



WHEN CORBETT THRASHED SULLIVAN.

"O UR season ends about June 4 and we do not resume again until September 12. This gives me over three months' time to prepare."

"I hereby challenge any and all of the bluffers who have been trying to make capital at my expense to fight me either at the lake in August or the first week in September, this year, at the Olympic Club, in the city of New Orleans, for a purse of \$25,000 and an outside bet of \$10,000, the winner of the fight to take the entire purse."

"I insist upon a bet of \$10,000 to show that they mean business—\$2,500 to be put up inside of thirty days, another \$2,500 to be put up May 1, and the entire \$10,000, and as much more as they will bet, to be placed by June 15. I am ready to put up the entire \$10,000 now. First come first served. I give preference in this challenge to Frank P. Slavin, of Australia, as he and his backers have done the greatest amount of blowing. My second preference is that bombastic sprinter, Charles Mitchell, of England, whom I would rather whip than any man in the world. My third preference is James J. Corbett, of America, who has uttered his share of bombast. But in this challenge I include all fighters."

"The Marquis of Queensberry rules must govern this contest, as I want fighting, not foot racing, and I intend keeping the championship of the world."

"Champion of the World.
"St. Paul, Minnesota, March 11, 1892."

"I WILL never challenge Sullivan." This remark was made by James J. Corbett to a party of friends in Chicago just before Christmas, 1891. Corbett had come East with the idea of making a theatrical engagement and at the time had not fully determined to enter pugilism as a career. He had been talking of his encounter in the previous May with Peter Jackson—a battle that, in spite of the "No contest" decision, had stamped Corbett as a fighter far above the ordinary calibre.

Since then some have been heard to say that Corbett won his reputation from none but old and decrepit men. Yet it should be remembered that it was after his fight with Corbett that Peter Jackson went to England and from Frank Slavin won the most sensational fight of his entire career.

When he entered the ring with Corbett, Jackson, the greatest of all negro pugilists, had a bad ankle. But Corbett also suffered under a severe handicap. He had been ill and was ill when he entered the ring. More than once during the fight he received medical treatment. Yet had he not been restrained it is certain he would have knocked out Jackson.

"Billy" Delaney, the foxiest ring general that ever developed a pugilist, knew that a draw with Jackson was sufficient glory for Corbett, in whose corner he was, and he refused to permit his principal, even when Jackson was so leg weary that he could hardly stand, to take chances in an exchange of heavy blows.

Corbett always liked John L. Sullivan and to this day speaks of him as one of the world's greatest pugilists—a harder hitter, in Corbett's opinion, than either Fitzsimmons or Jeffries. Continuing his conversation with his friends in Chicago the young pugilist said:—

"Yes, I think I can beat Sullivan, but if he waits for me to challenge him he can retain the championship for life. Should he lose the title I will be an immediate challenger. The only way to bring Sullivan and me together is to persuade him to make the first move. If he does that he will find me ready and waiting for him."

This conversation, considerably emphasized and much distorted, was repeated to Sullivan, and finally brought forth the sweeping challenge to the world that is here quoted. An attempt had been made to side-track Sullivan and to regard him as a retired champion. This injured his theatrical business and hurt his pride. It should be said for Sullivan that he far underestimated Corbett's powers. He regarded him as a clever boy without ability to put force behind his blows.

"Corbett can't punch a hole through a pound of butter," was one of Sullivan's favorite remarks. It is not on record that he ever uttered it after his fight with Corbett in New Orleans.

James J. Corbett had flashed across the pugilistic horizon like a meteor. Though in California he was regarded as the greatest of all amateurs, little was known of him in the East until he met Jake Kilrain in six rounds in New Orleans in 1890. Kilrain had been whipped by the mighty Sullivan after a tremendous battle. The idea of an unknown beating him was considered absurd. Yet Corbett stepped into the ring and from the first sound of the bell made Kilrain look like a novice. He went through the six rounds without a mark on him, while Kilrain crawled through the ropes crying and bleeding as the result of a score of bruising blows.

Corbett was ever a student of pugilism. From his earliest encounters as a schoolboy he made every fight answer the purpose of a lesson. He was always ready to put on the gloves with amateur or professional. When he found a man with a blow that was new to him Corbett made a study of the blow, improved upon it and appropriated it to his own use. So it happened that when Sullivan visited San Francisco in June, 1891, Corbett eagerly accepted the suggestion that he and the champion should appear in a mimic bout at the Grand Opera House.

