

FAKE PRIZE RING BATTLES

Nearly All Noted Fags Have Taken Part in Them.

SULLIVAN AND CORBETT SHAKE

Big Tim and Gentleman Jim Bury Hatchet, Which Ends Feud Dating from the Corbett-McCoy Fake.

When Big Tim Sullivan and James J. Corbett were induced to shake hands and make up at a banquet in New York the other night, a feud which was the direct result of the memorable fake fight between Corbett and Kid McCoy came to an end. Incidentally it revived several interesting stories of fake prize ring contests that have fooled the entire sporting world since the time and also enabled numerous sharpers to swindle the gambling fraternity out of thousands of real American dollars.

Several race track gamblers, including Eddie Burke, laid the plans for the mill. They saw a chance to make a cinch job of it by securing the promise of the wily McCoy to feign a knockout in the fifth round. Corbett was a party to all this conniving, but he did not trust McCoy. He also did not feel that he could rely on the Kid on the level, so that when the framers of the fake told him that McCoy had agreed to lie down Corbett declared with much emphasis that he would not enter the ring with the tricky Hoosier unless the latter first posted a \$10,000 bond as a guaranty that he would not execute a double cross. Accordingly the bond was placed by McCoy in the hands of Burke and articles were quickly signed. The training stunts of the two men, acknowledged to be the most scientific heavyweights in the world, created widespread interest. In fact, the general excitement was so intense on the night of the much talked of battle that the Garden was packed from ringside to roof with one of the biggest amphitheatres that ever passed into the famous amphitheater. The gross receipts amounted to nearly \$75,000, it was said, of which the pugilists got 50 per cent.

Who wants to bet a thousand on Corbett? "I'll lay 8 to 6 that Corbett wins!" "Where's the McCoy money?"

These and other sallies were quickly made by hunters who had been sent into the arena by the gamblers who were trying to make McCoy a hot favorite. That they succeeded goes without saying, for in a few moments nearly everybody who had any money wanted to back McCoy. Included in this number was Big Tim Sullivan, always ready to bet and always playing confidence in his friends. One of Sullivan's henchmen had been waylaid by the gamblers, who gave out the sure tip: "McCoy on the bit!"

Excitement runs high. The fight began with the great crowd worked up to a high state of excitement. Never before had such a wonderful exhibition of science been seen in any prize ring. Every known tactic in the skillful boxer's brain was brought into play, while the crowd looked on and marvelled. But close observers who sat very near the ropes noticed that many of the blows were delivered with open gloves, and that made them suspicious. Finally after a rapid exchange of swings, jabs, uppercuts and body smashes McCoy, in the fifth round, was seen to waver. He was apparently groggy, and Corbett, assuming the look of a demon, rushed in to finish the job. The result was what the spectators believed was a clean knockout, for McCoy went to the canvas apparently lifeless. Corbett was declared the winner and the gamblers raked in \$40,000 in bets.

Before the fight was over the wise men began to see what had occurred. Big Tim was sitting at a private table, and at an early hour the next morning when Corbett, without a scratch entered.

That was a dirty fake, Corbett," cried the big Tammany hall man, "and you threw all your friends down." "Nothing of the sort," replied Corbett hotly. "I won on the level."

That was the only fake that these star pugilists took part in. There were at least two others in which Corbett cut a big figure, although the public did not have the pleasure of seeing one of them—the six round bout with Peter Courtney, a green truckman, held before the Kinetograph at Edison's laboratory in East Orange. That Courtney affair was a huge joke. It was the first boxing match ever produced by motion pictures in this country and it was just a frame-up of the rawest nature. It was just one year to a day after the victory of Corbett over poor old John L. at New Orleans that the new heavyweight champion took on Courtney. Billy Bray or somebody else in the Corbett camp dug up Courtney in Trenton and promised him \$50 if he would stand up for six rounds of less than one minute each before the picture machine at Edison's. Corbett got ready for the battle as if he was about to meet Bob Fitzsimmons. He had half a dozen henchmen and he was highly excited, so much so that he wanted to wear undergarments to be able to carry out the skin tight gloves and knock the innocent Courtney out in the sixth round. Courtney, meanwhile, was filled with whiskey to give him courage and was actually dragged to the Black Maria, by which the building where the mill was to take place was called.

