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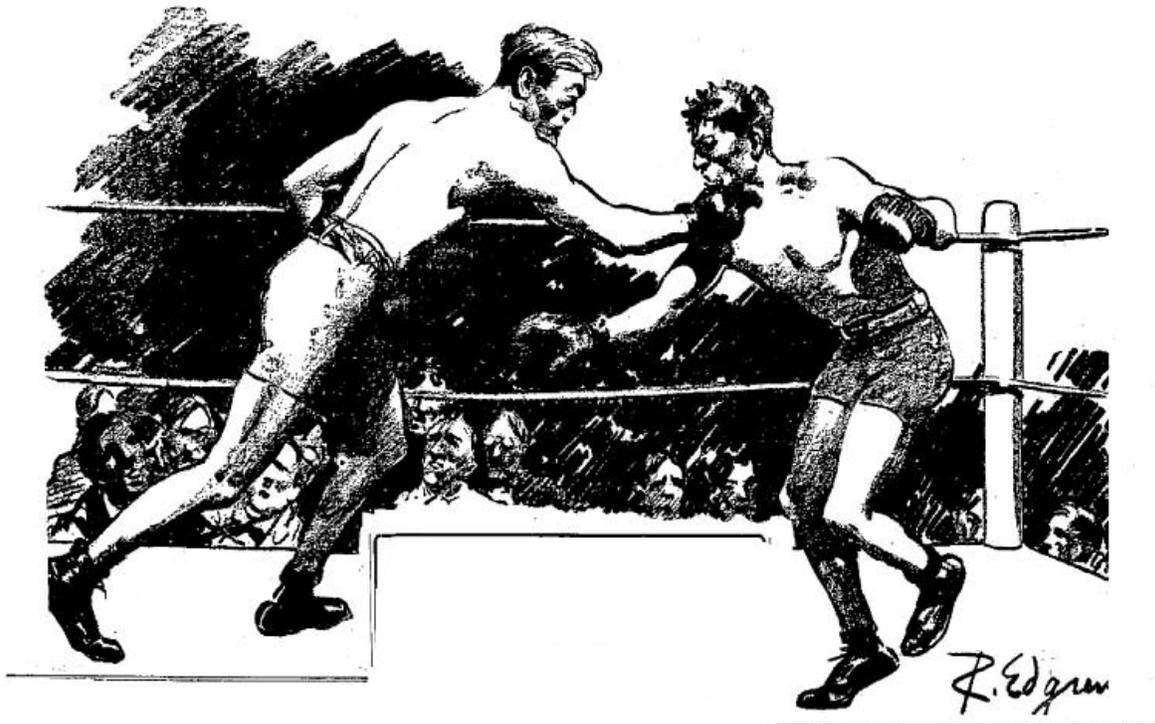
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IN THE DAYS OF REAL FIGHTING
BEGINNING today, the Journal-Gazette with the New York World will
print a series of ring stories, written by Robert Edgren, under the title
of "IN THE DAYS OF REAL FIGHTING."

This series will deal with famous ring contests, some of which will stir up memories of the old
sport and be of interest to the fight followers of the present day.

Fort Wayne Journal Gazette
26 September 1915

HOW MATTHEWS DID IT



This is the story of two of the greatest fighting men of fifteen years ago, matched to fight twenty rounds for a purse that amounted to about 3 per cent, of the money paid Mike Gibbons and Packey McFarland for their skilful ten round exhibition. It is a story of a fight that was a fight — a fight in which each of the principals, without the slightest timidity over loss of reputation or prestige, went in to win with a knockout.

Incidentally, it is the story of the quickest knockout ever known in the ring.

Fifteen years ago, in New York city and in other parts of the country where ring sport was popular, fighting men were always ready to fight and to risk everything in the hope of winning. Fighting was more of a sport than a business then.

