

count of twice, they would raise their soft-nosed pistols. The handkerchief should drop—so! The gallant ones would let her go—Gallagher with their canned mushrooms. And then—ah, what?—Dieu defend le droit!

All was ready. The Marquis de Gaufré advanced and embraced M. Foulle upon both cheeks. M. Chub advanced. The Mister Clink Thurston grinned and offered to punch the head of M. Chub should he permit himself to get gay and affectionate. M. Chub permitted himself to take a chew of tobacco. It is beautiful, this parting from those we love. Ah, bon dieu!

All was again ready. It was now the duel à la mort!

"Hold!" cried the Mister Thurston. Everybody held. The Mister Thurston spoke once more: "Monsieur le Marquis, I crave a word. The courageous M. Foulle has honored me in his high desire to blow my head off. Very good! I am a man of honor. I appreciate his wish. Yet, before the funeral, I yearn, in turn, to become of some assistance to Monsieur." Clink paused and spun his 45 on his trigger finger. "Monsieur is doubtless unfamiliar with the use of this the weapon of my sacred, savage land; and I, as a fair antagonist, would instruct him in its art. Permit me to expound and demonstrate."

It was wonderful! Both the Parisian principal and his worthy second, being moved by this grand, unselfish courtesy, bowed and permitted said instructions to proceed. The Messrs. Thurston & Peters bowed and gave an object lesson in gun work.

First, M. Chub, from his pocket, produced a five-franc piece which he twirled into the air. Clink blew it heavenward, so that it came not back again forevermore. Certain Parisian jaws sagged open and remained immovable. These mad Americans then shot the walnut from one another's hat. The Mister Thurston destroyed a fine cigar in the dauntless M. Chub's teeth. In his teeth, mon dieu! His teeth! The Marquis de Gaufré concealed his own cigar behind his back—not that the Mister Thurston would permit himself; yet, strangely, the bouquet of that cigar was gone.

The sublime M. Foulle sat down

upon the earth, perspiring freely, albeit the morning air was chill. On the earth he could better observe the wondercraft of the two vulgarians who smiled and shot and smiled. He observed how those mushrooms whined as they bored through space. He observed that, by whatso any misfortune they never missed their mark. Of an also, he observed that the islanders from Arizona seemed to make discharge of their guns with a carelessness. He was moved.

"Now, perhaps," said the Mister Thurston, with a tactless display of his gleaming teeth, "Monsieur is ready for my crossing over. Eh, bien?"

The Marquis advanced and conferred with M. Foulle, who still retained his grand-stand place of vantage on the earth. M. Foulle conferred with the Marquis de Gaufré. Monsieur le Marquis advanced to the mad Americans and bowed.

"Sair," said he, addressing Clink, "my principal, M. Foulle, most willing is to engage in combat, employing any weapons of a gentleman, from the lands of Iceland to the Tim-buck-too . . . but he be dam that he commit the suicide!"

The Mister Thurston cast down his eyes and bit his lips. He was moved. "Too bad!" he sighed. "You'll never know, old chap, how much I wanted to have my head blown off." He paused and pondered. "Alas! it is not to be; yet, since my opponent, M. Foulle, thus, generously, shall spare my life, I, too, will not be backward in advancing forward, but will make profound apologies to his amiable pantaloons."

He paused and bowed. The Marquis de Gaufré advanced to embrace him upon his cheeks, but Clink demurred.

"Hold on, old horse!" he urged. "Not yet! I request—nay, permit me, I demand—that the whole Parisian gang shall breakfast with me at that most amusing Cafe Beau Garde."

He bowed. "Sacre!" observed the valiant M. Foulle. "This madman is before and after all of a so delightful courtesy. Allons!"

They went—the whole gang—to the amusing Cafe Beau Garde. What would you have? Absinthe? But yes! It was beautiful—superb! Everybody bowed.

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