

James J. Corbett vs Charley Mitchell (January 26, 1894 - SF Examiner)

At 2 o'clock to the minute there was a stir in the crowd near the ring and Circular Joe Vendig went up through a gate in the wire fence and got within the ropes. He was followed by Billy Madden, whom he probably intended to introduce or perhaps did introduce as the timekeeper, but the sight of any one within the roped square was too much for those who had been waiting and watching, and they cheered the pair whenever "Circular" attempted to speak.

CORBETT APPEARS.

Suddenly the cheers increased, and there was a general craning of necks to catch a glimpse of some one who was coming along. It was Jim Corbett and his retinue, and as they passed along the side of the platform and made their way up to where the ring was pitched the enthusiasm reached a high pitch. Corbett was closely followed by Donaldson, Delaney and Jack Dempsey, with McVey, Creedon, Tracey and others bringing up the rear. The train of handlers had a big stock of blankets, wraps and cordials distributed amongst them, and they were careful to keep a sharp eye on everything they carried. Corbett wore street pantaloons, a white sweater and a long coat made of toweling. He nodded a few times as the shouts of welcome continued and then busied himself in stepping around and smashing out stray lumps of rosin with his fighting shoes. He looked cool and collected. There was not the slightest kind of a tremor visible about him and his careless movements were easy and natural. He had, however, a hard look on his face—the kind of look which told too well that the fight near at hand appealed to him more as an opportunity for settling a long-standing grudge than for any fresh luster it might shed on the prize-ring laurels he had already gained.

Just as Corbett sauntered over to his stool there was a second outburst of cheering, which heralded the approach of Mitchell and his party. The Englishman presented rather an unusual picture as he clambered into the ring, followed by the men who have been training him for weeks. His frame was enveloped in a huge ulster of blanket material and he wore a small, round soft hat cocked jauntily on the back of his head. The effect was rather comical and, as some one remarked, he looked more like a British tourist coming from his bath than a man who was going to tackle the cleverest fighter in the business.

As Mitchell and those with him settled themselves in their corner Announcer Madden read off the names of the seconds. Corbett had John Donaldson, Billy Delaney, Jack Dempsey, W. A. Brady, and lastly, Big McVey. His timekeeper was Ted Foley. Mitchell's esquires were Jim Hall, Steve O'Donnell, Harry Darrin, Poney Moore, Jack Fogarty and Tom Allen. "Bat" Masterson was Charlie's timekeeper.

The principals looked anything but lovingly at each other from under their eyebrows as they sat and waited for the ref-

eree to appear. Jim was evidently thinking of the Bowery Theatre incident, while Mitchell probably had in mind the many insults offered to him through the medium of the Charley Mitchell caricature in Corbett's play. Neither seemed to be all at ease. Mitchell had a grin on his round face which deepened into a sneering laugh as he stared over toward the corner where Corbett sat.

THE HAND-SHAKE OMITTED.

Now Honest John Kelly put in an appearance, duly trumpeted by Madden in the orthodox fashion, and, as the parliamentary reports have it, there was renewed cheering. Entering the ring nearer to Mitchell's corner, Kelly extended his hands to the Britisher, and Charley grasped it in a pompous way. Passing over over to Corbett's stool Kelly greeted the San Franciscan in a similar manner and the crowd grew quiet for an instant. It was only an instant, however, as Jack Dempsey at this juncture unfurled Jim's colors in the shape of an American and two Irish flags. Yells of approval floated up to the murky sky, where the seagulls floated, as Dempsey, with a finish born of long usage, deftly entered with the flags and wound them around Corbett's post.

The gloves next commanded attention. They were provided by somebody from a cardinal-hued pasteboard box, and Chief of Police Keene stepped briskly up to the side of the ring with a small weighing outfit, such as itinerant venders of fruit and candy carry. With all the nicety of a druggist parceling out paregoric the Police Chief hefted the tan-colored mittens with his little scales, and with a dignified, off-hand wave of his left hand made known to the watchers that everything was proper and in accordance with the law and the license.

The crowd cheered again. It was quite prepared to cheer, in fact, on the slightest provocation, and it almost seemed, indeed, as if the sporting representatives of the big Northern cities were keeping their lungs in trim for the greater cheering that was to follow. While Keene was testing the gloves, each pair of which proved to be a shade over the required five ounces, Mitchell arose from his chair, and with arms akimbo watched the operation critically. Corbett sat quietly in his corner all this time and talked with Delaney. It seemed to me that Jim took little notice of all the preliminaries and was simply awaiting the order to set to.

The weighing over, Referee Kelly called the men together in the center of the ring.

"I wish to remind the both of you that this is a fight for the championship of the world," said Kelly, "and I will look to you to fight fair and honorable. At the first palpable attempt at fouling I will decide against the man who resorts to such dirty work. Don't forget this. Now shake hands."