Long bouts were the rule and in every bout there was a decision. Many referees were opposed to calling any bout a draw, preferring to give an outright decision when either man had the slightest advantage. The result was that fighters gave the best they had. There was little stalling. And in spite of the general idea to-day that skilful boxing doesn't go with hard fighting, there were twenty clever and skillful boxers for every one developed under our spiritless no-decision system.

Both Men Had Great Ring Record

The men were Matty Matthews, destined a few months later to become welterweight champion of the world by knocking out the great Mysterious Billy Smith, and Kid McPartland, one of the greatest lightweights of his day. In the year 1900, when the match was made. Matty Matthews had been fighting five years, and had defeated many of the best men in the country.

He was a tall rangy fellow, formally a truckman, powerful, game and possessing a wicked punch. Among the famous ones he had beaten were Stanton Abbott, George Kerwin. Mike Leonard, Austin Gibbons, Tom Broderick, Owen Ziegler, Otto Sieloff, Eddie Connolly. Bobby Dobbs and Kid Carter. Incidentally he had fought Kid McPartland a twenty-round draw in 1898, and a six-round draw in 1899.

McPartland began fighting a year before Matthews, and developed almost at once into a remarkably skilful boxer. His skill never interfered with his knockout punch, which he put over often. Among his victims by knockout or decision, were Bob Farrell. Jack Burge, George McFadden, Jimmy Potts, Stanton Abbott Jimmy Handler. Tommy Butler, Tommy Ryan, Spike Sullivan, Otto Sieloff, Tommy McCune, Tom Tracey, Owen Ziegler and Jack Daly. A list of men famous fifteen years ago.

He also fought the then invincible Kid Lavigne, losing the decision in twenty five rounds, and fought Joe Wallcott to an eight-round draw. McPartland had one of the most remarkable records ever made in the ring, no decisive defeat being marked against him until after five years, during which he met scores of the best men in his class.

There was of course a great rivalry between Mathews and McPartland. The two draws added to the personal feelings between them, each being dissatisfied and anxious to try it out again to a more definite conclusion.

Matty Mathews had come under the management of Johnny Dunn, then a famous manager of fighters and today still handling a successful "stable." Dunn had a habit of thinking. According to his ideas Matty did too much swinging. Matty hitting straight would be invincible. He coached Matthews, who also had the advantage of boxing with his friend Tommy West, and the result was that Matty became the most dangerous hitter of his weight in the ring, not even excepting the marvelous Joe Gans.

Fought for \$1,000 Purse, Winner Take All.

Kid McPartland met John Dunn and told him that he'd like to fight Mathews again. As it happened Dunn had a warm personal friendship for McPartland. "Kid" said he "Don't ask me to match you with Matty now. He's improved a lot since you fought him last, and you haven't. He'll knock you out for sure. You don't have a chance, I don't want to profit by your misfortune, fight somebody else. You're a left hander fighter and matty has one punch you have no defense for. He'll get you with it".

McPartland didn't care for the advice. He went to his manager and had him see Mathews. Mathews went to Dunn and said McPartland wanted to fight him and he wanted to fight McPartland. And so Dunn made the match.

Mathews and McPartland agreed to fight for a purse of \$1,000, winner to take all, twenty rounds at the Hercules Athletic club of Brooklyn, whose palatial quarters were in the old Myrtle avenue car stables, near Broadway. The weight was 135 pounds.

McPartland went through his usual training. Mathews trained, too, but he worked on the development of the one punch with which he intended to knock McPartland out. He had developed a corking straight right, short punch with a mule's kick concealed in it, a wallop that was full of dynamite.

Johnny Dunn, now that the match was made, laid aside his friendship for McPartland temporarily and spoke to his man Matty like this: "Look here. Matty, you can win this fight with the first punch. McPartland is left handed. He stands with his left foot out, but he always starts by drawing his left hand back three times. He feints twice, and the third time he hits, you can count on it as a sure thing.

"When you meet in the first round take your distance and watch him. He'll make two moves with his left. The third time, instead of waiting for him to lead, step in suddenly and shoot your right straight to his jaw. You'll knock him out."

