

MISCELLANEOUS.

Written for this Paper.

A TALK WITH CORBETT.

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TOOK A RUN
down to Asbury Park last week to have an interview with James J. Corbett. I have never seen a prize fight, nor have I ever talked with

a prize fighter before. I don't know that I have ever shaken a "hand that Sullivan shook." I know nothing about the rules of the ring, and I have never put up any money on a boxing match. I represent in this a large number of people of the United States, and I want to describe for them just how this man looks to an outsider. At least a million or so of dollars will be won or lost upon him during the next few weeks, and at least fifty million out of the seventy-five million people in the United States will be talking about him. I have been with him for a day. I have seen him dressed and undressed. I have watched him as he went through his training, and have had a chance to study every steel spring of the five feet ten inches of muscle, bone and sinew of which his frame is made. I have seen him haul one of his trainers, the burly McVey, who weighs 200 pounds, over the floor in a wrestling match, and have watched a regular fight between him and Steve O'Donnell, who is to form a second part of the great fight. I have chatted with him while he rested, and have had a glimpse of his soul as I talked with him in his cottage late in the evening, when his hard day's work was done, and he was for the time at peace with himself and the world. I have, in short, had a good chance to study him, and I find him a decidedly interesting character.

Let me tell you how he looks. Seeing Corbett on the street, you would not imagine him to be an athlete. He is an inch and a half under six feet, but the loose clothes which he wears give an angular appearance to his person, and makes his frame seem almost ill jointed. He is perfectly unassuming in his manners, and has not the ordinary strut of men of his class. There is nothing of "the Bad Man of Bitter Creek" about him, and he does not put on the antics of the dude. He wore when I visited him a rough suit of Scotch tweed, under which a flannel shirt, with a loose turn over collar shone out, and his short, wiry, black hair was covered with a fifty-cent traveling cap, the visor of which extended well out over his forehead. There is nothing peculiar about his walk, and you would never imagine him the greatest athlete of his time. Even when he is undressed and at rest, you cannot realize that he surpasses almost every other man in the United States in muscular power and skill. I have seen many an arm, which appeared to have greater strength. His legs are lean and symmetrical, rather than overdeveloped

with bunches of muscle, and his long arms hang below the middle of his thigh. From the shoulder to the elbow the muscles are not filled out, and the greatest development seems to be in the fore-arm, the size of which is increased by the beard of black hair which stands out all over it. The shoulders are full and straight, however, and the neck is one of the strongest I have ever seen on a human being.

It is a peculiar neck. It is square, rather than round and the back of it is almost flat, with great muscular cords running down on either side into the shoulders. As Corbett pulled the brawny McVey about the room by his neck, McVey having grabbed him with all his might by the head, I could see these muscles stand out so that they were as big as your wrist, and the neck seemed a square column of painted iron. It is not a short neck, and the head, which is fastened to it is long and thin, with ears set low, and with black hair standing out like a shoe brush all over the head above them. Corbett's face is long and thin. His forehead is low. His nose is large and straight. He has strong jaws, a good set of upper and lower teeth, and his bluish gray eyes look out below heavy overhanging brows. While at rest these eyes assume a friendly look. They laugh now and then as he talks, and they grow sober as he discusses the possibility of his defeat. When he punched the bag or fought with O'Donnell, they changed in their expression every moment, and, I am told, in a fight, Corbett keeps them always on the eyes of his adversary and reads his soul like a book. They are wonderfully penetrating eyes. They are eyes of determination, and when in connection with them Corbett's iron jaws come together, and he attempts a difficult act, they almost flash fire. There is no shifting about them, however, and the fire is like the sparks from cold steel, for Corbett seldom loses his head, and as he fights he makes a scientific study of the feelings and intentions of his opponent. As he went through his training I could see that a great part of his strength comes from his ability to read his opponents, and of his perfect mastery of every muscle of his frame. Every atom of his body is in perfect condition. His machinery is of the finest steel, and it is being so oiled by exercise and hardened by training that he will be able to direct it to the best advantage. I gathered from his talk that he expected to beat Fitzsimmons rather through his superior mind than his superior muscles, and I was surprised at the practical common sense which he showed in his discussion of the fight.

I first talked to him about his training, and asked him: if he did not find it hard work. He replied:

"Few people have any idea what such training means. It is no fun, I can tell you. You have to keep it up for weeks, and I will train steadily from now on until the fight, working every day and watching every point to put and keep myself in perfect condition. It is especially hard at the start. Just now my feet and hands are covered with blisters. The flesh of my palms is raw and sore, but I have to go on. I know it will pass away, and my hands will get hard, but

I get sick and tired of it. I don't like it, and I want to stop."

"It is the life of a slave," he continued. "Think of it! I got up at 8 o'clock this morning and took a row for an hour on the lake before breakfast. After I was through with my meal, I walked a mile to Brady's cottage and went into training. You saw me there. I punched the bag for half an hour, and then rolled the weights of that wrist machine up and down for fifteen minutes to strengthen my wrists. I worked like a horse at the pulley weights, and then scuffled for another hour with McVey. I don't like to wrestle, and I hate to be pulled and hauled and strained day after day for the mere purpose of putting my muscles into shape. That handball which I did next was not hard work, but it was in a sweat-box, and a half gallon of perspiration must have run out of me while I was jumping about, trying to oil my joints. And then my fight with Steve O'Donnell today. I call it a fight, for it was one. O'Donnell and I are not going through mere sparring matches in our training. We fight every day, and fight to win. O'Donnell is getting to be a formidable antagonist. He has learned all my tricks, and I have more trouble with him every bout. He keeps me bright, and I will be in perfect condition by the time the fight comes off. In addition to the work you saw, I have to take long walks, and I work steadily up to 4 o'clock every day, and do not dare to stop for lunch. It is no picnic, I can tell you."

"Speaking of lunch, Mr. Corbett, what do you eat at such times?"

"Oh, almost anything," replied Corbett; "but I don't dare to eat more than two meals a day. I have to exercise and fight on an empty stomach, and I will go into my fight with Fitzsimmons, in all probability, feeling very hungry. If a man has any food in his stomach and he gets a blow below the belt it knocks him out. I used to take three meals a day, but during training I confine myself to two. I have my breakfast about 8:30 and my dinner at 5:30."

"What did you eat today?" I asked.

"Well, let's see!" replied Corbett. "I had a chop, some oatmeal, toast and ripe fruit, with a cup of tea, for my breakfast. My dinner consisted of some well-done roast lamb, mashed potatoes and other vegetables, and a little stewed fruit for dessert. I had to pass by the pastry and sweets. I have to be careful to eat things which agree with me, and it is queer what things do agree with me. When I am in training, I have an entirely different appetite than that which I have at ordinary times. I have all sorts of odd tastes, and my system seems to demand certain foods. If I desire a thing I get it, for I know that nothing else will satisfy me. What I eat one day may be entirely different from what I want the next. I don't know what it is, but I suppose it's the training."

"How about drinking?"

"I never drink very much at any time, you know. But it is with my drink as with my food. I take what I crave, and I sometimes drink considerable. I sweat profusely, and the water goes through my pores like a sieve. I use only one kind of water from beginning to end. I am now using an imported German mineral water, and I have enough in stock to keep me supplied until after the fight. I do not like ice water. I am afraid of