

# The Last Shot

FREDERICK PALMER

(Copyright, 1914, by Charles Scribner's Sons)

## SYNOPSIS.

At their home on the frontier, the Browns and Grays. Maria Galloway and her mother, entertaining Colonel Westering of the Grays, see Captain Lanstron of the Browns injured by a fall in his aeroplane. Ten years later, Westering, nominal vice president of the Browns, and Maria's father, the Browns' chief of staff, are at the head of the Browns' forces. Maria, who has been trained in war, tells her father to prevent war while he is chief of staff. On the march with the 33d of the Browns, Private Stranly, an anarchist, is placed under arrest. Colonel Lanstron begs him off. Lanstron calls on Maria at her home. She tells Lanstron that she believes Feller, the gardener, to be a spy. Lanstron confesses it. Feller and shows her a telephone which Feller has concealed in a secret passage under the lower floor to be used by the Browns in war emergencies. Lanstron declares his love for Maria. Westering and the Gray premier plan to use a trivial international affair to foment warlike patriotism in army and people and strike before declaring war on Lanstron. The Gray army crosses the border line and attacks. Lanstron's forces are driven back. Stranly, rising to make the anarchist speech of his life, draws the Gray artillery fire. Nicked by a shrapnel splinter, he goes to Berserk and fights "all a man." Maria has her first glimpse of war in its modern, cold, scientific, murderous brutality. The Browns fall back to the Galloway home. Maria sees a night attack. The Grays attack in force. Feller leaves his secret telephone and goes back to Lanstron. Hand to hand fighting. The Browns fall back again. Maria, taking Lanstron over the phone to Lanstron, draws and stops the fighting. Vandallion in the Galloway house. Westering and his staff occupy the Galloway house and he begins to woo Maria.

## CHAPTER XIV—Continued.

The subjective enjoyment of the declaration kept him from any keen notice of the effect of his words. Lanny was right. It had been a war of deliberate conquest; a war to gratify personal ambition. All her life Maria would be able to live over again the feelings of this moment. It was as if she were frozen, all except brain and nerves, which were on fire, while the rigidity of ice kept her from springing from her chair in contempt and horror. But a purpose came on the wings of diabolical temptation which would pit the art of woman against the power of a man who set millions against millions in slaughter to gratify personal ambition. She was thankful that she was looking down as she spoke, for she could not bring herself to another compliment. Her throat was too chilled for that yet.



"I Want to See an End of the Killing."

"The one way to end the feud between the two nations was a war that would mean permanent peace," he explained, seeing how quiet she was and realizing, with a recollection of her children's oath, that he had gone a little too far. He wanted to retain her admiration. It had become as precious to him as a new delicacy to Lucullus.

"Yes, I understand," she managed to murmur; then she was able to look up. "It's all so immense!" she added.

"Your ideas about war seem to be a great deal changed," he hinted casually.

"As I expressed them at the hotel, you mean?" she exclaimed. "That seems ages ago—ages!" The perplexity and indecision that, in a space of silence, brooded in the depths of her eyes came to the surface in wavering lights. "Yes, ages! ages!" The wavering lights grew dim with a kind of horror and she looked away fixedly at a given point.

He was conscious of a thrill; the thrill that always presaged victory for him. He realized her evident distress; he guessed that terrible pictures were moving before her vision.

"You see, I have been very much stirred up," she said half apologetically. "There are some questions I want to ask—quite practical, selfish questions. You might call them questions of property and mercy. The longer the war lasts the greater will be the loss of life and the misery?"

"Yes, for both sides; and the heavier the expense and the taxes."

"If you win, then we shall be under your flag and pay taxes to you?"

"Yes, naturally."

"The Browns do not increase in population; the Grays do rapidly. They are a great, powerful, civilized race. They stand for civilization!"

first line and—and one place where they are weak there—and a place where they are weak in the main line?"

