

# THE FENCING MASTER THE RUSSIAN MODEL

By F. TOWNSEND SMITH.  
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One winter afternoon in the year 18—two men were strolling in earnest conversation, over that space which is now known as Boston Common. They were Judge William Goffe and Edward Whalley, famous political refugees from England. Both celebrated fighters, they had always vanquished their individual enemies, but the government, which saw fit to prescribe rules of worship, had been too strong for them, and they had fled to the new colony of Massachusetts.

"What means that knot of people gaping over there?" asked Goffe of his companion, pausing and looking in the direction indicated.

"That," said Whalley, shading his eyes against the sun with his hand, "must be the fencing master who has recently come over from England and who is making himself notorious by defying any or all to engage with him in a sword play."

"A knight errant, I suppose. Surely those men who make a pleasure of fighting would be brought to their senses if transferred to this land, where they must needs fight the earth to produce sustenance and the red men to maintain life. But let us go and see what it means."

Approaching the crowd, they stood by a platform on which strutted a man flourishing a sword, boasting of his skill and inviting some one of those listening to him to come up and fence with him.

"The insufferable braggart!" exclaimed Goffe.

"I have a mind," said Whalley, "to give him his bellyful of his own food."

"Not so. You would demean yourself by fighting a bantam cock like that."

And the two passed on.

The next day, again walking in the same direction, they espied at a distance the bantam still strutting on his stage challenging any man in the colony to fight with him.

"There's been enough of this," said Whalley, starting forward. "I'm going to pull an end to it."

"He will not fight with a strong man like you," replied Goffe, restraining him. "He will find some excuse. What say you to disguising ourselves as simple rustics, returning and, unknown, accepting his challenge?"

"A good suggestion."

Later two men in country apparel stood beside the fencer's stage. Goffe held in his left hand a cheese wrapped in a cloth, in his right a mop with a long handle which he had dipped in dirty water as he passed a puddle by the way. The fencer, strutting about for a moment, turned his back to the two rustics and when he again faced them saw an adversary on his stage equipped rather for housecleaning than for a clash of steel.

"Get down from here!" the fencer ordered. "This stage is not for such as you. I wish an adversary."

"I'll not get down till I am driven down," replied the judge.

"Then I'll drive you," replied the fencer, making a pass or, rather, a poke with his sword at the intruder. Goffe raised his cheese in place of a shield, and the steel passing into it, the fencer was not able to withdraw it before his adversary had dabbed his face with the mop. For a moment he stood paralyzed with surprise, looking at the impudent countryman who had dared to oppose him with a cheese for a shield and a mop for a sword. Then, feeling dirty water dripping down his neck, he made another thrust. Again the judge dexterously received the sword in his cheese, and this time his counterstroke resulted in a poke that blinded the swordsman with soft mud.

By this time the assembled crowd were laughing or hooting. On the one hand stood the fencing master beside himself with rage and mortification, wiping the dirt from his eyes with his sleeve; on the other, the country bumpkin, his cheese lowered, his mop poised with its offensive end near the boards, waiting for a renewal of the contest. As soon as the bantam could recover his sight he made another thrust. For the third time the point of his sword penetrated the cheese, and for the third time the fencer's face was dabbed with mud, now almost unrecognizable from its coating. The maddened man dropped his fencing sword, took up a huge broadsword and started at his enemy like a fury.

"Stop, sir!" said the judge. "Either to I have only played with you and not attempted to do you harm, but if you come at me with that broadsword know that I will certainly take your life."

The words were spoken so firmly, there was such a change in the mien of the speaker, transformed as he was from a rustic to a man of evident intellect as well as physical vigor, that the swordsman was impressed. Dropping the point of his weapon, he stood regarding his singular enemy with curiosity rather than anger.

"Who are you?" cried the fencing master. "You must be either Goffe or Whalley or the devil, for there was no man in England who could beat me, and surely if there was none there there can be none here."

"I am William Goffe," replied the judge, "and this gentleman is Edward Whalley. As for the devil, we have left him across the sea, where maybe he still prevents God's servants from worshipping as their consciences dictate. As for you, sir, if you are so desirous to contend in arms let it be with the plowshare instead of the sword, that you may produce bread for us and our children."

By EDMOND COMPTON.  
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Spencer Fiske at twenty-one, though the possessor of a fortune, did not propose to lead an idle life. He laid out a European trip for himself to last one year, at the end of which time he would return, spend three years in the study of the law, after which he would practice the profession for the rest of the period allotted him on earth. The most practical part of his scheme was to marry at the time he began his work. He believed in marriage as necessary to a complete life and that it should be entered upon with one's judgment well in hand—not dazed by the glamour of the senses.

