



# A FIGHTING EDITOR

## THE DAY OF THE DUEL (A True Story)



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"HERE'LL be trouble if you print that editorial," said Fox, looking up with a frown from a damp proof sheet.

"Liberty of the press, my boy," answered De Courcey.

"Liberty get daylight bored through you," growled Fox. "I tell you, Harry, you'll wish you'd broken an arrow before it ever panned this. Genius is good, but even readers of the Calaveras Chronicle are likely to mistake the subtleties of that same genius for ordinary personal abuse."

Fox knew De Courcey, admired him and feared for him in the town. He had newly undertaken of commentator upon political events in a community that took its political seriously and with one hand on its pistol. And Fox took in the picture he shook his head.

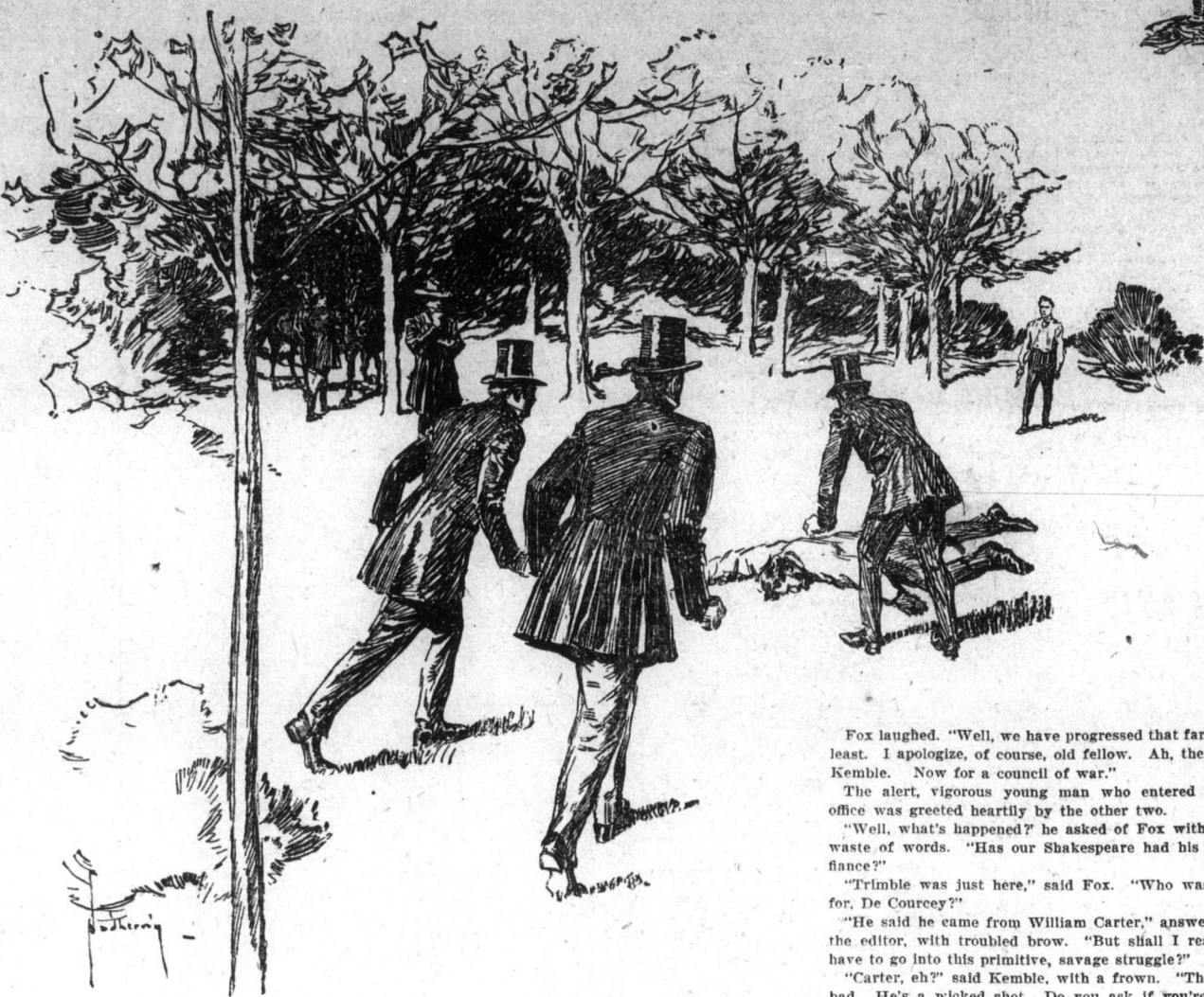
"You're hope, Harry," he said. "You must know the risk run when you mix in with delicate affairs in Yolo county. Down here, when a man expresses an opinion it is taken for granted that he's ready and anxious for a chance to back it up with bullets."