The two men appeared before a tremendous crowd. Instead of wearing ring costumes, the two pugilists were in evening dress. Not a hard blow was struck and not an attempt was made by either to break the agreement. Yet it was a try-out of the champion and for the benefit of Corbett.

Just before the close of the sixth round in that mimic encounter Corbett, feinting, fiddling and swinging his heavy covered fists, drew Sullivan into a mix-up, blocked a blow and raised his right arm, holding himself poised as if about to sling a right upper cut to Sullivan's face. The opening was there and Corbett saw it, made mental note of it and long afterward repeated the operation, though the result was far from what he had hoped for. The result was that Sullivan's face, to the undoing of the Boston man, was marked by a red line.

The articles of agreement for the first championship battle under Queensberry rules were entered into without any of the quarrelling and bickering that have marked the agreements of more recent years. Each man was anxious for the contest; neither desired an advantage for himself, and each was willing to meet the other half way in concessions. The result was an agreement for the great battle before the Olympic Club, of New Orleans, on September 7, 1892, the purse being \$25,000, the stake \$20,000 and the championship of the world the great goal.

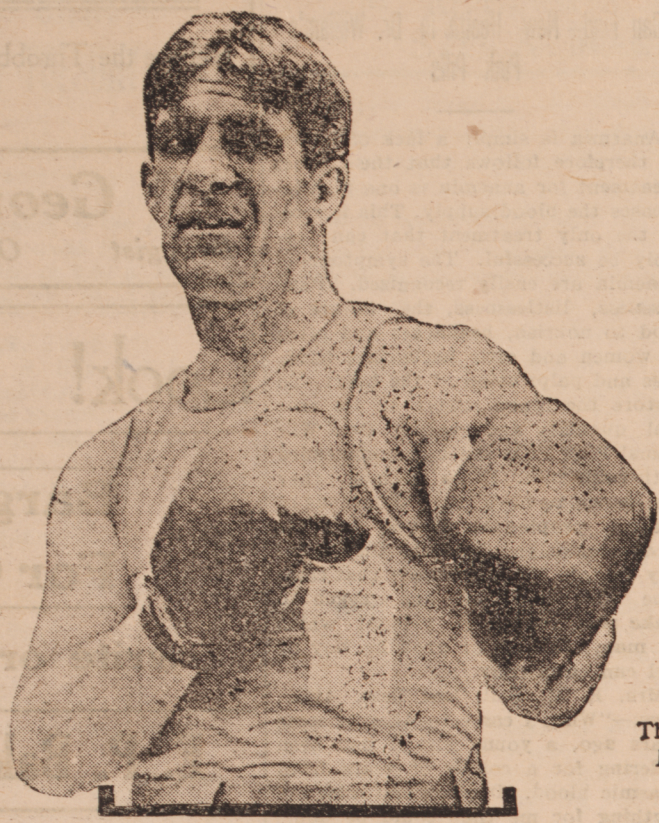
There are those who have said Corbett was filled with fear when he went to New Orleans for his meeting with Sullivan. Such a statement is utterly erroneous. The youngster was filled with confidence. He had his battle completely planned in his mind and it is a fact that he won the fight just as he had planned, forcing Sullivan to the final count one round earlier than he had expected.

Trained on the Cars.

In the baggage car attached to the train which took Corbett to New Orleans a gymnasium had been fitted up. There Corbett continued his training as he sped through the country, and just as the train entered New Orleans he authorized a friend who was with him to wager \$3,000 on his chances at the prevailing odds.

