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**MY STORY
 OF MY LIFE**



By Jim Corbett

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CHAPTER VIII.

CORBETT SHOWS ME THAT HE CAN LAND
 STIFF PUNCHES.

At first I followed instructions in
 sparring with Corbett and tried
 the blows they told me Fitz-
 simmons used. But I never
 could get the knack of it so that I felt
 tight in letting the punches go. Every
 man has his own instinctive style of
 fighting. Fitzsimmons had his, and it
 wasn't like mine at all. It was a style
 designed to fit his own build. Fitzsim-
 mons had light, thin legs and narrow
 hips. He stood in a knockkneed posi-



CORBETT AND I WENT OUT EVERY DAY
 FOR A TEN OR TWELVE MILE SPIN.

tion. His shoulders were very wide,
 and he had a long reach. Everything
 about his build helped him to pivot at
 the hips and knees and swing his
 whole body into the blow. My style
 was different. I didn't need to pivot
 like Fitzsimmons. All I did was to
 stick my left arm out like a piece of
 scantling and let them try to run into
 me. I could hold them off with the
 left and could hit a hard blow with
 my arm nearly straight, swinging it a
 few inches like a club. I could whip
 that arm down to the body in a good
 stiff punch and plunge in with it. And
 the right I used for a good dig into
 the body whenever I came to close quar-
 ters. I crouched a little, and my chin
 was partly protected by my left shoul-
 der. When I began using more of my
 own style I did better, and especially
 after I had begun to try to equal Cor-
 bett's fast footwork. That, I think,
 was about the most important thing I
 learned from Jim Corbett.

One of the first things I noticed
 when I began sparring with Corbett
 was that unless I could find Corbett's
 toes I might as well throw a stone at
 a flying duck as try to hit him. When
 we first boxed he was as hard to reach
 as a shadow. I soon grew tired of
 wasting my blows on the air and de-
 termined to force my way to close
 quarters before letting go a single
 punch. So I went after him steadily
 while he jabbed and hooked and danc-
 ed away. At last in closing I struck
 my toes against his and, lunging at
 the same moment, managed to get
 home a good whack on his ribs. As
 soon as I started forward again I tried
 the same trick, feeling around for him
 with the toes of my left foot and then
 shooting out one hand or the other.
 As soon as I felt him I knew he must
 be within striking distance. White
 laughed at me after that round and
 asked me if I was trying to step on
 Corbett's feet to hold him there so he
 couldn't get away, but I kept my own
 counsel. Corbett knew what I was
 doing, as I could see plainly, for when
 we boxed again he took care to keep
 shifting about rapidly to confuse me.

The part of the training that I liked
 best was the work on the road. I never
 tired of that. Corbett and I, some-
 times with the other sparring partners
 trailing along, went out every day for
 a ten or twelve mile spin. Sometimes
 we walked and ran alternately; some-
 times I ran the whole way at an easy
 trot, finishing with a 200 or 300 yard
 spurt as we came near the handball
 court. Jim Corbett was very proud
 of his running ability, and naturally I
 ran even with him at the finish, al-
 though there never was a day when I
 couldn't have left him far behind.

Billy Delaney thought that Corbett
 was doing too much road work, es-
 pecially when he went out for a long
 slow jog on the day before he was to
 meet Fitzsimmons. "He's leaving his
 fight on the road!" Delaney complain-
 ed. But Jim was a nervous big fel-
 low. He had to be doing something
 all the time. With me it never made
 much difference how I killed time just
 before a fight as long as I knew my
 work had been done and that I was
 fit. A game of croquet or a couple of
 hours' poker playing was good enough
 to fill in. Corbett was different. He
 was of a worrying mind, always
 thinking he had to do a little more to
 get himself exactly right and perhaps
 actually losing more strength through

nervousness than he gained by the
 hard work. Fitzsimmons, they told
 us, finished his training a few days
 before the scrap and spent the rest
 of his time chopping wood and putting
 an iron shot with the ranchers who
 came around to see him box.