The old Hercules club was packed that night. They were hanging on the rafters." The usual ceremonies having been observed the bell clanged. Matty advanced quickly to the middle of the

ring and stopped. McPartland advanced no less quickly and stopped. Crouching. McPartland feinted—twice—and started his left jab. On the instant Matthews shot across a terrific short right to the Kids jaw. McPartland pitched forward on his face. The ten count tolled over him and he never stirred. The first blow struck had knocked him cold.

A world's record that was even quicker, than the Hawkins knockout of Martin Flaherty at Carson City. Shortly afterward Matthews knocked out Owen Ziegler in two rounds. Dan McConnell in three rounds and Mysterious Billy Smith in nineteen rounds, becoming welter weight champion.

Then, as McPartland insisted he had been knocked out by a fluke punch, he gave the Kid another chance and stopped him in seventeen rounds of desperate fighting at the old Broadway A. C., where Choynski fought Maher and Dixon fought McGovern.

Gibbons and McFarland drew down \$33,700 for ten rounds of clever boxing. Matthews got \$1,000 for knocking out McPartland in a punch. McPartland didn't get even a carfare for his lost reputation. To-day Matthews is a stage carpenter and McPartland earns his living as a referee of boxing bouts.

End

**The Syracuse Herald 10 March 1915
IN THE DAYS OF REAL FIGHTING – No 2**

**Jess Willard Was A Terror When He Stopped Smiling
In McCarty Bout**

Not long ago, only two and a half years to be exact, a lanky, gawky giant lumbered up the steps at the side of the ring in Madison Square Garden, parted the ropes with a pair of hands like hams, tripped over the bottom rope and nearly fell into the ring. The crowd began to laugh uproariously. The giant walking to the middle of the ring and holding his broad rimmed hat behind him with both hands – to hide them – looked up at the galleries and smiled a smile a foot wide.

This was in the days when visiting fighters were always introduced. The announcer, seeking a chance for some light and humorous remarks, tiptoed to the giant, whispered to him, and turning to the crowd, held up his hand for silence.

“Jess Willard” he announced “The cowboy champion of Kansas”, and everybody roared. Nightly after that Willard was introduced. He became part of the programme always good for a laugh. Then unexpectedly he came on one night to fight. He was matched with Arthur Pelky, a powerful fellow who had made some local reputation as a slugger. Everyone, of course, expected to see Pelky knock the lanky cowboy out. Instead Willard very nearly punched Pelky nearly off the map.

So when he was matched again, and this time against the new heavyweight sensation of the ring, Luther McCarty, who had just knocked out Carl Morris, people came to see him fight.

McCarty was a magnificent specimen of a fighting man, tall, wiry, hard as steel, full of overbearing confidence. Standing in his corner he looked like an animated statue of some Greek hero – some Achilles turned to fisticuffs. Willard, sitting in his corner, looked admiringly at McCarty and then turned to laugh at the crowd.

McCarty started to wipe that big cowboy right off the slate. Everyone knew the moment he left his corner that he was going to try and land the knockout punch in the first round. He rushed with a swinging right. And as he came tearing in big Jess just reached out about seven feet with his extended left arm and punched Luther squarely on the nose. Then as McCarty came up short with the jar of a man who had walked into a beam in the dark, Jess turned and laughed at the crowd as if it was all a great joke.

McCarty, furious, came back instantly with another rush, swinging savagely. It looked like nothing could stop him, yet time and again Jess jabbed him away with that long left. There was a snap in the punches, no doubt of it. People who had been betting he'd be knocked out looked glum.

McCarty was a real fighter. He forced his way in obstinately and at last began to land his hard driven right handers. A red mark showed over Willard's left cheek bone. He stopped smiling for a moment, and as McCarty rushed again suddenly met him with a short right uppercut. The clash of McCarty's teeth could be heard far from the ring. McCarty was dazed but gamely he rushed in again. Willard met him with jabs and fed him with uppercuts. In the last round it seemed impossible that McCarty could finish. He was bruised and bleeding and his legs were weak under him, so that he tottered as he flung himself in headlong for more punishment.