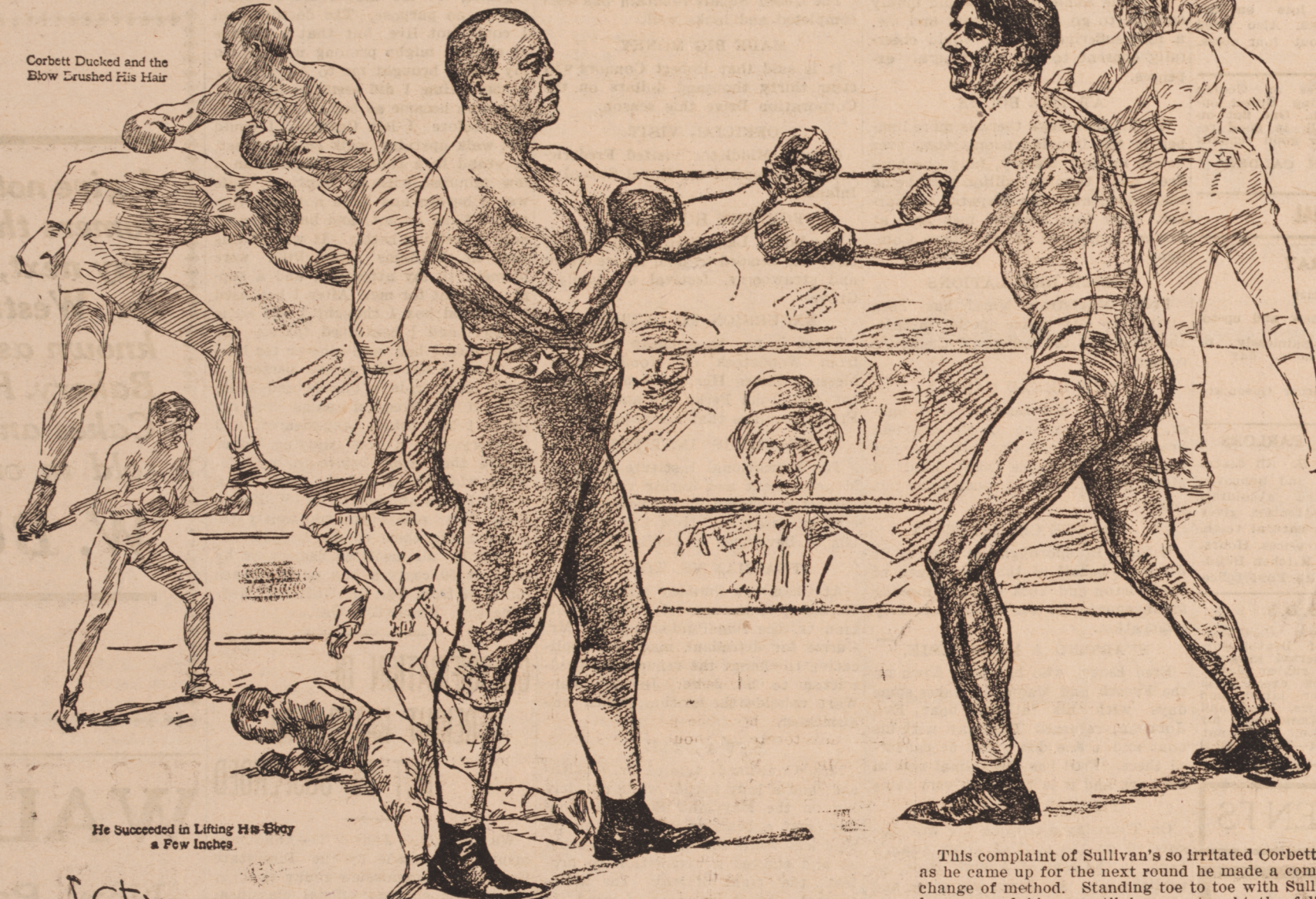
Corbett's confidence, however, was as nothing compared with that of the champion. Sullivan did not believe the man lived who could stand before his tremendous rushes. He had prepared for the battle at Canoe Place Inn, a famous hotel just beyond Good Ground, Long Island, established under royal grant in the second decade of the eighteenth century, now frequented by automobile parties touring through Long Island.

Sullivan ran over the Shinnecock Hills and ploughed through the sand, training more faithfully than he



The Big Fellow Was Not Knocked Out, but He Sank Forward to the Floor of the Ring

Corbett Ducked and the Blow Lashed His Hair



He Succeeded in Lifting His Body a Few Inches

thought the occasion required. He took off many pounds of surplus weight, yet went to New Orleans carrying a girth that made his friends shake their heads and long for the Sullivan of five years earlier.

Corbett did his training at Asbury Park, with Delaney at the head of affairs. He gave himself most careful preparation, spending all his waking hours in the open air.

Odds of 4 to 1 against Corbett were freely offered when the two men pushed their way through the great throng and entered the ring of the Olympic Club. Even at these almost prohibitive figures Sullivan money was urgent and plentiful, while the backers of Corbett were shy. Of all the thousands of men who packed the club house that evening Corbett unquestionably was the one alone absolutely confident of his own victory.

