpenter's invasion." The romance-loving spirit of France has gone out to this twenty-two-year-old girl, a tennis champion never defeated, before her present American visit, in any important match. If it is pointed out that the two French notables with whom she is commonly compared, Carpenter and Joan of Arc, both came to grief, defenders of the young French "queen of tennis" may reply, in the words of Grantland Rice, that, "in the way of infinities grace and matchless artistry," at least, Mlle. Lenglen "tops the field." Winner or loser, "for those who dare to study form and style, apart from results," he considers the French girl "better worth watching than any we know." Tris Speaker, Walter Johnson, and "Babe" Ruth, he says, are "all top-liners who intermingling grace and winning results. But the most spectacularily graceful entry of the entire cluster — the most vivid — is the French queen of tennis."

"In the being and manner of Mlle. Suzanne Lenglen is the sparkle that is France," writes a New York Times reporter who met her at the pier. As do many other of the American correspondents, he speaks of her "big red hat, her red-tinted

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pumps, her hoyanty hearing, and her smile." Her self-confi-
dence, which can't be but in a woman who has not yet
seen the Paris scene in her life, was not improved by the
fact that she had defeated the American champion, Mrs. Molla Bjaustedt-
Malloy, on Rafaelitic courts, starts the writer on this account of her
general personality:

The statement is characteristic of the French girl, and just
coming from her it did not sound boastful, rather she told it as a
fact and her hearers somehow accepted it as just that.

In many persons such impetuousness would be a
defect, but in Mlle. Lenglen it appeared natural.

In Mlle. Lenglen they appeared not only natural, but even con-
tentious. Like her fellow countrymen, she is always on the
instant when you saw her, and the more she talked and ges-
tured and acted the more you liked her.

Rather than a great athlete, possibly the outstanding trait in
her nature is her ability to make herself appear to be a little girl, full of enthusiasm, of life, and of the
joy of living.

She is not particularly small, however, especially for a French-
woman, for she is a good deal more than 5 feet 10 inches in
height, and weighs in excess of 125 pounds.

While she is of medium height, there is nothing of the

hag about her. In fact, when she is quiet there is no suggestion of the athlete at all,

but, in her liveliness, there is something feminine in

her alert attitude and the spring of her walk. Those who

know her best say that she is not only a great tennis-player, but a great all-around athlete as well—that she swims, runs, rides, and drives with the best of
them.

She is more than an athlete, too. She is a graduate of the
College of Compiegne in her native land.

She took up her studies and her tennis at the age of six.

She says that she herself would not have given her own

jams on her right hand those days unless her practice had pleased her.

Asked about her game, she cred-

ited the work of her father in

her success, her father, who was her teacher, and

constant practice. When she was asked her greatest

strengths, she replied that she

practised against a wall, aiming at

it as directed by her father, for hours at a time.

In this she gained both ability and

control, which makes her one of

the greatest of the French stars.

In this instance the writer feels
that by being so wholly in the game every instant she can

herself outgrow and out-

grow her opponents.

She described her game as

having more pep than that of any other player she had ever

met and counted it that its

strength.

Asked to describe her

game, she replied that she

had the simplicity and the

most inclusive way of

playing.

One of the most consistent

players of the game, she

is Mlle. Lenglen who was accompanied by

her mother. She plays Be-

ginning with an accent so

acquired at Nice, in the

south of France, and

the various places

she has played matches in England.

When prest as to whether she is a sonie, or say just a

little wim, before her matches, Mlle. Lenglen admitted that she
did not that she had been promised that it would be obtained for

her in the United States.

Despite the fact that she is in the

acrid land Suzanne praised the effect of this stimulat

on her.

"Nothing," she said, "is so fine for the nerve, for

the strength, for the success, as being able to do

one's best when one is tired. One can not always be serious. There must be some sparkle, too."

Tennis critics, American critics at least, are somewhat at

variance as to the reason for her success, after losing one set to

Mrs. Malloy in her first match, or the

National Championship series.

She had arrived only two days before, after a trying ocean voyage, she had previously post-

poned her trip twice on account of illness, and was out of

practice, say her defenders. But in her splendid play of Mrs. Malloy, the American champion.

As A. Wallis Myers, tennis editor of the London Field, explained, the
day after her defeat, writing in the New York Herald:

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Suzanne is a bundle of nervous spriightliness—volatile, excitable—she does not lack spirit. It is the spirit of a centaur, the spirit of a racehorse, which France has sought to cultivate. Suzanne was not brought out with sporting girls as American and English girls are—she was brought out with the French habit of letting the invader and ransacker of her country, she has lived for the last few years in Paris or removed to some other place, and her life has been a transitory one. Suzanne has been the child wonder of French tennis; flattered without precedent, she has not yet been spoiled; indeed almost more of her life by two food parents, she has yet displayed an independence that has given her a mind and an expression of her own.

Suzanne's father did not want her to come to America just yet. He felt, for one thing, that she was not physically strong enough. In this she is not wrong for her tours in a new country under strange conditions. But it was felt by the French Association that Suzanne was not quite ready for Paris or removed some place to tennis and temper from New York. Suzanne has been the child wonder of French tennis; flattered without precedent, she has not yet been spoiled; indeed almost more of her life by two food parents, she has yet displayed an independence that has given her a mind and an expression of her own.

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I thought the American sporting public would be distressing if the event did not turn out. I promised to play, I thought I could stay the course— but I just couldn't. My chest felt like nothing on earth; I could scarcely breathe. I wonder I won on for nine games. In my parents, I had not have allowed me to play at all. At New last year I wanted to defend my cup for the American Association, and to my knowledge I was with was ever so disappoointed she had to give up.

She gave every credit to Mrs. Mallory. She admitted frankly that the pretrend holder was better than she had anticipated; she had been hurt, and that is what Mrs. Mallory did not do. And it was ever so disappointed she had to give up.

I said he had said on his arrival that she played Mrs. Mallory in Paris and beat her every game. It is the habit in the French to report to a game; I think," she explained to me, "my meaning was misunderstood. I have always had the greatest respect for the American champion, especially for her pertinacy and her activity. I said that, the 1st was handicapped in Paris. I won in two sets, but was not equal to her. She is the best I have met."

Indicates. Perhaps before I leave America I shall meet Mrs. Mallory again, and then it will be after I've got more acclimated."

The French champion, "The Great Madame, as the New York Post calls her, was the best match player I have ever seen. In Paris, I have been acquainted with the spirit of modern tennis, which seems to be so deeply in my mind—back of all the other essentials like practice and natural attitude, I think there is another reason, almost an fundamental one."

The Will to Win. Does not mean to me —I do not mean that with confidence you can perform miracles, but surely without confidence, with the will to win that allowances of no doubt, you can expect to be a consistent winner. Nor can the will to win, alone, make you a success. Practice, practise, practice—tennis is just like any other sport.

The ball is coming to you like a bolt. Somehow you instantly sense whether the shot is good. It does not seem to be without your knowing it, that you must return it deep to the side. Line must hit right there—not an inch farther. Comes every time—and with the spirit of modern tennis you seem to see that exact spot where that ball must go. It must be there. Do you think it at that second a doubt flashed through your mind that your stroke would be unwavering? That is what I mean by confidence, the will to win. Meanwhile I can only say: "Que le meilleur gagne!" Or back to the speech of your tongue: "May the best man win."