Mitchell half extended his hand, but Corbett turned on his heel and walked to his corner. Mitchell stood for a second looking puzzled, then he trotted back to his corner and began to shed his big ulster and affix his gloves. Corbett disrobed in an instant, and stood forth with nothing on him but a light-colored breech-cloth, a pair of short white socks and black laced-up fighting shoes. Around his waist he wore the handsome belt of red, white and blue silk sewn on to a canvas girdle. This was made especially for him here in Jacksonville, and is a counterpart of the belt he wore when he fought Sullivan. Jim then held out his hands while Delaney put on the gloves and tied them securely at the wrists.

Mitchell freed himself from his big blanket envelope, but still wore his jaunty hat. He had on black trunks, short black socks and shoes much the same as Corbett's. While his gloves were being fitted Madden announced that "Denver" Ed Smith, the victor over Joe Goddard in a recent fight, wanted to challenge the winner for a stake of \$10,000. Smith, who arrived in Jacksonville at a late hour, was at the ringside, but somehow the announcement did not provoke even a faint cheer.

All was ready now with the exception of the formal handshake, which Corbett stolidly refused to be a party to. Mitchell beckoned the referee to him and asked whether the formality was not to be gone through with, and Corbett seemed to show impatience.

"What are we waiting for?" he said, knitting his brows. "Cut that gong loose, please."

Then the gong rang, the ring was cleared and Mitchell knocked off his hat and they went to the scratch without the mutual handshake of fistic tradition and the somewhat empty formula, "May the best man win."

As they stood there in position, Corbett's advantage in physique was very pronounced. He towered far over the chunky Britisher, and he clearly outweighed him by twenty pounds. As a matter of fact fighters always quibble about their weight, but striking an average of all the expert testimony that was offered and the various authentic declarations which were made, Corbett weighed 184 pounds and Mitchell 165. Mitchell's attitude seemed to dwarf his size before he loosened up and began to hop around. He stood with his legs close together and his arms curved close to his body. Corbett, on the other hand, shaped in a rangy and practiced style. His legs were kept fairly wide apart and his arms well extended, and he seemed to be balanced to a nicety on his feet. It was frequently remarked that the contrast between the pair was as marked as that between Dempsey and Fitzsimmons when the Nonpareil met his Waterloo in the arena of the Olympic Club at New Orleans.



JAMES J. CORBETT, CHAMPION OF THE WORLD.

[Sketched for the "Evening" by ALBERT P. MATHEWS from the latest photograph of the great pugilist taken in ring costume.]

THE FIGHT BY ROUNDS.

Mitchell Landed Two Strong Body Blows but That Is All, and Everything Else Went Corbett's Way—The Champion Very Ferocious in All His Assaults.

JACKSONVILLE, January 25.—Following is a description of the fight by rounds:

Round 1.—Both men went quickly to the center of the ring, Mitchell with a look of mingled bravado and confidence on his face; Corbett with his teeth set, his brows bent and no trace of a smile. Corbett advanced his left foot toward Mitchell and the Englishman quickly backed away. He moved, with Corbett steadily following trying to corner him. Once Mitchell stopped and moved both arms with a feinting motion; Corbett paused for the infinitesimal portion of a second, and then crept after his man again. In and out of every corner of the ring Mitchell maneuvered, the Californian stealthily stalking him near the ropes. Corbett swung with his left for the head; Mitchell ducked and clinched; Corbett pushed him away and once more the Englishman commenced his backward journey around the confines of the rosined floor. Then Mitchell changed his tactics for an instant. He made a start and went at Corbett swinging both right and left for the face, keeping his own head low. The left-hander caught Corbett lightly on the mouth and a blood stain showed on his upper lip. Mitchell drew backward quickly and a second later tried the right for the body, getting home lightly. His fanciers gave a thin cheer and this encouraged Charley. He made play with his left for the stomach, pulling a trifle short. Corbett up to this time was evidently worrying his man and drawing his fire. Now Corbett moved faster and crowded Mitchell to the ropes. The Britisher ducked a left aimed at his neck and clasped Corbett around the body. They separated and Corbett stood close again, Mitchell bucking and sending his left into the Californian's stomach at the end of the round.

