

basco. Attends! He sought his friends and resolved upon a revenge.

Mr. Thurston was having his breakfast in his apartments. His friend Chub Peters had not returned from being lost. However, the coffee was good and the two-pound steak better; therefore, the beast was in a joyous frame of mind. Entered a servant, licking his chops and bearing a card which had the honor to hold an imposing inscription, to wit:

Marquis Emil St. Honore de Gaufre. The Mister Thurston looked upon the card, then looked upon his servant: "Mon dew, garcon! did he come in his chariot?"

"But no, monsieur—the coupe." "Ah! Then lock up the silver and bring the absinthe. You may show the presence up."

The presence made entrance. Clink afterwards described him as follows: "It was a funny little runt, about as big as a minute, with the importance of a thousand years. It doffed its sloping tile and achieved a bow like the opening and shutting of an axle-box." Clink was about to offer him two chairs, when he waved a perfectly gloved little hand majestically.

"Sair," began the Marquis de Gaufre, "have I the honor to address the Mister Surston?"

"Well, yes," grinned Clink, "that's near enough. Sit down, won't you, and have a bite."

"Eh—a bite?" "That's it—a whack at the viands—breakfast, you understand."

"Ah! Sank you, no." Mr. Thurston outbowed him and suppressed a smile.

"Then have a seat and a snifter." He indicated one chair and the absinthe. The Marquis permitted himself to comprehend. He bowed and accepted both. Clink bowed also and begged to know his chances of serving an intelligent and charming guest.

"Sair," said the presence, laying a hand upon his abdomen, "by my friend M. Foufalle am I select to wait upon the Mister Surston. Permit me, this honor is to me done, for I—Emil St. Honore de Gaufre—may spik the lan'wich Amerikenne with a so great affluency. Eh, bien?"

"Wonderful!" commented Clink solemnly. "I was just about to compliment you. Go on."

The Marquis smiled in pardonable linguistic pride.

"Sair, you have the misfortune to wound in the dignities my friend and confrere, M. Foufalle, of the journal La Moutarde."

"You don't tell me!" said Clink. "What was the precise nature of my enormity?"

The presence bowed gravely.

"Mais! In the Cafe Beau Garde you have make at M. Foufalle the ver' gross laugh. Then, of an also, was his apparel disarranged, the hand of you to his pantaloons descending—in the rear, mon dieu!—thus causing to M. Foufalle a so great immodesty."

Mr. Thurston tried nobly to keep his face straight, but, in spite of him, his blue eyes crinkled and the corners of his mouth worked till they tickled him. Monsieur le Marquis observed and swelled visibly.

"Sair, it is not of the jokes I have the honor to spik."

Clink took a fresh grip on his risibilities.

"I beg your pardon, my dear Marquis. How may I atone for my flagrant sins?"

The presence brightened and bowed.

"My principal would beg of the Mister Surston some opportunities immediate, to the honor of a gentleman, his just revenge."

The Arizonian's jaw dropped in sheer amazement.

"Good Lord, man! you don't mean to tell me that your principal wants some more?"

Monsieur le Marquis achieved his inevitable bow.

"With M. Foufalle, it is of his most heartfished desiring—nay, permit me—the demand. May the Mister Surston be so amiable that he to me give of his acquiescence?"

Clink's smile broadened. His blue eyes danced in soulful joy. He delivered his answer to this fiery challenge in one short, cordial word:

"Sure!"

"Eh?"

The presence was doubtful of a perfect comprehension. The beast reassured him:

"With all the delight in life, my son. Aveck pleedoor!"

"Ah! I am please that I find the Mister Surston of so grand amiability to be."

"Right you are!" declared that gentleman jovially. "Amiability? It's my longest suit! Why, my dear boy, it oozes out of every pore. When would your friend desire to honor me with his just revenge?"

"Ver' soon," replied the little Marquis, without a trace of humor; "if by convenience, at the morning of to-morrow. The spots of meeting we have select him, not one time but many, should the Mister Surston, of his pleasing courtesy, not to reject."

This statement was a trifle involved, but Clink dissected it and absorbed its gist.

"Perfectly satisfactory. Do we blaze or carve?"

"Eh—pardon—"

"What weapons do we fight with?"

"Ah!" cried the little man, rubbing his hands and offering a lucid explanation: "When challenges to one come, him shall of the weapon make selection. Eh, bien?"