Six months after forming his plan he found himself one summer morning in St. Petersburg dawdling through a picture gallery, when he came upon a painting the subject of which was a village festival in Russian rural life. The central figure was a girl apparently about fifteen, with beautiful blue eyes, light hair and a delicious smile on two lips nestling between dimples.

Fiske gazed long on the scene, taking it in as a whole and in part, his eyes always returning to the central figure. He went to other rooms, but returned before leaving the gallery to gaze upon the laughing face of innocence. Nor was this all; he returned every day for a week—sometimes twice a day, each time to gaze upon the face that charmed him. One day while thus engaged a man stepped up to him and said in French:

"You seem pleased with my work."

"Your work?"

"Yes; I painted it."

"Where did you find your model for the central figure?"

"In Siberia. I am a traveler as well as painter. I found her in a small village. She is the daughter of a peasant."

A week later Fiske was on a train bound for Siberia. A desire to see the original of the festival scene had taken possession of him, and he saw no reason why it should not be gratified. Reaching the village, he sought the girl and found her in a dooryard spinning. She had grown a year older than when the picture was painted, with a slight budding of her beauty. Fiske knew only a few phrases of Russian, but they sufficed to convey to her the information that he had seen her face on canvas and had come to view the original.

However practical a young man may be, there is one thing about which he is usually stupidly impractical—a young girl's heart. Fiske was insensible to the effect his statement was likely to produce. He was even more stupid than this. He did not know that he had fallen in love with a pretty face. But he found it out all on a sudden, for the girl told him that he had arrived in time to see her married. There was in this wireless message something like the clutching of cold fingers about his heart. With his lips he told her that he was fortunate; with his eyes he told her that he had met with a sudden disappointment. Then she told him that the match had been arranged by her parents.

A few days later he went to view the ceremony. He found the bride in a tent surrounded by her girlfriends. On asking where was the groom he was told that he would soon appear, and it was further explained that as soon as the bride saw him she would run away. The groom would follow and must catch her before he could be permitted to marry her. This was the custom in that part of Siberia.

Presently a young man was seen approaching. The girls told the bride that the groom was coming and, leaving the tent, she ran like a fawn to elude him. The man found himself tripped and balked at every turn. Fiske in order to get a better view went up on to a rise in the ground. The girl was giving her intended mate a hard run. The American looked on with a wildly throbbing pulse, and once when the lover was about to grasp the prize his heart stood still. With a quick turn she avoided her pursuer and came running toward the point where Fiske was standing. As she passed him she looked at him. What her eyes said no one except the two knew, but they must have said something of importance, for Fiske gave a quick turn, advanced a few steps, stopped, then suddenly started after the beautiful fugitive.

There was a clamor among the lookers-on, but the American did not hear it. The groom, seeing another chasing his bride, stopped a moment in wonder, then went on as if a fury was spurring him. The girl looked back and, seeing herself closely pursued, sped on as if on the wings of the wind. One would have thought she sought to elude them both. Fiske, being the fresher of the two, soon gained. Then when the girl saw that he led she lagged and in a few minutes more dropped into his arms.

Thus it was that Spencer Fiske, who had laid out a life plan in which marriage was to be entered upon with circumspection, found himself the possessor of a Russian peasant girl whom he had caught in a race with the man to whom she was betrothed.

The pair were at once surrounded by several hundred people, all talking at once, the father of the girl more furiously than all the rest. The intended groom disappeared. Finally an interpreter was secured, and Fiske proposed that the girl be sent to school for three years at his expense. The proposition was accepted, and at the end of the term he married her at the time he had intended taking a wife on the common sense plan.



BLOOMER GOWN, LATEST FREAK OF PARIS FASHIONS.

Accustomed as Paris is to freaks of fashion, the boulevardiers gasped at sight of the new bloomer gown when Mile. Suzanne Bergere of the Opera Comique first appeared in it. The Bergere costume is a startling exaggeration of the pantalon gown which made its appearance some months ago. In fact, Mile. Bergere's outfit is more of a "they" than an "it," bearing a close resemblance to a pair of ordinary Turkish trousers.

## MISS INDEPENDENCE.

Opinions of the Girl Who Doesn't Care What Other People Think.

"I've reached the age where I can be independent," said one girl in the course of an argument.

"I, alas, have passed it," was the quiet but conclusive rejoinder of the other woman.

How typical were the two remarks! Almost every girl sooner or later comes to the place where she discovers that she can be independent in matters of usage and behavior. She discovers with a certain sense of elation that conventions are all nonsense and that she for one is old enough to disregard them.