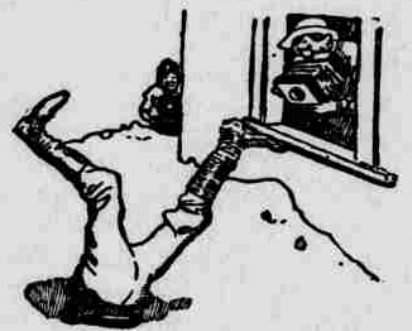
Only a few more days stood be-
 tween us and the great event. The
 hundred or so of newspaper men gather-
 ed in Carson were on tiptoe for some
 new sensation. They had written up
 everything from Corbett's food sched-
 ule to the way he brushed his hair,
 and they were always around looking
 and listening and asking questions of
 everybody. A certain bunch of these
 reporters from a San Francisco news-
 paper had the inside track in a way.
 Corbett having accepted an offer of
 \$5,000 for exclusive interviews. One
 of these men on a dull day thought up
 a scheme to make a good story. He
 proposed to Corbett that he take a run
 over Fitzsimmons' road and meet the
 Australian face to face. Corbett had
 no objection to looking at Fitzsim-
 mons. Every day Fitz's run took him
 from Cook's ranch, where he was
 training, down past the big stone
 buildings of the state prison.

So it was fixed up that Corbett was
 to visit the prison quietly in the morn-
 ing just about the time Fitz would be
 out on his run. With Homer Daven-
 port, the cartoonist, and a couple of
 writers in a rig, Corbett and I started.
 It all came out right. After awhile
 we saw Fitzsimmons' head bobbing up
 and down in the distance. He came
 running along, swinging a stick in his
 hand. As he reached us he started to
 go by without paying any attention to
 our party. But the reporters called to
 him, and he stopped. Corbett and Fitz-
 simmons were face to face. If any-
 thing the Cornishman was the cooler
 of the two. I knew that they had met
 before in the east and that they were
 bitter enemies. They hardly looked at
 each other now until one of the writ-
 ers said, "Shake hands, gentlemen."
 Corbett held out his hand.

But Fitzsimmons stepped quickly
 back and refused.
 "Last time I offered to shake hands
 with you," he said, "you struck me in
 the face. The only time I'll shake with
 you now is after I've whipped you."
 "Then you'll never shake with me,"
 said Corbett, flushing up angrily. "This
 is your last chance."

For a moment it looked as if they
 would come to blows right there on
 the road, and I thought I'd see a good
 fight. But the others interfered. Fitz-
 simmons went on his way, and we kept
 on to the prison.

Corbett was in a rage. "He'll shake
 hands after he's whipped me, will he?"
 he growled.
 Fitzsimmons made quite an impres-
 sion on me that day. He looked like a
 light man to fight for the heavyweight
 championship, for, although his shoul-
 ders were nearly as broad as my own,
 any one could see at a glance that he
 was just a mass of wiry sinew from
 head to heels, with no big muscles
 worth mentioning. And yet he had
 knocked out a lot of good men in a
 punch or two, and he was a cool fel-
 low, who evidently liked to fight. Fitz
 was a funny combination of fighter
 and practical joker. Even over at
 Shaw's we heard of his pranks in the
 training quarters. On this day, so I
 heard later, he continued his run to
 Carson and, going into one of the tem-
 porary newspaper offices there, spent
 half an hour trying to break all rec-
 ords on a punching machine that they
 had brought to Nevada to try out the
 fighters with. And after that, when he
 saw a lot of photographers waiting for
 him in the street, he tried to escape
 through the back window for a joke,
 lost his balance and fell head first into



FITZ STUCK HEAD FIRST IN A SNOWDRIFT.
 a snowdrift, where he stuck with both
 legs waving in the air like a signpost
 until they pulled him out after photo-
 graphing him first.

It was a day or two after this, if I
 remember right, that White and De-
 laney decided that Jim needed a try-
 out. So I was told to go out and fight
 him four rounds as hard as I knew
 how. Then I had the first real glimpse
 of Corbett's best work. He surely sur-
 prised me, for I had come to think he
 couldn't hit. Now he let me come at
 him, timed me perfectly and drove his
 right across to my jaw so hard that
 I could hear my teeth grinding and
 my jawbone snap in the sockets. I
 went right after him, and he showed
 some respect for my left hand by care-
 fully keeping away from it. I got in
 a few good punches for all that. Walk-
 ing back to the dressing room after
 the first round for we nearly always
 alternated, three men boxing with Cor-
 bett in turn, I passed a college ath-
 lete who was one of Corbett's aids
 coming out with the gloves on.
 "How is he today?" he asked.

I moved my jaw from side to side
 between my thumb and fingers and
 heard it pop.

"Oh, he's hitting all right!" I said.
 He surely was too. After my four
 rounds I had a very sore jaw and a
 cut over one eye. But I was perfectly
 satisfied. If this was fighting—and the
 kind of fighting that a champion does
 in the ring—then I wanted more of it.
 I wanted to go up against just that
 kind of work in the ring.