"You do Yolo county an injustice," said De Courcey. "What there's intimidation directed against the press here can be neither democracy nor justice. We are in America, though in a rather unfinished part of it, and Americans will neither undertake nor tolerate interference with the free criticism of individual institutions within the law."

Fox stared at him.

"There's a novel sentiment!" he cried. "Why, how do you account for scores of duels and the other scenes of shootings that have proceeded from the exercise of this line right of the pen?"

"As," said De Courcey, smiling blandly, "but in this case I think you'll find that the writer himself is a man of strife, whose qualities and bearing are not of the same order. I am a man of peace, and I am contented only to wing with words. If any man wishes to differ with the same method is open to him as to me."



was cool and controlled. The days of starvation had pinched his features and brought a hard, determined look to his mild countenance. He bore himself like a man quite capable of making a good fight.

"I almost believe he's got a chance," whispered Fox to Kemble.

"Of getting Carter? Not the least in the world," returned the second. "But we'll bring him out of it alive and with credit if I've figured right."

The adversaries took their positions in silence and faced each other across the green stretch with steady eyes. Each second then handed to his principal a loaded duelling pistol and stood aside.

"Gentlemen, are you ready?" asked Kemble.

"Ready!" they answered in a breath.

"One! Two! Three!" began Kemble.

At the third count De Courcey, who had levelled at the first word, pulled his trigger. It was a wretched shot. The watchers could see where the turf was torn up by the bullet almost at Carter's feet. Carter waited—waited until Kemble had reached "Fire." Then his weapon spoke.

De Courcey reeled, spun on his heel and dropped forward. The surgeon ran to him, followed by the two friends. The editor had been shot through the abdomen, and on receiving this information Carter and his party mounted and made off.

The wounded man was carried to the hotel and the surgeon made a more careful examination. "This is remarkable, Mr. Kemble," he said, after it was over. "I thought that Mr. De Courcey had been fatally injured. I find that the bullet has penetrated no organ. The stomach seems to be strangely shrunken. I believe he will live."

Kemble said nothing, but solemnly shook hands, first with the surgeon and then with Fox. De Courcey was well on the road to recovery within two days, and eating ferociously.

Not long after these events there appeared in the Alta California a short paragraph that effectively confirmed the citizens of Yolo in the belief that De Courcey, of the Calaveras Chronicle, was a man not lightly to be interfered with.

"It seems," said this publication, "that a certain gifted young journalist was recently selected as an easy victim by a group of lawless individuals whom he had attacked. It was believed that the journalist's guileless manner indicated a faint heart and that he could be picked off without difficulty by a professional duellist. It is a matter for regret that the aim of the aggressor was good, such being a common impish trick of Fate. But the young man very fully proved himself an able and courageous adversary. The plotters had overlooked the fact that he was already the survivor of some dozen similar encounters. We congratulate him upon his behavior. We are certain that he will have a long and useful career as a fighting editor."

### AN UNDIFFERENT CHAIR.

NEW YORK, Saturday.

"I saw a fellow young man was once assistant to an undertaker," said a party, smiling individually in the case of the Astor a few days ago.

"Strange but true, and in a manner of my leaving the profession was still sterner."

"It was a sizable Mal town to which I took my wife when I first started a search of a calling, and the undertaker was the man who would give me a job. The first importance, if I may call it that, upon which I was engaged was the funeral of an old resident, an immensely wealthy and very eccentric man, whose chief claim to fame lay in the remarkable collection of curiosities to all lands with which he had surrounded himself.

"Part of my duty was to attend to the seating of the persons about the coffin paratory to the services, and I was quite proud of my orderly and convenient manner in which I had arranged the chairs in the large parlor. I had reserved one conspicuously in front of and to one side of the rest of the company for members of the family. On the end of this row I had placed a large, clumsy chair with a solid back and very heavy legs.

