

A TANK DRAMA.

(Dramatis Personae)

A little boat,
Serene aloft
Upon the moonlit water;
A nice young man
Of modern plan,
An old man's pretty daughter.

(The Action of the Play.)

A while he rows
Midst lambent glows,
Along the laughing water.
He hugs the shore
A while, and more—
He hugs the old man's daughter.
—Outing.

A DEAD SHOT

In the summer of 1874, when Martin G. Scott was a much slimmer, more dandified-looking man than he is now, there were seated at one of the little marble round tables before the Cafe Ricci, in the Boulevard des Italiens, in Paris, two young Frenchmen, the cheeks of one of whom bore a red mark, as if some one had brought his hand sharply against it. In an inner room of the cafe the person who had done this was engaged in wiping away from his shirt front stains of some red wine which in his fury the recipient of the slap had hurled across the table. The man with the red cheek was the young Adolphus Ferrier, the son of the celebrated artist of that name. The man with the soiled shirt front was Martin G. Scott, of Mobile, Ala.

There had been an exchange of cards and Scott and his friend, George E. Wainwright, twelve hours later found themselves with a large-sized, healthy French quarrel on their hands to be settled, as most of those matters are in France, under the code.

When it came to the choice of weapons, Scott had wisely chosen pistols; for, while he was a notoriously bad shot, he was totally ignorant of the use of the rapier.

The affair was to come off at Auvergne, a little village distant about nine miles from Paris, in forty-eight hours time. The parties were to go out on the early train.

I doubt if Scott was so much out about the affair as Wainwright, even though he fully expected to be killed. Wainwright kept on blaming himself for having let his friend get into such a scrape. It was to be no child's play. They were to fire at twelve paces and to continue firing until one of the parties was disabled.

The more Wainwright thought over the affair the more he realized what an awkward job he had on his hands.

"Come," he said to Scott, "we haven't too much time before us. We must go down to Maupassant's gallery and get some practice. You stay here and have some breakfast. I don't care to eat so early. I'll run down there and see if we can't get the gallery all to ourselves for a couple of hours."

"That will be pretty costly, won't it?" hazarded Scott.

"Not more than a decent coffin and all the other funeral fixtures," replied Wainwright, with some little sarcasm. "If possible I want to throw these expenses on the other fellow."

Wainwright jumped around and dashed off to the Gallery Maupassant, where for upward of half an hour he remained closeted with its proprietor.

"It's agreed, then," said Wainwright, at the conclusion of the interview. "Now, then, M. Maupassant, there are 250 francs down. The remainder of the 500 you get if the duel doesn't come off."

"Agreed," said the Frenchman, and he sat down and wrote at least twenty letters like the following:

"M. Maupassant requests the pleasure of your company to-morrow afternoon at 3 o'clock to witness the phenomenal shooting of the American

gentleman who has kindly consented to give an exhibition of his skill at that hour."

While M. Maupassant was thus engaged Wainwright put in half an hour making sundry purchases, returning with them to the gallery, where the next hour was profitably employed by him in company with an ingenious mechanic.

Meantime, as the idea grew upon the mind of M. Maupassant, he chuckled and wrote, extending his invitations until, if one-half of them were accepted the question was would there be standing room in the gallery.

"We must certainly go down and see this American shoot," said Mr. Ferrier's second. "You may find some of his tricks useful to you at Auvergne to-morrow."

M. Ferrier, whose courage was not of the 5-o'clock-in-the-morning kind, shivered slightly, though the weather was decidedly warm.

"I wish those fellows had chosen rapiers," he muttered. "These Americans are such demons with the pistol."

It was 5 o'clock in the afternoon.

M. Maupassant's gallery was crowded. M. Ferrier had an excellent seat. He sat talking with his friend and second. He had been drinking somewhat to keep his courage up, and his voice could be heard all over the room. With a Frenchman's love of gossip, his second had talked freely of the meeting of the morrow.

As the American had not yet come a dozen voices called on Ferrier to step down and get some practice and amuse the company at the same time.