McCarty's gameness carried him through the ten rounds. But Willard was the winner easily. At the end he was fresh and unmarked. McCarty looked as if he had been through a finish fight.

It was four months later that Willard fought Soldier Kearns, a powerful fellow, who looked like a magnified Tom Sharkey, and whose kick had been demonstrated a week or so before when he knocked out "One Round Davis" in a single round.

Soldier Kearns had remarked that the gigantic cowboy had a "Glass Jaw" and that he intended to find it. Willard took this fight as a joke judging by the way he laughed and smiled to the ringsiders while he was holding off with his long extended left. It went eight rounds. Willard was practically untouched until Kearns at last managed to drive home one of his crushing right hand swings for the body. It struck the giant just at the lower edge of the ribs – the solar plexus.

Feeling his fist sink in, Kearns stepped back a pace or two to let Willard fall. There was an expectant look on his face. He dropped his hands low.

At this interesting moment Willard who has a habit of doing unexpected things reached over about ten feet and shot his right straight for Kearns jaw. There was much annoyance behind that

blow. When annoyed Willard is an amazingly strong and quick man. My advice to any gentleman trying conclusions with Willard is to maul him as long as he smiles, and when he stops smiling beat it for the tall timber.

Willard shot his right for Kearns' jaw – as I said – and landed it. Mr Kearns turned through the air in what is technically termed a parabola. At the height of his trajectory his heels were above his head, being below his heels – as well as various other parts of his anatomy, struck the floor first when he descended.

The referee counted ten over Mr Kearns. He might as well have counted a thousand. It's that way when Willard lands one when in an unsmiling mood.

**The Fort Wayne Journal Gazette
3 October 1915**

RITCHIE FOUGHT THE TOUGHEST BATTLE OF HIS LIFE FOR \$800



IN THE DAYS OF REAL FIGHTING NO 3

**Ritchie Once Won Fight After Being
Knocked Out In The Opening Round**

Sometimes it is necessary to go back fifteen or twenty years to find a fight. Willie Ritchie the American lightweight champion is one fellow who, like the old timers, never disappoints those who expect to see action when he steps into the ring. Willie Ritchie has shown some fighting in New York. Once, just after becoming champion, he boxed Leach Cross here and just to show his goods stepped into Leachie and slugged all the way. |

Again he chased Freddy Welsh for ten rounds, hammered him into and out of every corner of the ring, and outclassed the Briton so far that every spectator was convinced the English decision

that took Ritchie's lightweight title away must have been one of the most astonishing even given in a ring, Ritchie has had some hard fights, Joe Rivers once nearly finished him in the first round, and Willie came through and knocked the Mexican cold a few rounds later. Charlie White nailed him with a right on the chin that nearly robbed him of his senses in the first round, and Willie fought himself out of the hole and at the end of the decisionless six was piling into White and doing his deadly best to even the score.

But the toughest fight of his life was on New Year's day, 1912, nearly eleven months before he became champion. What happened then came near killing Ritchie's chance to get the fight that earned him the title. Ritchie began fighting when he was eighteen. He had a lot of short bouts and won often. His first long fight was with Matty Baldwin, whom he beat in twenty rounds in San Francisco.

Boxed Welsh 20 Rounds on Short Notice

Just four months after this fight Ritchie was at home and not very busy when he received a wire asking him to start at once for Los Angeles, several hundred miles away, to substitute for Ad Wolgast in a twenty round bout with Freddy Welsh. Wolgast had suddenly been knocked out by an attack of appendicitis and was in the hospital. Ritchie accepted by wire, rode all night, arrived in Los Angeles in the afternoon and fought Welsh the twenty rounds that night.

Although Ritchie had gone in without a day's training he fought a fast twenty rounds and lost a decision to the clever English boxer only by a narrow margin. Welsh was trained to the moment for an attempt to take the title from Wolgast. Ritchie's sensational exploit established him as one of the best lightweights in the country and he started for the east to increase his reputation and gather some coin.