John L. Sullivan was the originator of the fighting face. In his hundreds of ring contests he had frightened his opponents by the ferocity of his appearance. More than one fight had been won by him before a blow was struck. Yet Sullivan was puzzled by the demeanor of Corbett while the preliminaries of the battle were being arranged in the ring. In Sullivan's corner were Jack McAuliffe, premier light-weight of all time; Joe Lannon, Phil Casey and Charlie Johnson. Behind Corbett were Billy Delaney, Mike Donovan, Jim Daly and John Donaldson.

Corbett stopped and joked with his seconds after crawling through the ropes, and then stepped jauntily over to Sullivan, paying not the slightest heed to the heavy scowl that darkened the champion's visage. He gripped his opponent's huge fist, gave it a hearty squeeze and told Sullivan he was glad to see him. Then he went prancing away, jumping from one foot to another like a schoolgirl—he was testing the floor of the ring to find any possible weakness that might be developed. His coolness was a revelation even to his most intimate friends. The experience was new to Sullivan, who had the effect Corbett desired upon the giant like holder.

When the two men came together to receive instructions from John Duffy, the official referee, Corbett stood nonchalantly shoulder to shoulder with Sullivan. He looked an ideal Greek athlete compared with a heavy muscled Roman gladiator. Sullivan began to explain his understanding of the rules, and his deep voice rumbled from his lips; Corbett stepped away to shake hands with a friend at the ringside. Sullivan stopped in disgust, showing he had been making another effort to discourage his opponent.

There was a hush through the building as the gong changed, a little after nine o'clock, and brought the two men together. Sullivan rushed to meet Corbett, who ducked under and hopped away just in time to escape a vigorous right intended for the jaw. Sullivan was carried almost off his balance, but he steadied himself by catching the rope with his left hand.

Again he plunged toward Corbett, swinging right and left, and the crowd was roused to cheer Corbett for his evasive tactics. Rush after rush was made by the champion. Again and again he swung his tremendous right, followed by his no less tremendous left. It seemed that Sullivan expected the jeers of the crowd would compel Corbett to halt and exchange blows with him. But the round ended without a blow having landed. Corbett had been content to let his adversary extend himself and develop his fighting blows while he in turn made absolutely no effort to inflict punishment. As the round ended the jeers changed to prolonged applause, though it was difficult to tell whether the cheering was for Sullivan's earnestness or Corbett's skill in avoiding danger.

The second round found Sullivan again aggressive. He rushed two-thirds across the ring and swung his left for Corbett's face. He missed his target by eighteen inches. The champion then worked Corbett into a corner and succeeded in landing the first blow of the fight—a glancing right on the jaw.

Then came a clinch and the first great surprise of the battle. Sullivan's admirers had been waiting for this moment and expected to see the champion crush his less robust adversary in his great arms almost as he might crush an eggshell in his brawny fist.

Instead, Corbett caught Sullivan by the forearms, pinning them in such a manner that he was unable to do the slightest bit of damage. Sullivan in turn leaned against Corbett, straining to break the embrace, intending to force home a heavy body blow as they separated.

Then came the second surprise of the fight. Corbett made a quick shift. His forearm went across Sullivan's throat and the champion's head was forced back until he was compelled to break the clinch and give ground. His throat was constricted and before he could catch his breath Corbett had swung him around against the ropes and was posing unharmed in the middle of the ring.

Almost howling with rage, Sullivan charged back from the corner, and Corbett for the first time made an aggressive move. Sullivan swung out his mighty right fist. Corbett stepped deftly aside, shifted and brought his left with his full weight behind it flush on Sullivan's mouth. The mighty Sullivan was shaken from head to toe. Enraged beyond power of endurance, he charged after Corbett, driving him around the ring, swinging first left and then right, delivering blows that, had any of them landed upon a vital spot, would have ended the battle then. Corbett, with a smile of derision, dodged here and there, lightly thrusting aside one blow, dodging inside of another, and finally, just before the bell sent them to their corners, drove his own left fairly into the pit of Sullivan's stomach, the force of the blow being heard throughout the arena.

The challenger's friends were jubilant. Sullivan's backers, a trifle nonplussed, were still confident that the champion finally would succeed in landing one of his most potent blows. The odds had shortened. Corbett's friends were taking 3 to 1 and were ready with more money than at any time previous to the battle.