"The room was nearly full and the ceremonies were waiting upon the appearance of the relatives. Finally they arrived in a set of black garbed procession, and the others stopped whispering to watch them. The place was very quiet. I stepped forward and pushed the end chair a little to one side to allow the passage of the little group.

"At that instant a most remarkable thing happened, a thing that to tell of still seems to chill along my back. The chair on which I had my hand began to move, of its own accord, and a strain of metallic music wafted through the room. I can only suppose that the sensations of the other three present were similar to my own. I dropped the chair as if it had bit me and jumped away in terror. The company sat petrified.

"Left to its own devices, the chair began a kind of solemn jig, keeping a halting time with the music box melody, which came, apparently from under its upholstered seat. It hopped and swayed and pruned for all the world like a fat dervish in a spree. It was ribald in its uncanniness. It had the open space before the coffin all to itself, and it made the most of it. The tension in the room lasted a few minutes, and then a dozen persons started for the door. A niece of the dead man stopped them. She explained that the chair was one of her uncle's curiosities.

"Some one must have touched it spring," she said, and looked at me. My employer took the hint, and in the glare he gave me I read the end of my employment with him.

"Take the thing out of here, quick," he whispered, and while the company stared, and the music tinkled I captured the chair and dragged it out of the room. I got it down in the lower hall and released it, whereupon it promptly renewed its weird dance. I had overcome my fear by this time and was just about to examine the mechanism of the extraordinary contrivance when my employer's fierce whisper reached me down the stairs.

"Get away from here with that, you scoundrel! Do you want to ruin me?"

"I caught up the offending piece of furniture and started for the basement with it, thinking I would be well out of earshot there. On the top step I stumbled and I went the full flight in one grand revolving, crashing descent. When I sat up at the bottom with an aching head to take inventory of the disaster a mass of wires, wheels, cogs, broken wood and torn brocade was all that remained of the dancing chair."

### THE SURGEON RAN TO HIM, FOLLOWED BY TWO FRIENDS.

Fox gave up the attempt to impress a sense of his danger upon this confident scribe. "All right," he said. "We'll let it go at that. Meanwhile, on the flat ground of friendship, I advise you to confine your efforts to generalities and innocuous subjects. In this," he added, striking the proof before him with his open hand, "you are merely courting trouble."

"As how?" asked De Courcey, imperturbably.

"Because you mention names," snapped Fox. "It's all right to lambaste the Vigilantes, though they're the strongest force for law and order we've got. But if you jump on Judge Lynch, with capitals, and there happens to be an individual of that title in the vicinity look out for consequences."

"I've mentioned no one who is not notorious," said De Courcey calmly. "The men all took part in the hanging of José Savarez last week. Every resident of the county knows it, and this presents an unequalled opportunity for protest. I shall print it."

"All right," said Fox, rising. "Then I'm going to send for Ed Kemble without any delay. If you're determined to have a lesson, why, all your friends can do is to make sure that you're treated square."

Editor Not Hampered.

On the morning following this conversation the people of the town of Washington, Yolo county, had an opportunity to read a very able and forceful denunciation of the recent Vigilante activity. What was of especial interest to them was the fact that the editor of the Calaveras Chronicle had not been hampered in his comments by a prevailing reticence regarding the names of the men involved.

"Looks like that dandy boy with the long hair has been polishin' up somethin' more than his shirt front," observed a leading resident, as he ranged the bottles behind his altar of refreshment.

The opinion expressed by the leading citizen was the one chiefly adopted by his patrons and the public at large. It was conceded that the earlier estimate of De Courcey as a retiring and inoffensive maker of rhymes and harmless sentiments had been hastily formed. The proud young men of Yolo were quite ready to admit their error, fully awake to the dramatic element involved in this sudden transformation of a fashion plate into a fire breathing man of battle.

In the meanwhile, De Courcey, unaware of the new interest and respect attaching to his person, reached his dingy little office and turned his attention to routine. To him entered presently his youthful assistant with the information that there was a gentleman outside desiring audience. Inasmuch as "outside" was nothing more than the doorstep, De Courcey, surprised at such remarkable formality, hastened to invite the visitor inside.

Whereupon there appeared Josiah Trimble, a lawyer and a small politician.

"Ah—do I have the honor of addressing the editor of the Chronicle?" he asked.

De Courcey felt vaguely that important affairs were pending.

"Why, yes, Mr. Trimble," he returned. "I believe we have met before. Won't you sit down?"