One month after meeting Welsh Willie fought Paul Koehler in Cleveland. Koehler was a tall, rangy fellow with boxing skill and a punch. He had fought Packey McFarland and had given Packey the toughest time in his experience while the bout lasted. He was no easy mark.

Willie, anxious to make a hit in the east, walked straight at Koehler ready to begin hostilities without any preliminary sparring. Right here Willie made the mistake of underestimating his man. It was Koehler who began, not Willie. As "Willie stepped within range Koehler suddenly slammed a right fist over on his jaw with all the strength of arm and back and shoulder and legs behind the blow.

Ritchie Never Knew What Struck Him

Ritchie never knew he was hit. He flopped over forward like a man struck down by a bullet and fell flat on his face, knocked out cold.

It was so sudden that Koehler stood staring at Ritchie paralyzed with astonishment. The referee laughingly turned to Koehler and waved him to his corner. Emil Thiry, who was supposed to be his chief advisor, turned his back on his man and walked away from the ring. He deserted the ship. When three or four seconds had passed it suddenly occurred to the referee that he might as

well count over Ritchie and announce his official finish. He began. Ritchie lay on his face completely out.

The referee, Koehler being a local favorite was enjoying his task. He smilingly glanced at the wildly enthusiastic spectators. At "seven" something stirred in the back of Ritchie's brain. Perhaps he didn't actually think. Some instinct aroused by the slow tolling of the ten-count drove him to action. Mechanically he rolled over to his knees and just at "nine" pushing himself to his feet and stood tottering. If the referee had begun counting at once no doubt Willie would have been counted out and in that case he wouldn't have had the match with Wolgast later on. Such small things, two or three apparently unimportant seconds, sometimes make all the difference in the world.

Ritchie was up, but was in bad shape. His hands hung at his sides, Koehler rushed in anxiously to finish him. Ritchie swaying, reeling falling headlong forward, somehow managed to move his chin away from the blows that were rained upon him. And round after round his strength slowly returned. At first, in his corner, he made no answer to the deserting Thiry, who had been brought back and was anxiously asking Willie "how he felt." After the seventh round Ritchie came to his corner with the dazed look gone from his eyes.

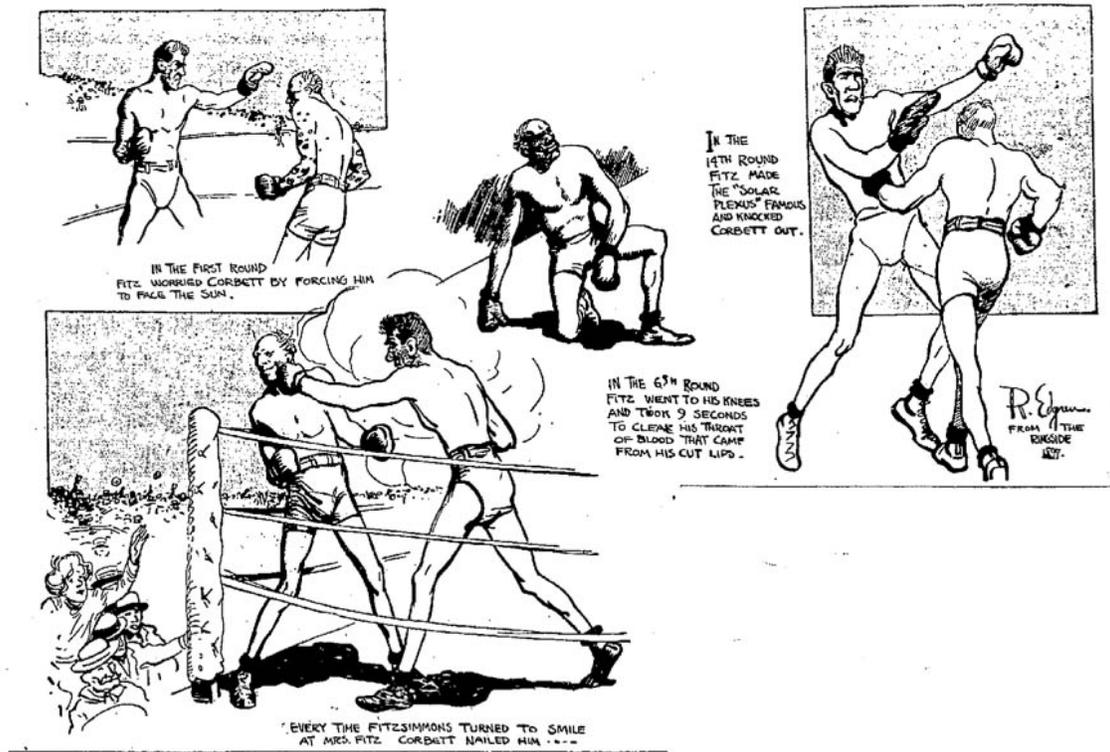
"What happened ?, is the first round over" he asked. He had been fighting for seven rounds purely on the fighters instinct. He never remembered anything about the beginning of that fight.