Ferrier, who was really a good shot, was not a little proud of it, and with such an audience he was not slow to avail himself of the opportunity thus afforded of displaying his skill.

Throwing off his coat he stepped down on to the floor of the gallery, and, picking up a pistol, marked two bull's eyes in rapid succession.

The third bullet was a little above, however—an inch at least to the right.

"Your pistol is a little heavy on the trigger, *monsieur*," said a voice behind him.

Turning quickly, he recognized Wainwright, who was standing quietly by, a smile full of meaning in his blue eyes, as Ferrier, quite disconcerted now, fired again and missed for the second time.

At this moment a side door in the gallery opened, and, scrupulously attired and holding in either hand a long dueling pistol of American manufacture, came Scott, who, being introduced to the audience, bowed, while M. Maupassant said:

"Monsieur Scott has kindly consented to give us an exhibition with the pistol."

Mr. Scott bowed again, and so much was the attention of the audience riveted upon him that no one noticed Wainwright standing quietly against the wall, feeling cautiously with his hands behind him for a small round, white object.

Mr. Scott bowed once more profoundly to his distinguished audience. Especially did he extend his salutation to that portion of the room where, pale as death, now sat the thoroughly alarmed M. Ferrier, who in the redoubtable American marksman had recognized the man he had insulted at the Cafe Ricci.

"I will now give you an imitation," said Scott, in an off-hand manner of a Western cowboy practicing on the head of a ten-penny nail at fifty paces. I will first at the large bull's-eye so as to get my hand in."

He lifted the two long dueling pistols and fired from them alternately, pulling the triggers like lightning. Above the noise of the explosion could be heard the tinkling of the bells as each bullet struck fair and square in the center.

When the smoke cleared away not a mark was visible on the white portion of the target. He had fired twelve shots and every shot had struck the bull's eye.

Scott turned and bowed modestly to his audience in acknowledgement of a vociferous round of applause.

As before, he glanced over to the

seat occupied by M. Ferrier. The Frenchman's face looked more anxious than ever, and he exchanged hurried whispers with his second.

"I'll now show you, gentlemen," continued Scott, "a somewhat more difficult feat."

He took a pistol and threw it toward the ceiling, and catching it in his hand as it descended, pulled the trigger.

A loud ring of the bell announced that the bullet had again struck the bull's eye.

"*Mon dieu!*" whispered Ferrier, who was now in a clammy sweat through fear. "He will drop me at the first shot."

Scott now took a small Winchester rifle from the hands of M. Maupassant, and, placing it over his shoulder, turned his back to the target and faced a large mirror where the same was reflected.

Starting from the firing point and walking slowly toward the mirror he fixed his eye steadfastly upon the reflection of the target and rapidly turned the crank of the Winchester. As before, every one of the sixteen bullets struck the bull's eye and the bell was ringing almost continuously.

A perfect hurricane of applause now shook the gallery. M. Maupassant smiled all over and several French gentlemen left their seats and crowded around the American, offering their congratulations at the marvelous skill which he had displayed.

Among the latter was the second of M. Ferrier.

"Of course, we shall meet you, Monsieur Scott," he added, but I trust you will spare us. Nobody has a chance who stands up before you."

He was evidently as much frightened as his principal.

Now was Wainwright's opportunity. He stepped forward and said to the little group:

"Gentlemen, can't this matter be patched up in some way? You see the kind of a shot my friend is. He hates to take life."

"I'll see what I can do," said M. Ferrier's second eagerly, and he dived over to his principal.

"Well, if you won't apologize you're an idiot. This time to-morrow you'll be in the hands of the undertaker. I tell you, I'll have nothing to do with this murder."

This settled poor Ferrier. Choking down his humiliation, he stammered out:

"Well, you may apologize for me if you like. It's a dreadful thing to do, but I suppose I must. I certainly can't afford to die at my age and with my prospects. But I shall never hold up my head at the club again."