Corbett's never to be forgotten mixup with Tom Sharkey at the Lenox Athletic club in November, 1888, was one of the worst blows that the boxing game got in those days. But in this case Corbett got the double cross from friends of Big Tim Sullivan. Sharkey was under the management of Tom O'Rourke then and was fraudulently fighting his way up to the top of the heavyweight class. The burly sailor in a four-round draw with Corbett two years before in California made Gentleman Jim take to the defensive, so that when the

battle ended Corbett had a whole lot of respect for his antagonist. That was the reason why Sharkey never ceased challenging Corbett thereafter. Corbett, however, ignored Sharkey, but took on Fitzsimmons, who won the world's championship from the man with the pompadour at Carson City.

Corbett did not care much for fighting after that dismal setback for him, so he did not enter the ring again for a year and a half, when he took on Sharkey. But it was only after much persuasion on the part of O'Rourke that Corbett agreed to fight at all. Corbett said he was not physically fit and needed at least six weeks in which to train. The mill was scheduled to be held in its half that time. So Corbett balked, even when a \$25,000 purse was guaranteed.

"Tell you what I'll do," finally suggested Corbett, "if you can get Devery to stop the mill in the sixth round, I'll fight. I think I can keep going about that length of time."

O'Rourke bites quickly. "It's a bet!" said O'Rourke, who came back in a few days with the information that Devery, then the "best chief of police New York ever had," would be on the job. Corbett, therefore, did some light training, while Sharkey worked like a Trojan. When it came time to fight, Hon. John Kelly was the referee. The word was passed around by O'Rourke that Sharkey would beat Corbett's head off and that he was worth a big bet. Big Tim, unaware of the trick that O'Rourke had framed up in order to get Corbett to box, put down a spanking wager on Sharkey. So, every-thing was set for the fight, and the night of the fight was no longer under way than Sharkey proceeded to show Corbett up by means of terrific slugging and incessant rushing.

Corbett, always quick on his feet, stalled until the sixth round began. Then he never took his eyes off Devery, who sat in a box in full uniform, a picture of confidence. The sixth round ended, but Devery did not make a move. Corbett was as white as chalk in his corner as he waited for the next gong. Maybe Devery had forgotten him! But Big Bill never turned a hair when, as the seventh round started, Corbett hustled around to that side of the ring and while in a crouch looked intently over Sharkey's shoulder at the chief of police.

Sharkey was fighting like a wildcat then. His blows were terrific. Corbett caught one on the side of his head and received another pile driver in the stomach. It looked all over when the eighth round ended, for Corbett had been knocked flat. By this time Corbett concluded that he had been either duped or that Devery had forgotten him. It was up to him, therefore, to stop the fight himself in a way that would let him out with a whole skin. In his corner was Con McVey, a trusty follower, who was told that unless some radical move was made Sharkey would score a clean knockout in the ninth round.

McVey turns the trick. "Leave it to me!" whispered McVey as the gong called the fight on. He stepped quickly behind Corbett's head and with a fearful smash on the mouth and then almost doubled him up with a destructive uppercut in the wind. In a jiffy McVey, violating the rules, jumped through the ropes. There was a small-sized riot in a few seconds and the peaceful Devery got busy. Corbett, apparently in a rage, tried to punch McVey in the face. McVey punched back, which was all very theatrical. But the cops were soon clearing the ring so that the referee's decision could be heard. Of course, everybody knew that Sharkey had won on a foul. But nobody was prepared for the startling announcement from Honest John Kelly.