Sullivan Ponders.

Sullivan came up for the third round wearing a look of sobered determination. He did not plunge after Corbett as he had in the two previous rounds. He walked steadily after his little opponent, attempting to feint him into a lead. Sullivan led his right and it whistled by Corbett's ear like a rifle bolt. There was a short clinch and Sullivan attempted a left as they broke away. Corbett merely drew back his chin, permitting the blow to brush his cheek as it passed by.

Corbett's footwork at this moment was marvelous. He was weaving in and out, with his fists swinging at his sides, making little attempt at parrying or countering. Sullivan found it absolutely impossible to land a blow upon him. Corbett finally halted in his tracks, stepped suddenly forward and swung his left full to the champion's stomach. Sullivan made a wide sweep with his right arm in response and brought up against the ropes, only to see Corbett five feet away, smiling at him in derision. As Sullivan faced around Corbett edged closer to him, for a moment feinted wildly and then stepped closely in and swung right and left to Sullivan's face.

The champion was somewhat distressed and was angered thoroughly. He pawed Corbett with his left hand and then shot out a vicious right which for a fraction of a second seemed destined to find its proper target. Corbett ducked and the blow brushed his hair, he realized how close he had been to annihilation.

Returning to his former tactics, Sullivan opened the fourth round with a wild rush. He hurled his great bulk at Corbett time and again and kept the challenger on the run to avoid his blows. Several times Corbett seemed to be in grave danger, but on each occasion succeeded in worming his way out of the corner into which he had been forced. Finally Sullivan caught him against the ropes, swung, missed and clinched, holding Corbett with his left.

Sullivan's ponderous right then swung through the

air and fell with a heavy thud across Corbett's kidneys. Corbett's arms dropped to his side and he fell forward upon Sullivan's breast. This was only for a second, however, and he then backed away, taking his own time to recover from the effect of the blow, which he since has said was the heaviest he ever received in the ring. Had Sullivan been able to land such a blow in a more vulnerable spot the history of the modern prize ring would have been changed.

As his strength returned to him Corbett again took up his serpentine methods, advancing and retreating, feinting first with one hand and then with the other until Sullivan was completely bewildered. Corbett then dropped his hands and looked at his beefy opponent in a most tantalizing manner. Sullivan, thoroughly enraged, rushed; Corbett sidestepped, then dodged in close and, just as the round closed, dealt the champion a blow on the right ear that came near sending him to the mat. This was the hardest blow struck by Corbett thus far in the fight, but it did not seem to bother Sullivan in the least. He went to his corner smiling in derision, and in a voice that could be heard throughout the entire arena grumbled his complaint that Corbett would not stand up and fight like a man.

Sullivan Was So Completely Tired Out That He Threw Out Both Arms and Fell Into a Clinch to Avoid the Blow



This complaint of Sullivan's so irritated Corbett that as he came up for the next round he made a complete change of method. Standing toe to toe with Sullivan, he swapped blows until he was taught the folly of this system by a jarring left that thoroughly shook him up. Corbett fell into a clinch, again caught Sullivan by the arms to save himself from injury, then threw his forearm up and across the champion's wind pipe, forcing Sullivan from his balance so that he was unable to settle himself for a punch.

Both men lost their temper at this point and the best fighting of the contest was seen. Sullivan rushed in with a right swing. Corbett moved his head just far enough to allow the blow to pass, then with a spring like that of a panther he went forward and seized Sullivan into the same position that he had compelled him to occupy in their try-out fifteen months earlier in San Francisco and then swung a heavy right that caught Sullivan flush on the point of the nose, damaging that feature to such an extent that it was puffed and sore during the remainder of the fight.

Sullivan lost all sense of distance, and though he might have been old at this time, he was not old enough to be afraid of Sullivan's blows and sending in smash after smash without once missing the target for which he aimed. Sullivan was tired and of gory appearance and was glad of the opportunity to clinch to save himself from the bombardment, which he little understood.

It was at this point that those who had bet on Sullivan attempted to save themselves from loss by hedging their bets, offering even money that Corbett would win. His seconds sent Sullivan up for the sixth round so much freshened that his friends again took heart, and odds of 7 to 3 were offered that he would retain the championship.