"You do?" Westering exploded. The plans of the enemy! The plans that neither Bouchard's satiric cunning, nor bribes, nor spies could ascertain! It was like the bugle-call to the hunter. He controlled himself. "Yes, yes!" He was thoughtful and guarded.

"Do you think it is right to tell?" Maria gasped half inarticulately.

"Right? Yes, to hasten the inevitable—to save lives!" declared Westering with deliberate assurance.

"I want to see an end of the killing! I—!" She sprang to her feet as if about to break away tumultuously, but paused, swaying unsteadily, and passed her hand across her eyes.

"We intend a general attack on the first line of defense tonight!" he exclaimed, his supreme thought leaping into words.

"And you would want the information about the first line tonight—if it is to be of service?"

"Yes, tonight!"

Maria brought her hands together in a light clasp. Her gaze fluttered for a minute over the tea-table. When she looked up her eyes were calm.

"It is a big thing, isn't it?" she said. "A thing not to be done in an impulse. I try never to do big things in an impulse. When I see that I am in danger of it I always say: 'Go by yourself and think for half an hour!' So I must now. In a little while I will let you know my decision."

Without further formality she started across the lawn to the terrace steps. Westering watched her sharply, passing along the path of the second terrace, pacing slowly, head bent, until she was out of sight. Then he stood for a time getting a grip on his own emotions before he went into the house.

CHAPTER XV.

In Feller's Place.

What am I? What have I done? What am I about to do? shot as forked shadows over the hot lava-flow of Maria's impulse. The vitality that Westering had felt by suggestion from a still profile rejoiced in a quickening of pace directly she was out of sight of the veranda. All the thinking she had done that afternoon had been in pictures; some saying, some cry, some, groan, or some smile went with every picture.

The sitting-room of the tower was empty to other eyes but not to hers. The lantern was in the corner at hand. After her hastening steps had carried her along the tunnel to the telephone, she set down the lantern and pressed the spring that opened the panel door. Another moment and she would be embarked on her great adventure in the line of action. That little ear-plate became a specter of conscience. She drew back convulsively and her hands flew to her face; she was a rocking shadow in the thin, reddish light of the lantern.

Conscious mind had torn off the mask from subconscious mind, revealing the true nature of the change that she had wrought in her. She who had resented Feller's part—what a part she had been playing! Every word, every shade of expression, every telling pause of abstraction after Westering confessed that he had made war for his own ends had been subtly prompted by a purpose whose actuality terrified her.

Her hypocrisy, she realized, was as black as the wall of darkness beyond the lantern's gleam. Then this demoralization passed, as a nightmare passes, with Westering's boast again in her ears.

bell brought Lanstron to his feet with a strident, boyish bound.

"Very springy, that tendon of Achilles!" muttered Partow. "And, my boy, take care, take care!" he called suddenly in his sonorous voice, as vast and billowy as his body.

It was Maria's voice and yet not Maria's, this voice that beat in nervous waves over the wire.

"Lanny—Yes, I, Lanny! You were right, Westering planned to make war deliberately to satisfy his ambition. He told me so. The first general attack on the first line of defense is tonight. Westering says so!" She had to pause for breath. "And, Lanny, I want to know some position of the Browns which is weak—not actually weak, maybe, but some position where the Grays expect terrible resistance and will not find it—where you will let them in!"

"In the name of—Marta! Marta, what—?"

"I am going to fight for the Browns—for my home!"

"In the sheer satisfaction of explaining herself to herself, of voicing her sentiments, she sent the pictures which had wrought the change moving across the screen before Lanstron's amazed vision. There was no room for interruption on his part, no question or need of one. The wire seemed to quiver with the militant tension of her spirit. It was Marta a name who was talking at the other end; not at home for him, but with a purpose that revealed all the latent strength of her personality and daring.

"I shall have to ask Partow. It's a pretty big thing."

"Yes—only that is not all my plan. A little plan. After they have taken the first line of defense—and they will get it, won't they?"