"Ah—possibly we have, though the circumstance had slipped my mind. Thank you, no; my business does not permit of my seating myself," said Mr. Trimble, with studied politeness. "I am the accredited representative of Mr. William H. Carter." He paused impressively.

"Indeed," said De Courcey. "Mr. Carter is, I believe, a lawyer, like yourself."

"He is, sir," said Mr. Trimble. "And I may add, sir, that Mr. Carter is a gentleman. Need I say more?"

"No, of course not," replied De Courcey, readily.

"Then perhaps you will be so good as to give me the name of some friend who will undertake this service for you?"

"Friend? Service? What service?" inquired the bewildered De Courcey.

Mr. Trimble glared at him disapprovingly.

"I sincerely trust, sir, that you have no intention of making light of this matter. If such be the case I shall hold myself ready at any and all times to give you satisfaction, sir, after the present affair shall have been disposed of."

"But, Mr. Trimble, sir—my dear sir—if you would be a trifle more precise"—stammered De Courcey.

"I repeat," said Mr. Trimble. "I am acting for Mr. Carter, who takes issue with certain remarks published by you in to-day's Chronicle in which you mention his name. Again I ask that you name some gentleman who will undertake the negotiations."

"You mean that Mr. Carter wishes—offers to fight with me?" cried De Courcey.

"I observe that you finally have my meaning," he said.

"Extraordinary!" exclaimed De Courcey. "What has—is it possible he has taken offence at what I said concerning the Vigilantes?"

"Sir, not only possible, but true."

"But—he does not understand," said De Courcey, warmly. "He must not take such an attitude. The press has the right to comment upon events. Surely, Mr. Carter is too intelligent a man, too good a lawyer, not to perceive that he cannot hold me to a personal combat because I exercise."

The editor was fully launched upon his theory, while Mr. Trimble looked upon him in rising indignation, when there a step outside and Fox entered. He noted the identity and expression of the visitor instantly, guessed the rest and broke in with a curt phrase.

"It's all right, De Courcey. Kemble has consented to act for you. Good morning, Mr. Trimble."

De Courcey stared at his friend as if in fear he had taken leave of his senses. He started to speak, but Fox checked him. "I presume you know Mr. Kemble, Ed Kemble, of the Alta California," he said to the accredited representative of Carter. Mr. Trimble bowed. "Mr. De Courcey was in doubt as to whether he could obtain Mr. Kemble's assistance for any difficulty that might arise. In behalf of Mr. De Courcey I may now say that Mr. Kemble will be pleased to wait upon you this evening."

"That is perfectly satisfactory, sir," said Mr. Trimble, as he departed.

"What is the meaning of this?" demanded the editor, as the door closed.

"It means that I arrived just in time to prevent you from being insulted and probably man-handled by that smooth ruffian who was just here," said Fox. "In another minute, when he got your drift, he'd have struck you over the mouth. You've got to fight. Nothing under the sun but fight can save you now. You're not willing to run, are you?" he added, rather brutally.

De Courcey flushed suddenly and drew himself up. "I have never yet learned that I am a coward," he said, with dignity.

Fox laughed. "Well, we have progressed that far, at least. I apologize, of course, old fellow. Ah, there's Kemble. Now for a council of war."

The alert, vigorous young man who entered the office was greeted heartily by the other two.

"Well, what's happened?" he asked of Fox without waste of words. "Has our Shakespeare had his defiance?"

"Trimble was just here," said Fox. "Who was it for, De Courcey?"

"He said he came from William Carter," answered the editor, with troubled brow. "But shall I really have to go into this primitive, savage struggle?"

"Carter, eh?" said Kemble, with a frown. "That's bad. He's a wicked shot. Do you ask if you're in for it? You are, my friend. And I'll undertake to be your second on one condition, that you obey my instructions implicitly."

"I'm quite helpless," said De Courcey, simply. "I have the utmost faith in you, Kemble. Whatever you decide I will abide by."

"Good," said Kemble. "Now we'll proceed with your transformation to a lead shooter. Turn the office over to your assistant and come with me."

The three men walked to the only hotel in the town, where Kemble took two rooms. He and Fox moved into one of them. The other was for De Courcey. The latter was surprised to observe that Kemble annexed both keys, but offered no objection. When Kemble left to keep the appointment with Trimble that evening he gave the key to De Courcey's room to Fox, with instructions to lock the editor in at bed time.