During the sixth round Corbett contented himself with a plan of campaign that seemed intended merely to annoy Sullivan and compel him to work himself into fatigue.

Corbett gave evidence that it was his intention to so change his fighting methods with each round that the big fellow could not tell what to expect. As round seven opened he sprang forward and met Sullivan more than half way across the ring. Standing close, he drove in a short arm left to the stomach and then brought his right up to Sullivan's chin. Sullivan swung his left, which barely touched Corbett's chest. Corbett returned with two rights and a left to the champion's face, again damaging Sullivan's nose.

Corbett sprang back; then weaving in again he planted a hard right to Sullivan's heaving stomach. The champion's arms dropped to his sides, and Corbett, taking advantage, scored repeatedly with both hands, hitting Sullivan almost at will.

Step by step the absolutely defenceless Sullivan was forced back to the ropes, where Corbett, taking deliberate aim, put his entire weight behind a right that drove hard between the champion's eyes. Sullivan's head bent far back and his knees sagged. He looked like a whipped mare, and the crowd of gleeful thousand fight fans were on their feet calling for the finish. A knockout might have occurred had the round been a minute longer, but the bell came to Sullivan's rescue and he staggered to his corner a sorry looking champion indeed.

Nevertheless the minute of rest did Sullivan much good. He came back freshened by this early part of the eighth round did the best work that he had accomplished. Corbett was forced into clinches, and Sullivan complained to Duffy that he was being fouled by Corbett, who continually forced himself out of the clinch by throwing his forearm across Sullivan's throat, completely shutting off the champion's wind. Sullivan was much distressed by this trick, which was new to him, and attempted fighting at long range. In that he was thoroughly outpointed. Corbett was glad to stand off and shoot his left through to the face.

Sullivan's features were distorted, his cheeks puffed and his eyes blackened. Corbett seemed to have just got down to his work. His movements were as perfect as those of a steam engine. In and out he came, shot, seldom failing to damage and weaken the champion.

The ninth round was a repetition of the eighth so far as Corbett's work was concerned. Sullivan won

THE Story of America's Greatest Prize Fight and the Vanquishing of the Mighty Conqueror by the Mightiest Bank Clerk

applause merely by his remarkable powers of endurance. He seemed to reach Corbett with an occasional blow, but the youngster was so timing his movements that the blow always caught him as he was going away and left no sign of damage. Sullivan landed several apparently heavy lefts on Corbett's chest, but not enough damage was done to even redden the skin.

The eleventh round saw Corbett land twice, but with no great force to his blows, and Sullivan failed to land a glove on the challenger.

Rounds twelve, thirteen and fourteen were in a measure monotonous, although Corbett's dazzling footwork pleased the onlookers. Not once did he consent to exchange blows with the champion. He was in and out and around Sullivan, hammering away like the traditional cooper around a cask.

Much money had been wagered that Corbett would not stay a full fifteen rounds and he opened that round in a manner to prove to his admirers that he was determined not only to stay but to show he was the best man in the ring.

Sullivan, having been warned by his seconds that his friends would lose many wagers if he did not put Corbett out in this round, growled out an oath as he left his corner and rushed headlong at Corbett. His backers were overjoyed when he reached Corbett's neck, but it was only a glancing blow that did little damage. Back came Sullivan with another charge, and Corbett, suddenly stopping his retreat, stepped forward and threw his full weight into a right that was followed by a smacking left. Both blows reached Sullivan's face, doing much damage. Again Corbett took up his weaving stride, swinging his fists down by his hips, throwing his head first to one side and then to the other, almost at will hammering in blow after blow to the challenger's stomach. Sullivan was encouraged, and his friends could not help realizing that, barring an accident, he was a beaten man. His shoulders slunk and his breast heaved as he stumbled to his corner at the sound of the welcome bell.

Corbett was fighting too logical a battle to give to his opponent an opportunity to take advantage of an accident. Many expected him to rush in at the opening of the sixteenth round for a knockout. Instead of doing that, he kept out of range of Sullivan's fists and made the champion's face the target for his volley of rapid fire lefts. Sullivan was so completely tired that he threw out both arms and fell into a clinch to avoid the blows that rained upon him, and as the round closed odds of 2 to 1 that Corbett would win found no takers.