"Yes, we shall yield in the end, yield rather than suffer too great losses there that will weaken the defense on the main line."

"Then I want to know where it is that you want Westering to attack on the main line, so that we can get him to attack there. That—that will help, won't it?"

"Yes."

"Of course, all the while I shall be getting news from him—when I have proved my loyalty and have his complete confidence—and I'll telephone it to you. I am sure I can get something worth while with you to direct me; don't you think so, Lanny? I'll hold the wire, Lanny. Ask Partow!" she concluded. Of the two she was the steeper.

"Well?" said Partow, looking up at the sound of Lanstron's step. Then he half raised himself from his chair at sight of a Lanstron with eyes in a daze of brilliancy; a Lanstron with his maimed hand twitching in an outstretched gesture; a Lanstron in the dilemma of being at the same time lover and chief of intelligence. Should he let her make the sacrifice of everything that he held to be sacred to a woman's delicacy? Should he not return to the telephone and tell her that he would not permit her to play such a part? Partow's voice cut in on his demoralization with the sharpness of a blade.

"Well, what, man, what?" he demanded. He feared that the girl might be dead. Anything that could upset Lanstron in this fashion struck a chord of sympathy and apprehension.

Lanstron advanced to the table, pressed his hands on the edge, and, as Lanstron in the dilemma of being at the same time lover and chief of intelligence. Should he let her make the sacrifice of everything that he held to be sacred to a woman's delicacy? Should he not return to the telephone and tell her that he would not permit her to play such a part? Partow's voice cut in on his demoralization with the sharpness of a blade.

"Well, what, man, what?" he demanded. He feared that the girl might be dead. Anything that could upset Lanstron in this fashion struck a chord of sympathy and apprehension.

on to redoubts 36 and 37, you mean?" asked Lanstron.

"You have it! The position looks important, but so well do we command it that it is not really vital. Yes, the Bordir road is her bait for Westering!" Partow waved his hand as if the affair were settled.

"But," interjected Lanstron, "we have also to decide on the point of the main defense which is to make Westering think is weak."

"Hm—!" grumbled Partow. "That is not necessary to start with. We can give that to her later over the telephone, can't we, eh?"

"She asked for it now."

"Why?" demanded Partow with one of his shrewd, piercing looks.

"She did not say, but I can guess," explained Lanstron. "She must put all her cards on the table; she must tell Westering all she knows at once. If she tells him piecemeal it might lead to the supposition that she still had some means of communication with the Browns."

"Of course, of course!" Partow spat the fat of his hand resoundingly out in this way. In England and Wales alone there are 4,250,000 men between the ages of twenty and thirty-five, and over 2,250,000 of them are bachelors. To give the round figures, between the ages of twenty and twenty-five there are 1,275,000 bachelors to 275,000 married men; from twenty-five to thirty there are 750,000 bachelors to 750,000 married men (half and half); and from thirty to thirty-five there are 275,000 bachelors to 1,000,000 married men. This gives us our total of 2,250,000 bachelors of all reproductive ages in England and Wales alone.

It remains to show that there are a million bachelors who are not engaged to be married (or rather who are certain not to marry, for the number not engaged to be married must be larger). Between twenty and twenty-five, naturally, most men are bachelors; to be exact, five out of six are unmarried. Between the ages of twenty-five and thirty one man in two is a bachelor. Between thirty and thirty-five one man in four is a bachelor. Between thirty-five and forty one man in five is a bachelor, between forty and forty-five one in seven, and between forty-five and fifty one in eight. One may consider that men who are still unmarried between thirty-five and forty are pretty confirmed bachelors, so one may take it that one-fifth of the total male population has no intention or expectation of marrying. This gives us over eight hundred thousand bachelors. Assuming half of them to be physically fit, that gives us 400,000 men. The remaining 100,000 could be thrown in by Scotland and Ireland, representing the proportion of their population to that of England and Wales.—Manchester Guardian.