Ferrier's second then tendered a handsome apology to Scott, who with a magnanimity which provoked applause, thereupon immediately apologized also, which so affected M. Ferrier that, after the fashion of his countrymen, he would have thrown himself on M. Scott's breast and wept.

And thus was the duel between M. Scott and M. Ferrier averted by the ingenuity of Mr. Wainwright.

M. Maupassant was a distinct gainer by the hoax for in addition to the splendid reputation it gave his gallery, he immediately received the remaining 250 francs from Mr. Wainwright. The electric bell, wire and batteries which Wainwright had purchased that morning, and, with the aid of the ingenious mechanic, had put in such admirable working order, were also given by Wainwright to the worthy proprietor of the gallery, who instantly disposed of the whole outfit for cash, even to the little button which Wainwright had pressed so efficiently every time his friend Scott fired off his blank cartridges.

While the Horses Were Being Changed.

First Conductor.—That is a mighty nice man, that new superintendent, he fired McGinnis last night for knocking down, and then thanked him.

Second Conductor.—What did he thank him for?

First Conductor.—For bringing the car back.—Puck.

FOR NOTHING.

Should the House Mother Make a Machine of Herself.

Self-sacrifice comes natural to women says Harper's Bazar. Much of it is born in them, and what is not is ground into them from their childhood by education. For the sake of her home duties a girl gives up amusements and privileges which her brother would never be expected to forego for the like reason. As she grows older, this spirit grows, encouraged by all tradition and outside influence. Often its power masters her altogether, and her life becomes one long devotion to endless labor and acceptance of unpleasant things, that the pleasant part of living may be kept sacred for the rest of the family.

The purely useless side of this entire self-abnegation must sometimes strike the beholder. Such effacing of individuality is not uncommon. And it gives as little real benefit to the family as it does to the individual.

Putting aside the moral effect on the younger members of a family brought up to regard their mother as a machine run for the family service, does the woman who so gives herself for the well-being of her family really accomplish all she desires? If she works without pause or slackening day in and day out, does she always feel satisfied, with admiring on-lookers, that it is the noblest way to so spend her health and energies? If she renounces all recreation and higher life for herself, and gives up all communion of mind and spirit with her husband and children, is the reward adequate that is paid to them in a better-kept house, a more bountifully supplied larder, or handsomer clothes?

If over-fatigue causes her to become petulant or complaining, is not the atmosphere of home more greatly injured than the added cleaning and cooking can repair? If she is too worn out to give sympathy and help to the children's joys and sorrows, what do the finer clothes and furniture obtained avail? And if, as it sometimes happens, outraged nature gives way, and others must step into the breach, do their own work and the played-out woman's as well, and take care of her into the bargain, what has she gained by her efforts that she has not lost by the break-down.

A life laid down in a worthy cause is not lost, but gained; but is this cause worthy?

IN LIFE'S KALEIDOSCOPE.

"Jack, the Ink Slinger," is abroad in Brooklyn.

An Indiana man bet his whiskers and lost, but he paid his bet, going right off to the barber's and having his beard removed.

There is a man in Winsted, Conn., who belongs to twenty-four secret societies, four volunteer fire organizations, nine military companies and three churches.

"We have been offered \$20 to leave the town," says a Georgia editor. "It's the first clear money we have made in six years. Lord make us thankful for what we are about to receive."

A Banning Cal., constable arrested two vagrants, who were tried and given \$5 or five days each. They had no money, but they could both play the piano, so the judge suggested that they get up a dance, which was done and enough money was raised to pay both fines.

The great temperance apostle, Father Mathew, was addressing an audience of Irish car-drivers, and had told them that they should learn a lesson from the brute creation. "If," said he, "I were to set before one of your horses a bucket of water and a bucket of whisky you know which the wise beast would take." Whereupon one of the quick-witted carmen replied: "Well, father, if I were to place before my horse a truss of hay and a sirloin of beef you know which the wise beast would choose. But does it follow that the hay is best for me?"

The buttonwood tree to which Master Marlow, of the ship Kent, lashed the cables when the first settlers landed at Burlington, N. J., in 1676, is still standing on the river bank.