Round 2.—Corbett went to work more briskly now, having apparently ascertained all he wished to know about the other man's methods. Mitchell retreated, but Corbett crowded him and there were a few smothered exchanges, ending in a clinch, which Mitchell appeared all too ready to resort to. After the break Corbett forced matters again. Mitchell brought about another hugging match. Separating, the Englishman made a right-hand drive at Corbett's ribs, but his feet spread and he barely reached the mark. He tried for the stomach with his left, and Corbett steadied him with a vicious left-hand under the chin. As Mitchell went back toward the ropes Corbett tried to hit again, but the Britisher got under the blow. The pace Corbett was setting told on Mitchell. He began to poise his right hand as if on the point of delivering it at the head, but Corbett was not to be intimidated. Jim feinted with the left and then put in a right-hand body blow which jarred Charley considerably. Mitchell turned his back and slipped along the ropes and one or two of the spectators began to hiss. Corbett headed his opponent off and landed on the face with a left jolt. Mitchell backed to the ropes and Corbett went after him, forcing an exchange of blows in which Mitchell was punished severely around the ribs and stomach. Mitchell's returns either landed on Corbett's shoulder or went over his head, and Mitchell clinched to terminate a rather one-sided rally. Mitchell seemed inclined to prolong the embrace, but Corbett's left forearm was across his windpipe and Charley dropped his arms reluctantly. His back was close against the ropes and before he could escape Jim tackled him like a tiger, sending in a couple of body blows, which, if the look in Mitchell's eyes was any criterion, had a very disastrous effect. Mitchell was breathing heavily and evidently distressed. Corbett gave him no mercy, his left hitting

him fiercely on the mouth and then shooting his right across for the jaw. The blow landed a trifle high, but it brought Mitchell down and the spectators rose up and howled for the San Franciscan. Corbett became excited and lost his head. He made at the Englishman as if to punch him while he knelt, and it looked indeed as if Mitchell rather invited than endeavored to avoid the impending foul blow. Delaney and Donaldson got between Corbett and the man he hated and Referee Kelly also stood so as to prevent Corbett injuring his chances of victory by striking his kneeling opponent. The uproar was such that no track could be kept of the timekeepers, and it looked as if Mitchell was on his knees twenty seconds instead of ten. He arose at last when the referee placed his hand upon his shoulder, and Corbett, who had been edging around in a vain endeavor to reach him, went at it again. Mitchell was evidently distressed, but the effects of the knockdown blow had partly passed away and he met Corbett's rush and fought back. They were exchanging blows in Corbett's corner when the gong rang. The noise outside the ring possibly prevented Mitchell from hearing the clang of the gong. In any case he followed Corbett further into his corner and struck at the back of his head. The referee pulled him away just as Corbett came back at Mitchell, intent on fighting it out without regard to timekeepers or rules. Corbett's seconds seized him and forced him into his chair, while Hall and O'Donnell ran Mitchell across the ring to his corner.

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Round 3.—The timekeeper's signal for the third round was still vibrating on the air when Corbett was in hot pursuit of his defeated opponent. Mitchell was by no means aggressive, and if looks go for anything, he recognized the fact that the end was not far off. To and from side to side stepped Corbett nimbly, while Mitchell with wide open eyes danced backwards and tried to avoid the enraged Californian's onslaught. Over the ropes went Mitchell with Corbett right hot after him, and then Jim sent in a right which appeared fierce enough to shatter his opponent's ribs. Mitchell threw his arms around Corbett and tried to hold him on. Jim rushed him backward as if handling a light weight, and Mitchell unclasped his arms to prevent himself from falling. Into a corner Corbett crowded his rattled adversary and hooked him viciously full in the face. A big smear of blood showed across the bridge of the Englishman's nose and his eyes dilated. He was apparently on the point of forcing a clinch again when Corbett drew back his elbow and sent in a right-hander under the heart, which left the issue of the fight still less in doubt. The blow took all the vim out of friend Charley, and he fell sideways to the floor, doubled up as if in great pain. The referee kept a keen eye on Corbett and held him back while Mitchell rose laboriously. He was straightened up against the ropes and his eyes were rolling in his head. He made a weak attempt to get his arms in position, but Corbett was on him like a flash and a right-hander, which sounded like the crack of a pistol, landed on Mitchell's face. Blood covered his countenance from brow to chin and from ear to ear, and down again he went in a sitting position hard against the ropes. It was all over to a moral certainty, and nine-tenths of the spectators jumped to their feet and waved their hats frantically, while the din of shrieks and cheers was simply deafening. In the ring Kelly kept Corbett at bay, while Mitchell with glassy eyes

hung with both hands to the lower ring-rope and bled like the proverbial stuck pig. When the ten seconds were all but up Kelly motioned Mitchell, and the bruised and battered Britisher stood as erect as he could. With one hand he hung for a moment to the upper rope and then stood without assistance. Corbett made for him, but Mitchell's power to raise an arm or duck a blow seemed gone. Corbett struck him but once. It was a right hand smash on the jaw which sent Mitchell's head aside with a jerk and brought him down on his face like a man whose heart had been pierced by a bullet. His nose and forehead struck the floor of the ring hard enough to cause a recoil and then he lay like a dead man where he fell. His hands and arms were stretched far out, but not a muscle quivered. It was one of the most effective knock-out blows ever delivered within the ropes of a ring. Such a thing as the timekeeper making himself heard amid the din that arose was entirely out of the question, but Referee Kelly kept his head and took his cue from Snapper Garrison. The famous jockey signaled each passing second with his hand and Kelly repeated the motion, keeping count the while. The seconds passed away and found Mitchell still stretched there with the blood welling from a fractured nose, and then Kelly's actions, more eloquently than his words, proclaimed to those assembled that Corbett had won.