The Latest Amusement.

Down in New Milford, which is in Connecticut, a new form of amusement has been discovered. Of course it may not appeal to all of us—but that is to be expected, you know. Not all of us believe in poker, pugilism or any one of half a dozen other diversions that might be mentioned, do we? The new game which is to put New Milford on the map with Petrograd, Czestochowa, Przemysl and the other prominent places, is this: Catch a nice, lively rooster. Place it in a store window alongside a can of corn, containing 1,000 or more kernels. Starve the rooster for 24 hours. Then register your guess as to how many kernels it will eat at a meal and up set the corn. The game is said to be highly diverting to persons participating. It contains an element of cruelty, to be sure. This is held by some to add zest to the game. By others it is said to arouse indignation and disgust. What the rooster thinks of it cannot be recorded, of course. Yes—some of us are easily amused, that's a fact.—Detroit Free Press.

Man Wanted.

Representative W. R. Oglesby of New York is known to fame socially in Washington as the champion golfer in the house, and while on the links lately he heard the following story told by a senator friend.

It seems that this senator has a sister-in-law who is a woman of some years and is much loved by her nieces and nephews, who are yet of a tender age, believing in Santa Claus. Last Christmas the kids were skrimishing around to get stockings big enough to hold the goodies and presents they expected Santa Claus to bring.

"Well, Aunt Mary," chirped one plump boy, "how big would a stocking have to be to hold all you want?"

"Not very large, Charlie," laughed the aunt. "All I wish could just fit in a pair of Sox nicely."

"Indeed!" replied the delighted Mrs. H., with a flush of pride at the compliment. "Do you really think so?"

## MANY BACHELORS IN BRITAIN

Newspaper Points Out That There is Plenty of Material for the "New Army."

England is the land of bachelors, so there is plenty of material for our "new army" without any of the married men. Indeed, we could safely exempt not only the married but the betrothed and still raise an army of 500,000 men, assuming, as we surely may, that only one man in two between the ages of twenty and thirty-five is physically fit. One works it out in this way: In England and Wales alone there are 4,250,000 men between the ages of twenty and thirty-five, and over 2,250,000 of them are bachelors. To give the round figures, between the ages of twenty and twenty-five there are 1,275,000 bachelors to 275,000 married men; from twenty-five to thirty there are 750,000 bachelors to 750,000 married men (half and half); and from thirty to thirty-five there are 275,000 bachelors to 1,000,000 married men. This gives us our total of 2,250,000 bachelors of all reproductive ages in England and Wales alone.

It remains to show that there are a million bachelors who are not engaged to be married (or rather who are certain not to marry, for the number not engaged to be married must be larger). Between twenty and twenty-five, naturally, most men are bachelors; to be exact, five out of six are unmarried. Between the ages of twenty-five and thirty one man in two is a bachelor. Between thirty and thirty-five one man in four is a bachelor. Between thirty-five and forty one man in five is a bachelor, between forty and forty-five one in seven, and between forty-five and fifty one in eight. One may consider that men who are still unmarried between thirty-five and forty are pretty confirmed bachelors, so one may take it that one-fifth of the total male population has no intention or expectation of marrying. This gives us over eight hundred thousand bachelors. Assuming half of them to be physically fit, that gives us 400,000 men. The remaining 100,000 could be thrown in by Scotland and Ireland, representing the proportion of their population to that of England and Wales.—Manchester Guardian.

The Latest Amusement.

Down in New Milford, which is in Connecticut, a new form of amusement has been discovered. Of course it may not appeal to all of us—but that is to be expected, you know. Not all of us believe in poker, pugilism or any one of half a dozen other diversions that might be mentioned, do we? The new game which is to put New Milford on the map with Petrograd, Czestochowa, Przemysl and the other prominent places, is this: Catch a nice, lively rooster. Place it in a store window alongside a can of corn, containing 1,000 or more kernels. Starve the rooster for 24 hours. Then register your guess as to how many kernels it will eat at a meal and up set the corn. The game is said to be highly diverting to persons participating. It contains an element of cruelty, to be sure. This is held by some to add zest to the game. By others it is said to arouse indignation and disgust. What the rooster thinks of it cannot be recorded, of course. Yes—some of us are easily amused, that's a fact.—Detroit Free Press.