"Sharkey wins on a foul! All bets are declared off!" The declaring off of bets caused another near riot. Under the rules Kelly had no right to make this decision and instantly it was rumored that there was a motive. "The referee bet a bunch on Corbett!" said several of O'Rourke's friends who had backed Sharkey for a large amount. "Fakel! Hobberly! Skin!" roared the spectators as they filed out of the building, condemning Corbett, McVey, Kelly and everybody connected with the affair. There was so much scandal as a sequence that Big Tom Sullivan, who was a stockholder in the Lenox Athletic club, held a formal investigation of the charges that the fight was a fake, but the conclusion was officially reached that there was nothing wrong. Corbett did not tell about the Devery trick until long afterward.

Tom Always Had Bad Rep. Sharkey, before he came east, bore a pretty hard reputation for participation in queer fights in California. He was then under the management of Danny Lynch, a man who was known all over the country as a sure-thing gambler and who for a time ruled off the western prize tracks. It was Lynch who saw a chance to clean up a fortune by framing up a job by which Sharkey could get a verdict over Robert Fitzsimmons. A match was made and Sharkey and Fitz met in Frisco on December 2, 1894. Wyatt Earp, a gun fighter and all around hard man, was the referee. Fitzsimmons, then in his prime, was a big favorite in the betting, but before the mill began there was plenty of Sharkey money wagered at the ring. For seven rounds Sharkey was beaten at all angles. Fitz out-boxed, out-slugged and out-generalized him. It seemed a sure thing that the sailor would be stopped. But in the eighth round, when Fitzsimmons was going at top speed, Sharkey suddenly fell to the floor, placing both hands over his groin.

McCormick, a mixed ale fighter. Of course another match had to be made, and the New Yorkers were asked to stand for it at the Broadway Athletic club in September, 1898. The result was inevitable, for after a raw lot of faking for seven rounds McCoy put the fourth rater away with one good wallop. And don't forget that McCoy got the money.

Fitzsimmons, in spite of a career that commanded the respect of sporting men all over the world, took part in two fake fights during his career. He admitted that he threw a fight to Jim Hall in Australia in 1890. He received \$25 for "lying down" in the fourth round. But afterward at New Orleans he knocked daylight out of Hall in the same number of rounds. That mill caused a great deal of talk because Charley Mitchell, who handled Hall, had brought over the rich Squire Abington, who bet a fortune on the beaten fighter and then suddenly died at a Crescent City hotel. Fitz did no more training until he met Philadelphia Jack O'Brien in Frisco in 1905, when Bob, for a consideration, confessed by O'Brien, refused to continue after thirteen rounds, declaring that he was all in. It is said the gamblers in California cleaned up handsomely on O'Brien, who also won a big bet on himself and a reputation, while Fitz got the bulk of the purse.

Maher-Morrissey Fake. One of the most barefaced fakes was the frame-up between Peter Maher and Mike Morrissey, pulled off at Lenox Athletic club, in 1900. This was a cold-blooded plot to defraud the supporters of boxing in New York and it succeeded handsomely from a pecuniary standpoint, but as far as the fight itself was concerned it was a huge farce and one of the last straws that broke the back of the boxing game in the state of New York. Morrissey was a keeper of an insane asylum on the outskirts of Brooklyn. He was a big, husky fellow, who naturally was able to take care of the violent patients that were placed in his care. Somebody visited the asylum one day, and looking at Morrissey over, was struck with the idea that he would make a fighter. When a proposition was made to Mike to leave the asylum and become a new "champion of Ireland" he readily consented, as visions of a fortune were made to appear before him. In a few days Morrissey was taken over to Boston on the quiet by Eugene Connelley, a well known sporting man, and in the course of a week or so came a scare-head story from the Hub which read this way:

"Mike Morrissey, champion heavyweight pugilist of Ireland, has just arrived here and has issued a challenge to fight any man in the world, Peter Maher preferred. Morrissey is six feet tall, weighs 220 pounds, is a physical marvel. He is a terrific hitter and has won all of his fights by the knockout route. Experts who have seen Morrissey put up his hands say that he is wonderfully clever and will make Jeffries, Fitzsimmons, Sharkey, Corbett and the others hustle. But he wants to beat Peter Maher first. Just to show his countrymen that Maher is a counterfeit champion of the Emerald Isle."