Furiously trying to finish the work he had begun Paul Koehler had fought himself arm weary. He had nearly shot his bolt. And now in the seventh round Ritchie turned the tide of battle against him. Ritchie had come back. He pressed his rival hard. Koehler was as game as Ritchie. He fought his best to the end. In the last round, the twelfth, Ritchie beat Koehler until he was hanging over the ropes. There Ritchie was trying to turn him around in time to put over a knockout punch when the last bell rang. Knocked cold in the first round Ritchie had beaten the man who had put him down, for the referee's decision was that Willie had won.

Ritchie's end in this fight was \$800, less than 5 per cent, of what McFarland received for boxing ten rounds safely and cleverly with Mike Gibbons. Willie made such a hit that he was matched to meet Koehler again at the Eagles' club of Cleveland, but Koehler drew out and Yankee Schwartz was substituted. Ritchie knocked him out in three rounds.

Fort Wayne Journal Gazette
4 October 1915
IN THE DAYS OF REAL FIGHTING
Part 4

FITZ AND CORBETT IN THEIR MEMORABLE BATTLE



**Fitzsimmons Didn't Get Cent When
He Defeated Jim Corbett For Title**

Winner of One of Greatest Ring Battles Became Partner of
Promoter and Was Compelled to Contribute His
\$15,000 Purse to General Expenses and Losses of Fight
Conducted by Dan Stuart in 1897.

How one of the world's greatest championship battles was fought for nothing.

The fight between Bob Fitzsimmons and Jim Corbett for the heavyweight championship of the world was worked up for years. There was deadly rivalry between the two. Fitzsimmons had repeatedly challenged John L Sullivan (whom he could undoubtedly have beaten in a few rounds then) and Corbett was the lucky one to get the Sullivan match. Fitzsimmons, disappointed in the Sullivan matter, camped right on Corbett's trail and annoyed Corbett exceedingly with challenges.

Worse than that for Corbett's peace of mind, press and public began to wonder if Fitzsimmons wasn't Corbett's master in the ring.

They met once in Green's hotel, Philadelphia and Fitzsimmons asked Corbett publicly for a match. Corbett expectorated in Fitzsimmons eye (fighters' manners being somewhat crude in that day), but that didn't prove anything. The upshot of it all was that Corbett was driven by public opinion into making a match with Fitzsimmons to defend the heavyweight title.

He didn't want to do it, but he had to. And once matched he became filled with an overwhelming desire to beat Fitzsimmons to a pulp and prove that Jim Corbett's equal didn't exist on earth.

Probably no man ever trained harder for a fight than Corbett trained for Fitzsimmons. The fight was held at Carson City, Nevada March 17, 1897. As a cub sporting writer I joined Corbett's camp a little over a month before the fight and for four weeks sparred with him daily and took long jogs on the road.