Man Wanted.

Representative W. R. Oglesby of New York is known to fame socially in Washington as the champion golfer in the house, and while on the links lately he heard the following story told by a senator friend.

It seems that this senator has a sister-in-law who is a woman of some years and is much loved by her nieces and nephews, who are yet of a tender age, believing in Santa Claus. Last Christmas the kids were skrimishing around to get stockings big enough to hold the goodies and presents they expected Santa Claus to bring.

"Well, Aunt Mary," chirped one plump boy, "how big would a stocking have to be to hold all you want?"

"Not very large, Charlie," laughed the aunt. "All I wish could just fit in a pair of Sox nicely."

"Indeed!" replied the delighted Mrs. H., with a flush of pride at the compliment. "Do you really think so?"

"I certainly do," continued the heartless husband, "otherwise it would have been worn out long ago."

TAKE SALTS TO FLUSH KIDNEYS IF BACK HURTS

Says Too Much Meats Forms Uric Acid Which Clogs the Kidneys and Irritates the Bladder.

Most folks forget that the kidneys, like the bowels, get sluggish and clogged and need a flushing occasionally, else we have backache and all manner of ailments in the kidney region, severe headaches, rheumatic twinges, torpid liver, acid stomach, sleeplessness and all sorts of bladder disorders.

You simply must keep your kidneys active and clean, and the moment you feel an ache or pain in the kidney region, get about four ounces of Jad Salts from any good drug store here, take a tablespoonful in a glass of water before breakfast for a few days and your kidneys will then act fine. This famous salt is made from the acid of grapes and lemon juice, combined with lithia, and is harmless to flush clogged kidneys and stimulate them to normal activity. It also neutralizes the acids in the urine so it no longer irritates, thus ending bladder disorders.

## TO TILL UNOCCUPIED CANADIAN LANDS

THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT ASKING FOR INCREASED ACREAGE IN GRAIN, TO MEET EUROPEAN DEMAND.

There are a number of holders of land in Western Canada, living in the United States, to whom the Canadian Government will shortly make an appeal to hold the unoccupied areas they are holding under cultivation. The lands are highly productive, but in a state of idleness they are not giving any revenue beyond the unearned increment and are not of the benefit to Canada that these lands could easily be made. It is pointed out that the demand for grains for years to come will cause good prices for all that can be produced. Not only will the price of grains be affected, but also will that of cattle, hogs and horses, in fact, everything that can be grown on the farms. When placed under proper cultivation, not the kind that is often resorted to, which lessens yield and land values, many farms will pay for themselves in two or three years. Careful and intensive work is required, and if this is given in the way it is given to the high-priced lands of older settled countries, surprising results will follow.

There are those who are paying rent, who should not be doing so. They would do better to purchase lands in Western Canada at the present low price at which they are being offered by land companies or private individuals. These have been held for the high prices that many would have realized, but for the war and the financial stringency. Now is the time to buy; or if it is preferred, advantage might be taken of the offer of 160 acres of land free that is made by the Dominion Government. The man who owns his farm has a life of independence. Then again there are those who are renting who might wish to continue as renters. They have some means as well as sufficient outfit to begin in a new country where all the advantages are favourable. Many of the owners of unoccupied lands would be willing to lease them on reasonable terms. Then again, attention is drawn to the fact that Western Canada numbers among its most successful farmers, artisans, business men, lawyers, doctors and many other professions. Farming today is a profession. It is no longer accompanied by the drudgery that we were acquainted with a generation ago. The fact that a man is not following a farming life today, does not preclude him from going on a Western Canadian farm tomorrow and making a success of it. If he is not in possession of Western Canada land that he can convert into a farm he should secure some, make it a farm by equipping it and working it himself. The man who has been holding his Western Canadian land waiting for the profit he naturally expected has been justified in doing so. Its agricultural possibilities are certain and sure. If he has not realized immediately by making a sale, he should not worry. But to let it lie idle is not good business. By getting it placed under cultivation a greater profit will come to him. Have it cultivated by working it himself, or get some good representative to do it. Set about getting a purchaser, a renter or some one to operate on shares.