The yellow newspapers played this yarn up with a flourish of trumpets, and when Morrissey arrived in this city a few days later his photograph was published in fighting togs. He stripped well and looked like a fighter, so that the deception was a perfect success. The crowd was such a rumpled affair that Maher, who has been made over Morrissey that he was followed about town by a crowd of open mouthed persons who believed that he was a world-beater. The climax was reached when he was taken to a Bowers clothing store, where he was togged out to a pair of 50-cent suit, \$2 silk hat and a pair of 50-cent kid gloves. Then he was lugged up to the Lenox Athletic club to be introduced to the crowd that had gathered to see a battle between two lesser lights. As Morrissey stood ready to crawl through the ropes following an introduction, his mentor, Cuminsky, said to him:

"Ireland's Invincible. "Don't open your mouth. Don't say a word. Just bow to the crowd." "Gents," roared Charley Harvey, the master of ceremonies, "I take great pleasure in introducing to your notice this evening Ireland's invincible heavyweight champion, Mr. Mike Morrissey, who has beaten all comers on the other side and is ready to make a match with Peter Maher, then anybody in the world." Morrissey received an ovation as, silk hat in hand, he bowed to the spectators on all sides of him and then left the ring in an awkward manner.

"He looks like a good one," said many who thought they knew a fighter when they saw one. The next day a forfeit was posted by Morrissey's manager and a challenge was issued to Maher to fight for the title of champion heavyweight of Ireland. The fight was quickly made and the Lenox Athletic club was selected for the battle-ground. Judges were so excited over the proposed mill that there were scraps and arguments all over town as to the respective merits of the two men. Morrissey went to a secluded spot in Long Island to train. He had never had on boxing gloves before in his life and knew absolutely nothing about the science of hit, stop and get away.

So great was the excitement that a dozen sharks hustled about taking all the Morrissey money in sight. Still the Irishmen present remained loyal to Morrissey and declared that Maher would be knocked out in five minutes. Maher had read and heard so much about Morrissey that he began to have cold feet as the time drew near to enter the ring. "Maher calls for pint," growled Maher as he drew on his fighting shoes and buckled his belt in the dressing room. The request was readily granted and Maher swigged the liquor down in order to bolster up his flagging spirits. He wanted courage, and he got it in few moments. Then he entered the ring into the big arena and climbed into the ring. His reception was lukewarm, and Maher frowned as he looked around for Morrissey. But Morrissey just at that time was causing his managers much anxiety. He was so nearly frightened to death that it seemed for a moment as if he would drop through the floor of his dressing room. But Sharkey, threats and all sorts of financial promises finally induced him to start for the ring. The moment Morrissey appeared there was a wild scene. There were 10,000 men in the building and more than half of them were Sons of Erin. Hats were thrown in the air and hoarse cheers went up from the four corners of the arena. Hundreds crowded about Morrissey and tried to shake him by the hand. He was surrounded by a crazy mob when the police jumped in and cleared a way to the ring. As Morrissey climbed through the ropes so awkwardly that ring veterans began to call him a rat. Maher turned pale and called for the black bottle. "Three cheers for Morrissey, the champion of them all!" shrieked a lunatic in the top balcony, and immediately there was

The Best Advice

Grid of 'DON'T WORRY' coupons for various concerns like Lawyer, Banker, Friend, Mother, etc.

by investing in one of the Standard Policies of The Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States THE BEST ADVICE WE CAN GIVE YOU is cheerfully at your disposal.

Coupon form for Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States, 120 Broadway, New York.

Advertisement for Woodmen of the World Life Insurance Society, featuring 'Perfection and Protection' and '15,000 Elegant Monuments'.

Advertisement for D. C. Scott, D.V.S., featuring 'Headquarters in W.O.W. Building, Omaha' and 'Largest Fraternal Insurance Order West of Mississippi River'.