In the seventeenth round Corbett was still resting, his face yet unmarked and his hair not ruffled; not a red spot on his body to show where the champion had landed. He was going with all of his strength and all his speed, yet he was still content to make Sullivan the receiver general for all punishment, keeping himself the while out of possible reach of Sullivan's fists. Sullivan finally fell forward, and as he came to a clinch gave Corbett a half arm jolt in the neck. This apparently dazed Corbett for a few seconds, and as they separated Sullivan was able to land a right and left, but was too weak and too wild to do much damage, and his opportunity was lost.

Nearing the End.

Coming up for the eighteenth round Corbett stood as if ready to swap blows with Sullivan, but as a heavy swing came over he ducked beneath it and while crouching swung forward with a tremendous left that sank far into Sullivan's flabby stomach. The champion gasped with pain and astonishment, and before he could recover Corbett swung his left upward and again flattened Sullivan's nose. With a quick movement he then drove his right to Sullivan's ribs and as the champion's guard fell shot two hard lefts flush to the face.

Corbett was now playing for the knockout. He stepped forward and twice in succession landed Sullivan's head back between his shoulders. Again it was apparent that the bell saved Sullivan from defeat. A tremendous right crashed against his neck just as the bell sounded, and his seconds worked industriously over him to send him forward for the nineteenth round in as good shape as possible.

Corbett now saw victory close at hand, and in the nineteenth round made no other attempt than to keep Sullivan so tired that he could not regain his stance and speed. He made no move to knock the big fellow out, but sent in half a dozen hard left jabs to the face.

The twentieth round found Sullivan almost in a collapse. Two or three tremendous swings, however, showed that he still possessed power to land a knockout blow if he could bring it home. Corbett stood back on the point of danger and laid out his right, catching Sullivan repeatedly on the jaw. Finally the old fellow's knees gave way, his hands fell to his sides, his eyes glazed and he stood waiting for the blow that would send him to the floor a defeated man. Corbett poised ready to land that blow, but was disturbed by the clanging of the gong that gave to the champion another and what proved to be his last moment of glory.

Sullivan came up for the twenty-first round still dazed and tired. His legs wobbled and refused to support him. Corbett, as strong and active as when the fight opened, sprang upon him and caught him full in the mouth with a tremendous right drive. This was followed by a left, another right and a second left. Corbett was now fighting as Sullivan would have had him fight when the battle opened. He was standing before his antagonist regardless of any punishment he might himself receive and was working his arms like piston rods.

Sullivan reeled, caught at the rope with one hand and spread his legs to brace himself. Corbett caught him on the point of the jaw with a whiff swing and then restrained his left mercifully, waiting for Sullivan to drop from exhaustion. There was still a spark of strength left in the older man's body, however, and he refused to fall.

Corbett again threw his right fist forward with just sufficient force behind it to drive Sullivan from his balance. The big fellow was not knocked out, but he sank to the floor of the ring. He struck the mat on his left side, then rolled over on his face. Jack McAuliffe from his corner showered ice cold water upon him from a sponge.

The mighty Sullivan placed the palms of his hands on the floor and attempted to raise himself. He succeeded in lifting his body a few inches and then lurched forward as the referee counted the fateful ten.

The referee waved his hands in the air and then patted Corbett on the shoulder to show that the championship had passed into new hands. The youngster walked forward and attempted to help Sullivan's seconds to carry him to his corner. His face wore a look of sympathy for the man he had beaten. Filled with the elation of victory, he was still sorry for Sullivan and made his sympathy known with a word of condolence.

Sullivan, heartbroken and dejected, sat in his corner until the demonstration had somewhat spent itself; then, rising and supporting himself by the top-most rope, faced the crowd. For a moment he could not control his voice. Then, swallowing a sob, he said:

"I tried once too often. I am glad that the championship remains in America."

Again the cheering was taken up, and fully as many then followed the defeated Sullivan to his quarters cheering for him as chased after the new champion, giving him their plaudits for his prowess and success.

Not only had a new championship been established, but a new school of pugilism had been set up in the world. Queensberry rules had been substituted for all time for the old London prize ring rules. Science, intelligence and speed had been called upon to form the champion capable of defeating the greatest of all representatives of muscle and brawn. Sullivan, the most popular pugilist who ever wore a glove and the greatest of all fighters in the London prize ring, had lost his laurels to Corbett, the greatest and most scientific boxer the world has produced. It may perhaps be said in truth for Corbett that he took to the prize ring the best intellect that institution ever has known.