In all the camp Jeffries was the only man who would stick to Corbett in his daily runs. The champion was never satisfied that he'd done enough work. He was at it from morning to night, handball, boxing, rope skipping, shadow boxing, bag punching, running, walking. He even went for a long run the day before the fight, and for a walk the morning of the fight, which was fought at noon.

Men Agreed That Winner Take the Entire Purse.

Over on the other side of Carson City, a few miles away, Fitzsimmons worked nearly as hard as Corbett. There was a difference. Fitzsimmons wasn't driven on by doubt and anxiety. He was full of practical jokes, good natured, - pleased with, everything, and quite satisfied with his condition and confident that he'd win. "The' Corbett-Fitzsimmons fight attracted more attention than any other since Corbett and Sullivan met at New Orleans. People came from all over the world to see it. Carson City swarmed with the best known sporting men of the continent.

And the purse offered by promoter Dan Stuart was just exactly \$15,000, winner take all.

Compare that with the \$33,700 paid McFarland and Gibbons for a neat ten-round exhibition, and have a good laugh at modern boxing and everything that goes with it.

For the \$15,000 purse Corbett and Fitzsimmons were to fight to a finish; not even a forty-five round fight, but a fight that could end only when one or the other was unable to continue. It was for the most important world's championship – and the purse for both men was \$15,000. Things have changed!

To go just a little farther I might as well say that the Corbett-Fitzsimmons match was fought for nothing, which is literally true. Corbett, as loser, didn't get any money and was out of pocket on training and other expenses, to say nothing of the money value of the title he lost that day. And Fitzsimmons, winner of the fight, didn't get a dollar of the \$15,000 purse.

The reason for this is little known. Dan Stuart, the promoter, came to Fitzsimmons a short time before the fight and offered to take Fitzsimmons into partnership. Fitz accepted. The gate money was all eaten up by the building of a large arena, advertising and other expenses. In fact it was more than eaten up, according to Fitzsimmons for being a "partner" he was compelled to contribute his \$15,000 purse to the general cause of promotion, and he never saw a dollar of it.

The biggest fight in many years was fought for nothing!

During the first few rounds Corbett jabbed Fitzsimmons almost as he pleased. He cut Bob's lips and made them bleed. A large part of the trouble was Mrs. Fitzsimmons, who sat immediately in front of me. She jumped up every few seconds and shrieked advice to her fighting husband, and whenever he heard her voice he looked around, and whenever he looked around Corbett stepped in and nailed him.

After a few rounds it began to look bad for Bob. He wasn't landing his heavy hooks and swings. He was bleeding, a little dazed, grimly patient, and still turning his head to listen to Mrs. Fitz and nod encouragingly to her while she shrieked to Corbett: "You can't lick my Bob." Corbett smiled at her in an aggravating way over Fitz's shoulder, which drove her to greater endeavours, and Fitz still turned his head, and Corbett nailed him.

In the sixth round Fitzsimmons who had been jabbed until he was dizzy and who was choking with the blood that ran down his throat from cut lips and nostrils, dropped to his knees. Corbett was jubilant. Referee Siler held him off and counted nine. Having cleared his throat and rested a little Fitzsimmons got up. But then the bell rang and Fitz reeled to his corner so picturesquely that his own seconds thought he was whipped.

In the beginning of the seventh Fitzsimmons leaped from his chair and ran across the ring, almost catching Corbett in his own corner. He had been stalling. And from that moment the fight changed its character entirely. Corbett, pale and grim and trying his best, for he had plenty of courage, fought like a champion who knows he's beaten, but who intends to "die game".

Fitzsimmons rushed him constantly. In the 14th Corbett, backing away, was trying to hold Fitz off with jabs. He jabbed, Fitz let the glove slide over his shoulder, shifted his right foot forward, and hooked his left into Corbett's middle. As Corbett fell forward Fitz clipped him on the jaw with the same left hand, bringing it up, and whirled around to nail him with the right. But he held back the last blow. It wasn't needed. Corbett was counted out.