The remark of the second woman is just as typical as that of the first. It is as apt to be the second chapter to such a tale. The woman who admitted that she had passed that happy age where she could afford to disregard conventions had doubtless lived a little longer than the first woman and had found that it didn't pay.

And there is no time like the summer for encouraging the girl who thinks that she has reached the place where she can be independent.

She can ride on the open cars with her sleeves rolled up and her hat off, and, what's more, she can talk loud or sing or shriek with laughter. Why not? She is out with a crowd of young people for a good time, and what does she care what people think? She can be independent. To be sure, she has a sneaking notion that she is not only independent, but very cute and dashing, and that the other passengers on the car are thinking her very smart and clever instead of very tiresome and silly and generally lacking in taste, as they are sure to be doing.

The woman who said she had passed the age when she could be independent doesn't of necessity maintain a solemn countenance on her way to the beach of a summer evening. She has a good time, but finds that she is just as happy if she keeps her good time to herself and does not make what would be called a vulgar display of it were it clothes or jewelry we were talking about instead of jokes.

There are a thousand and one ways in which the penny wise and pound foolish girl thinks that it is smart to be independent. Sometimes this tendency takes the form of a special fondness for appearing at a dress affair in a shirt waist suit, and again it manifests itself in the daring little way in which a girl calls up her men friends on the telephone. But, whatever form it takes, this much is true—the woman of good judgment, however much she may suffer from the malady of independence for a season, is bound to out-

grow it. The conventional way of doing things, especially those things that are done in public, may be tiresome and apparently unreasonable, but they are to be reckoned with, and they are peculiarly uncompromising. They have a way of staying doggedly where they are, no matter how much those young, eager spirits batter away at them. As with the proverbial case of the head and the stone wall, the girl who tries to batter them down only hurts her head worse than she does the stone wall.

## HEALTH AND BEAUTY.

For a soft, painful corn try binding it nightly in common baking soda moistened with a little water. This will take out the soreness.

Rubbing vaseline in the eyebrows and eyelashes will make them grow out heavier and darker. Never use vaseline elsewhere on the face, for it tends to promote the growth of hair.

If one is obliged to have the hands in strong soapy water while washing dishes or doing other household duties a little vinegar rubbed upon them after they have been taken from the water will greatly improve them and also tend to keep the skin white.

An excellent cologne may be made with half an ounce of oil bergamot, a quarter of an ounce of oil of lemon, half an ounce of English lavender, half a dram of oil of neroli and one quart of alcohol. Shake the bottle several times a day for four or five days.

The older a woman grows the more water she should drink and the more fruit she should eat. With increasing years come deposits of certain earthy salts in the body, which produces decrepitude. Unless one takes plenty of water this process is accelerated and the feebleness of age is hastened.

Caustic or nitrate of silver removes warts. Touch them every two or three days. Some warts may be removed by soaking them several times each day in castor oil. Melt some essence of salt in water and bathe the warts in it. This caustic will dissolve them and cause them to peel off. This treatment requires great caution, especially if applied to the face.

If that part of the feminine world which is striving to attain syphilike proportions would adopt the Japanese method of gaining them they would be assured of success. The mothers of the mikado's realm consider a fat bride a disgrace, and so for weeks before the wedding they deal out daily to their obedient daughters three teaspoonfuls of rice and one glass of hot water, and on the bridal day the maidens are led forth as willowy and slender as heart could desire.

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DID HIM A FAVOR.

His Apparently Innocent Request Cost the Bank Dearly.

A customer having a fairly good balance, never going below four figures, at a London bank hurried in one morning and asked to see the manager. The usual civilities were exchanged, and the caller explained that he was making a rather good investment and had promised to pay £1,000 the next day.

"Well," said the manager, "there's no difficulty about that." "Precisely," was the rejoinder, "but will you do me a small favor?" "What is it?" queried the manager. "I want my friend to see that my paying him £1,000 will not exhaust my resources. Will you, therefore, oblige me by instructing all the pay clerks (and they were numerous) to cash my check when it is presented without referring to the ledger to see how my account stands? It will make a good impression on my man, and it cannot do you any harm, as you know what my balance is." (It was a little over £1,000.)

"Certainly, if you particularly wish it," replied the unsuspecting manager, for his customer's name had been long on the books, and there had never been any trouble with him.

When the check was presented the next day at a particular desk the clerk, without going through the formality of referring to the customer's account, pleasantly inquired, "How will you take it?" and handed over the amount without ado.

The same little ceremony was gone through at four other pay desks, each clerk, acting upon instructions, cashing Mr. —'s check for £1,000, making £5,000 in all, or nearly £4,000 in excess of the wily customer's balance.

And, of course, when Mr. — received a polite note requesting him to call at the bank he was not to be found.—Fall Mall Gazette.



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