I BECAME SPARRING PARTNER TO
 CORBETT AT CARSON.

If I live to be a hundred—and mine
 is a long lived family—I'll never
 forget that first day at Shaw's
 Springs. When Billy and I left
 our rig we didn't go into the hotel.
 They told us that Corbett was in his
 handball court, and we went straight
 out to meet him.

It was a perfect day, I remember.
 The sun was shining, and the glare
 from the snow that covered the ground
 was blinding. Corbett had established
 a regular camp at this little hotel a
 few miles out of Carson City, at the
 edge of the hills. They had built for
 him a barnlike structure containing a
 big handball court and a snug dressing
 room.

A bushwhacking photographer had
 followed us down from the hotel, and
 now he pranced off into the snow with
 his camera and held us up to get a
 picture of Billy Delaney arriving with



AT THE END OF OUR BOUT I WAS
 PLEASED WITH MYSELF.

Jim's new sparring partner. Seems
 funny, looking back now. If that pho-
 tographer had known that he was
 taking the first picture of a coming
 world's champion wouldn't his eyes
 have bulged out?

When the photographer had snapped
 us we went inside. The handball
 court was empty. I put my suit case
 down on the floor and looked around.
 That suit case held about all I had
 in the world at the time—a couple of
 changes of clothes and a well worn
 sweater with a neck stretched all out
 of shape through being pulled over my
 head so often.

Delaney opened a little door in one
 corner of the room, and then I had my
 first sight of the great man I was to
 work with and whose boxing skill was
 to have such an effect on my later con-
 tests in the ring. Corbett was just get-
 ting dressed for his work.

It's strange how vividly every little
 detail of an important event comes up
 in a man's memory. I can shut my
 eyes and see that little dressing room
 now. Beside the stove, engaged in
 drying out the clothes, was a squarely
 built, rather fat fellow wearing a mask
 that exposed only his mouth and nose
 and eyes and that looked like a big
 yellow bologna curled around his coun-
 tenance.

He turned to Delaney and said "Hel-
 lo, Bill," in a voice that was a kind of
 a husky squeak. This was Billy
 Woods, an old time heavyweight from
 Denver. Tilted against the farther
 wall was a round jawed, big should-
 ered fellow with a grin on his face, wear-
 ing dark red tights. Con McVey he
 was. There were two or three others
 —just reporters from the papers.
 All of this I took in from the corner
 of my eye. The thing I really saw
 was the champion. He was sitting on
 the corner of his ruddy couch care-
 fully lacing his boxing shoes. With-
 out waiting to finish he jumped up
 and shook hands with Delaney. Then
 he turned to me.

"So you're Delaney's new giant, are
 you?" he asked, smiling in a friendly
 way. "You look big enough."

I was so busy looking Corbett over
 that I almost forgot to answer. But I
 shook hands and instinctively gripped
 him hard to see what he was made of.
 All the time I was wondering if this
 slim, sinewy fellow could be the great
 champion I had heard so much about.
 Where did he keep his fighting
 strength? He was just about my own
 height, but fully forty pounds lighter,
 if I was any judge of men. His eyes
 were deep set. The skin was drawn
 tight over his cheek bones and was
 well browned by the weather. He had
 a cocksure way about him, like a man
 who knows he can fight and would re-
 sient any imputation to the contrary.

"Get ready, big fellow," said he,
 "and we'll have a little tryout. Got
 your stuff with you?"

I had, and in a few minutes I was
 ready for work. Corbett looked me
 over and sized up my strength and
 condition. "You ought to do if you
 have any speed," he said. "What I
 need is a fast man who can make me
 go some." I made up my mind right
 on the spot that the champion wouldn't
 find me lacking. After a quiet talk
 with Corbett, Delaney asked the news-
 paper men and the rest of the staff to
 go up to the hotel and leave him alone
 with me. There was some argument,
 but Jim insisted. He explained that
 he wanted to have a private tryout
 and see how we would work together.

In the next few minutes I got a new
 idea of what a champion should be
 like. Griffin was clever enough when
 he fought me, but he was nothing be-
 side this Corbett. Jim danced in and
 out so fast that it was hard to hit him
 at all. He ducked under swings easi-
 ly and bobbed up again unhurt. He
 jabbed me and jumped away before I
 could get him. Now and then he tried
 to feint me out, but I never did fall
 for a feint, even in those days. When
 a man feints at me I just walk into
 him, and he can punch away if he
 please.

