Feb 25 1964  I was 14 years old, long enough ago I could listen to the fight on the radio, and heard for the first time that Clay "continues to backpeddle" and that Liston "had a mouse" under his eye. Parts of boxing's lexicon new to my little ear. I knew that Clay was the best. I knew that Liston's eye was a symbol that he was under the spell of a wiser and more experienced opponent. I knew nothing about the "sweet science," and I could still not understand the fascination it held for the generation of fighters that preceded Clay, and the admiration it still holds for the generation of fighters that followed him.

This classic shot, featured in Life magazine's coverage of the bout—yes, these were the days before media attention, shows Sonny Liston at about the end of his road. Blustred open under the left eye, a prominent "mouse" under the right, the ambulances of Patterson looks to be approaching his second birthday.

Liston is wearing classic 1950s white trunks with a black stripe. Clay is dressed nearly the same. The black is almost purple. His gloves are barely taped and the thumbs are definitely unattached.

Fittingly, the lunch-biased ring light over Liston's head is out, the one over Clay has the burnished highlights of a crown.

Of course, Sonny quit on his stool after six, an official TKO. Clay.

(This picture, taken by the estimable Herb Scharfman, are part of Life's pictorial coverage of the bout that included, along with Scharfman's...