It was a physical impossibility for the uproar that prevailed when the decision was made to become any greater, but at any rate it was prolonged. Now and then the sounds of crackling timbers rose sharp above the thunder of approval as the sports jumped and smashed the benches on which they stood. Within the ring Corbett's seconds and his trusty friend, Porter Ashe, gathered around him clasping his hands, while the Californian bore his flashing honors modestly. In the meanwhile Mitchell with bleeding lips was dragged face downwards across to his chair by his

disgruntled seconds, and the fight which has caused more excitement probably than any match that was ever made was at an end.

The barbed wire fences and the barriers did not prevent the ring from being invaded, and within five minutes from the time the Britisher got his quietus a hundred people were within the ropes endeavoring to wrench Corbett's arm from his shoulder socket and displaying an inclination to carry the San Francisco lad to his dressing room on their shoulders. Corbett did not cast even a glance towards Mitchell's corner as the defeated man was being slapped and sponged back to consciousness. Jim left the ring without according him the customary handshake.

AFTER THE BATTLE.

The Men's Tactics Analyzed by W. W. Naughton—Mitchell Admits That He Has Been Whipped by a Good Man—The Men Arrested and Shake Hands.

JACKSONVILLE, January 25.—The contest was an unequal one from the start and I never doubted what the result would be from the moment the men put up their hands. Mitchell had never seen Corbett spar even. I had a decided advantage in this respect, for I have watched his clever work for years at the Olympic Club and had also seen him in the two most important engagements of his career. I refer to his memorable battle with John L. Sullivan and his probably equally as creditable performance with sable Peter Jackson. Therefore, when I saw Mitchell with his close guard and his little stiff-legged jumps, I placed the limit of his lasting at five rounds. At that I was two rounds over the mark. Mitchell reached Corbett's face a time or two in the first round and landed on his body as well, consequently Mitchell's scattered friends were jubilant. It struck me, however, that Corbett need never have been struck had he cared to act shifty. He seemed from the clang of the starting gong to have the utmost disregard for Mitchell or his blows, and simply fiddled and forced him until he had discovered all the

Englishman's weak points, and knew just when and how to administer the *coup de grace*. When Corbett toed the scratch with Sullivan he was eminently careful in everything that he tried to do. At the least sign of ugliness on the big fellow's part Jim was out of danger like a flash, and until he had gauged the speed and reach of the then world's champion, Corbett did not take a single chance.

In to-day's fight it was different entirely. Corbett did the forcing from first to last, and the merit of his performance can only be correctly gauged when it is remembered that Mitchell has fought men like Sullivan to a draw and has never before had the shadow of a defeat upon him. I have always considered that Corbett's left hand is his most dangerous weapon. He uses it in a greater variety of ways than any other knight of the knuckles that I know of, and he seldom places it on a man's face without leaving a mark. He has short, left jolts which are vicious enough to tear a nose or an ear from its fastenings, and a full sweep left facer is an assault which once sampled is not easily forgotten.

To-day Corbett used his left hand but little, and most of the times when he did try with it he went over Mitchell's head. This may have been on account of the Englishman's rapid ducking, but I incline to the belief that Jim was not trying very hard to make connections with his left. He discovered early in the game that Mitchell was inclined to deliver heart blows, and he

made up his mind that he could do the trick with his own right when the proper moment arrived.

In the mean time it was good generalship to take Mitchell's attention from the right-handers that were in store for him by aiming at his head with the left and missing. In each of the first two rounds Mitchell made the circuit of the ring. A couple of times at least he retreated into all the corners and scuffled along with his back to the side ropes, but try as he would to keep away Corbett was there on top of him all the time. Many times the hard-pressed Englishman clinched to obtain a temporary respite, but even this process had its drawbacks, for Corbett met him frequently as he came in with a right-bauder under the heart. Corbett used the right cross three times, and scored as many knock-downs after the first of these. It was in the second round Jim lost his head. If his seconds and the referee had not been wary he would in his rage have committed a foul and thus, according to the ethics of the prize ring, have lost himself the battle. Even now some of those who witnessed the fight claim that Mitchell was fouled. That which urged the San Franciscan to act as he did was simply the workings of pent-up passion, for Corbett hated Mitchell