"And see that he doesn't get a mouthful to eat," added Kemble.

"What? No supper?" asked Fox.

"Not even a swallow of whiskey," said Kemble.

Mysterious Rites.

Next morning he reported slow progress with Trimble. Several more interviews would be necessary to complete the arrangements.

"But can't we have the thing over with?" asked De Courcey. "I find this most uncomfortable."

"It's going to be dragged out as long as I can find a kick to make of a quibble to argue on," said Kemble with decision.

This situation lasted for three days. The negotiations dragged, delayed and hampered by the shrewd Kemble. In the meanwhile De Courcey was allowed a little tea and toast at intervals, but nothing more sustaining. Fox finally demanded to know the reason for these mysterious rites.

"My dear fellow, I know what I'm about," was Kemble's answer. "Carter has killed three men and his spot is the abdomen. I'm giving our friend the one chance he's got. And incidentally he's developing a beautiful temper."

Early in the morning of August 12, 1852, Kemble and Fox aroused their principal from sleep to prepare him for the meeting that was to take place at dawn. De Courcey was a changed man. His carefully trimmed beard was uncombed, his peaceful eye had taken on a strange glint, he swore fluently at being aroused.

"Well, do I continue to starve?" he snapped, as he sat up.

"You do, my noble firebrand," said Kemble, sweetly. "and we will now have the pleasure of reducing Carter's target by all the inches we've gained these last few days. You'll do," he nodded. "Thank your stars you never were a fat man, Harry."

They met the opposing Carter and his party after a brisk fifteen minutes' ride at the crest of a low rise where there was a clearing among the trees. Kemble and Trimble measured the twelve paces that had been agreed upon as the distance, and tossed for choice of position and the right to give the word. Kemble won both.

Carter was a small, wiry man, with an intimidating eye and a hatchet face. He was a veteran duellist and, as Kemble did not doubt for a moment, had been deliberately picked by the offended Vigilantes to represent their collective cause against the editor. He showed no concern, but stood chewing a straw and discussing politics with the surgeon while the seconds were employed.

De Courcey, as his friends noted with approval,

### WHY THE HOLLY BLUSHED.

By Barbara Blair.

THE Holly on the chandelier looked severely down upon the Mistletoe hanging below it.

"It is the regret of my life," he said sternly, "that I must always be associated with you."

He settled the skirts of his green coat stiffly around him and frowned aggressively at the Mistletoe, who, gray, wraithlike, graceful and lovely, smiled demurely.

"Infer then, you do not approve of me," she said, hanging her head.

"I blush for your disgraceful conduct. My whole family blushes for you. I have often heard my grandmother say that originally my people were as pale as you are, but we spent our first Christmas with some of your relations, and we have blushed for shame ever since."

"Your blushes are very becoming," said the Mistletoe, prettily. "I often wish I had a little more color myself. But what have I done?"

"It is what you make other people do," returned the Holly, stiffly.

"And is it the kissing you don't like, my dear?" asked the Mistletoe, mockingly.

"Yes, the kissing which goes on right under your nose, and which you not only encourage but indeed assist upon. Why, no one can look at you without thinking of a kiss."

"Without wanting one, you mean," said the Mistletoe, demurely.

"But," she continued softly, "is there anything nicer in the world they could think of? Now you think of it, dear. Think of a charming room like this, with an open fire, crackling and sputtering as this one does; flowers and candy and presents everywhere; the room made gay with those unfortunate blushes of yours which you so deplore, and an air of mystery, of excitement, of delightful enchantment added by me. Then think of a pretty girl entering the room and carelessly, oh, so carelessly, walking toward me, until she unconsciously stops in this very spot, while she says, 'I wonder where I put—'

"Then the man who loves her steps up quickly, folds her close in his arms and lays his lips on her soft, pretty red ones, which cling tenderly to his while she struggles furiously to get free. Now isn't that worth thinking of?"

"Disgraceful! Perfectly disgraceful!" muttered the Holly, growing scarlet. "I wish you wouldn't talk about it. You-er-annoy me."

"That's what they all say," laughed the Mistletoe, and bending her head gracefully she left a soft little kiss on the Holly's red cheek.

### POOR SEAMANSHIP.

CAPTAIN—One of the most thrilling experiences I recall followed our running out of port one day in a gale of wind.

Fair Passenger—How interesting, but I always thought that sailors drank nothing but rum.