The department of the Dominion Government having charge of the Immigration, through Mr. W. D. Scott, Superintendent at Ottawa, Canada, is directing the attention of non-resident owners of Western Canadian lands to the fact that money will be made out of farming these lands. The agents of the Department, located at different points in the States, are rendering assistance to this end.—Advertisement.

A Sting in His Compliment.

"My dear," said Mr. Hawkins to his better half the other evening, "do you know that you have one of the best knees in the world?"

"Indeed!" replied the delighted Mrs. H., with a flush of pride at the compliment. "Do you really think so?"

"I certainly do," continued the heartless husband, "otherwise it would have been worn out long ago."

Self-Control.

One valuable way of practicing self-control is in checking grumbling, and an unnecessary display of vexation at petty inconveniences. A workman has fulfilled his task imperfectly, some order is wrongly executed, some one keeps you waiting unreasonably; people are careless or forgetful, or do what they have in hand badly. Try not to be disturbed, be just, and show the persons to blame where they are wrong, even if it be needful make them do the thing over again properly; but refrain from diffuse or vehement expressions of displeasure. A naturally quick, impetuous person will find that to cultivate a calm external habit is a great help towards gaining the inward even spirit he needs.—H. L. Sidney Lear.

The Black Sea.

The Black sea is without rival in changes of name expressive of human feelings toward it. To the ancient Greek navigators it was at first known as the Pontus Axenos, the inhospitable sea, on account of the savagery shown by the natives of its shores. Later it became the Pontus Euxinus, the Hospitable sea; either simply for the sake of changing an ill-omened name to a flattering one, or in allusion to the growth of Greek commerce and civilization round the sea. Finally the Turks called it the Black sea, because its sheltered expanse, its storms and its fogs contrasted with the bright Aegean which they had previously known.

Ready Means to Identification.

Richardson Wright recently made an appointment to meet a stranger in a Hartford hotel, and over the telephone he described himself as being a round person with an incipient mustache. When the stranger finally found him Mr. Wright asked how he was able to recognize him so quickly. Back came the ready answer: "Looked up 'Incipient' in the dictionary."—Kansas City Star.

He Felt for Them.

"I hate to see two girls kiss each other."

"Envy, eh?"

"Not at all—pity."—St. Louis Times.



"I'm Going to Fight for the Browns—For My Home!"

enemy's headquarters. The plan meant giving, giving in the hope of receiving much in return. Would he get the return?

"A woman was the ideal one for the task we entrusted to Feller," he mused, "a gentlewoman, big enough, adroit enough, with her soul in the work as no paid woman's could be! There seemed no such one in the world!"

"But to let her do it!" gasped Lanstron.

"It is her suggestion, not yours? She offers herself? She wants no persuasion?" Partow asked sharply.

"Entirely her suggestion," said Lanstron. "She offers herself for her country—for the cause for which our soldiers will give their lives by the thousands. It is a time of sacrifice."

Partow raised his arms. They were not formless as he brought them down with sledge-hammer force to the table.

"Your tendon of Achilles! My boy, she is your sword-arm!" His sturdy forefinger ran along the line of frontier under his eye with little staccato leaps. "Eh? Eh? Bettle, don't scratch; tell me where it itches, and I'll scratch it for you."—Chicago Tribune.

"Let them up the Bordir road and