"Yes, that's so," agreed Clink thoughtfully. "I had forgotten about it. At home, you understand, we settle little difficulties of this character with our hands. Perhaps your principal—"

He paused, then held out his own brown hands for critical inspection, but the Marquis recoiled in horror.

"But no!" he declared. "Imposzibul! M. Foufalle is a savage not, nor will he his nation's honor to forget in the fighting with his nails."

"All right," agreed the American; "anything to stir the pot of happiness! What would you suggest?"

"Mon dieu!" cried the tiny presence, in open admiration of such generosity. "I would not of myself—how you call her?—but in—yet if the Mister Surston nothing cares, then, soever, why not the foil? Ah! Eh? Not?"

"The foil!" cried Thurston, knowing well that in his hands such a weapon could only be employed in spanking an antagonist, "the foil! Well, not on your life, old chap! I'm far too amiable. Why, what earthly good would it do your principal to poke me in the eye with one of those ridiculous little wires? No, sir! M. Foufalle has demanded of me a dignified revenge, and, by Jupiter! I'm going to give him a fine, large, juicy one. Look at these!"

He dived into his traveling bag and produced a brace of .45's, of a wicked build and a glossy, blue-black complexion.

"There," said he, in beaming satisfaction, as he patted one of the beauties lovingly, "what do you think of that for a promoter of duellistic joy?"

"Ciel!" breathed the little man. "Sang dieu, but that were murder!"

"Possibly," agreed the American heartily, "but when a chap is as hot after his revenge as M. Foufalle, why, a little thing like murder shouldn't affect him in the least. Monsieur le Marquis doubtless agrees with me. We are men of honor, my dear sir. We understand—perfectly!"

He beamed upon the nobleman, urging him to partake of another snifter. He did it with grace. The Marquis poured his liquor with a trembling hand and swallowed it at a gulp.

"Just cast your eyes on these!" begged Clink, when another dive into his traveling bag brought forth a box of vicious-looking cartridges. "Permit me to explain." He lifted one heavy shell and held it between his thumb and finger, smiling happily the while.

"This infant is known as a 'soft-nosed bullet.' When the courageous M. Foufalle draws his bead upon me and turns loose, this bullet enters my body—say in the region of my breast-bone. Very good. Upon entering my body, it makes for itself a small round hole; but, coming in violent contact with the bone alluded to, this bullet mushrooms."

"Eh?" gasped the Marquis. "Mushrooms?"

"Exactly," assented Clink, with a cheerfulness. "Doubtless Monsieur le Marquis has partaken of the mushroom upon his steaks. Excellent! This bullet, then, takes the form of that suc-

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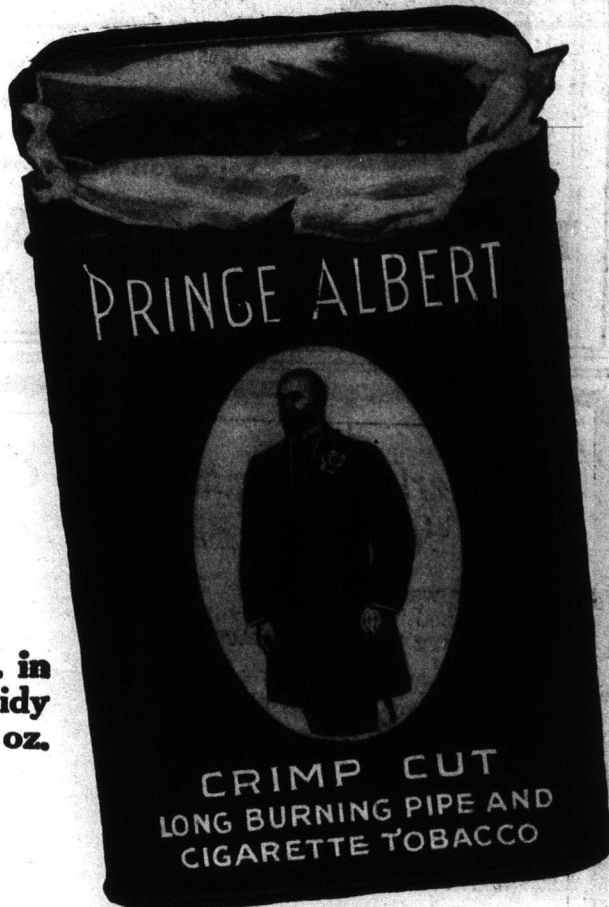
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