At the end of our bout I was pleased
 enough with myself. Corbett had
 landed on me almost whenever he
 wanted to, but he hadn't shaken me
 with his punches. I didn't feel like
 trying to get away from him. I had
 worked fast, and I noticed that when
 I went after him he took pains, as a
 rule, to move out of the way. That
 showed me something. I didn't need
 to back away even from a champion
 like Corbett. And he had to back
 away from me. So all I needed was
 to develop fast footwork and some of
 his skill in hitting and I'd have at
 least an even break with him or any
 one else. I determined to get that
 speed before I left Carson.

From that afternoon I knew the big-
 gest honor in the ring wasn't beyond
 my reach. I thought the whole thing
 over. Here was a chance for me to
 work three or four weeks with the
 master boxer of them all. There was
 no need for hurry. I'd take my time
 and learn all I could. I'd be patient
 and let Corbett hammer me as much
 as he chose, but every day I'd tuck
 some new information away in the
 back of my mind. Then when the
 championship fight was over I'd go
 out and meet all the heavyweights,
 whip them one by one and finally fight
 Corbett or Fitzsimmons. I laid my
 plans right there and kept my mouth
 shut.

When I went to bed that night I
 dropped off to sleep in a couple of sec-
 onds, as I always do. I slept without
 moving until Billy Delaney came and
 shook me to wake me up for breakfast.
 When we all sat down Delaney turned
 to me with a solemn look on his face
 and said:

"You're a nervous big fellow, aren't
 you?"

"Why, no," I said, "I'm not nervous."
 "You don't want to be nervous just
 about boxing with the champion," he
 said, not paying any attention to my
 denial. "You aren't going to be hurt
 much. You ought to try to get in
 some sleep. Don't lie awake all night,
 because if you do you won't be strong
 enough to give Jim here any work."

"I don't lie awake a minute," I de-
 clared, feeling that Delaney wasn't
 giving me a good reputation.
 "Then why did you get up in the
 middle of the night as if you couldn't
 sleep and sit in the window for a cou-
 ple of hours?" he went on, more so-
 lemnly still.

"I didn't," I said.
 I managed to get away with six or
 eight soft boiled eggs and as many
 chops, with vegetables of one sort or
 another. I looked up for a moment
 while in the act of reaching for another
 chop.

"Don't you feel a little sick, Jeff?"
 Billy asked solicitously. "Why don't
 you brace up and try to eat a bite or
 two? You can't give Corbett any work
 on an empty stomach."

Here the whole crowd began to
 laugh, and I hurriedly came to the
 conclusion that they were having a
 little fun with me. They were all just
 ordinary men if they were in a cham-
 pion's camp instead of in a boiler shop.

That day Corbett and I boxed again.
 Delaney and Charlie White were
 coaching me and telling me what to
 do, for they wanted me to fight as
 much like Fitzsimmons as possible.
 They had me shift my feet around,
 pull my left hand back a little and let
 drive with it for Corbett's ribs. The
 first time I did it the champion step-



"YOU'RE A NERVOUS BIG FELLOW, AREN'T
 YOU?" ASKED BILLY DELANEY.

ped in lightly and shot his right across
 to the point of my chin. It was a
 good, hard punch, but it didn't daze
 me. It only drove my head back a
 little. I went right on trying the same
 blow, and every time Corbett stepped
 in and landed on my chin. When I
 walked back to the dressing room
 after the round Delaney said: "Jeff, I
 didn't think you'd be willing to try
 that punch again after I saw the way
 he landed on you the first time. You
 must have a great jaw."

"Why, I thought that's what you
 wanted?" I said. "Let me use my
 left hand in my own way and he
 won't step in on me like that more
 than once or twice."
 "Time enough—time enough," said
 Billy. "You're here to help Corbett
 train just now."

MORAL STRENGTH.

Our times of greatest pleasure are
 when we have won some higher
 peak of difficulty, trodden under
 foot some evil and felt day by day
 so sure a growth of moral strength
 within us that we cannot conceive
 of an end of growth.—Stopford A.
 Brooke.

The Nicotine Water Habit.
 The hookah, hubble bubble or Turk-
 ish water pipe is always being smok-
 ed by Burmese women, partly because
 they like it, but mainly to supply the
 men with nicotine water. This hubble
 bubble nicotine water habit is, in fact,
 a lazy form of tobacco chewing. A
 mouthful of the nasty beverage is
 held in the mouth as long as possible.
 They carry about gouds full of it and
 claim it preserves their teeth.