

THE LAST SHOT

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By FREDERICK PALMER



In this story Mr. Palmer, the noted war correspondent, has painted war as he has seen it on many battlefields, and between many nations. His intimate knowledge of armies and armaments has enabled him to produce a graphic picture of the greatest of all wars, and his knowledge of conditions has led him to prophesy an end of armed conflicts. No man is better qualified to write the story of the final world war than Mr. Palmer, and he has handled his subject with a master hand.

CHAPTER I.

A Speck in the Sky.

It was Marta who first saw the speck in the sky. Her outcry and her bound from her seat at the teatable brought her mother and Colonel Westerling after her onto the lawn, where they became motionless figures, screening their eyes with their hands. The newest and most wonderful thing in the world at the time was this speck appearing above the irregular horizon of the Brown range, in view of a landscape that centuries of civilization had fertilized and cultivated and formed.

At the base of the range ran a line of white stone posts, placed by international commissions of surveyors to the nicety of an inch's variation. In the very direction of the speck's flight a spur of foot-hills extended into the plain that stretched away to the Gray range, distinct at the distance of thirty miles in the bright afternoon light. Faithful to their part in refusing to climb, the white posts circled around the spur, hugging the levels.

In the lap of the spur was La Tir, the old town, and on the other side of the boundary lay South La Tir, the new town. Through both ran the dusty ribbon of a road, drawn straight across the plain and over the glistening thread of a river. On its way to the pass of the Brown range it skirted the garden of the Gallands, which rose in terraces to a seventeenth-century house overlooking the old town from its outskirts. They were such a town, such a road, such a landscape as you may see on many European frontiers. The Christian people who lived in the region were like the Christian people you know if you look for the realities of human nature under the surface differences of language and habits.

Beyond the house rose the ruins of a castle, its tower still intact. Marta always referred to the castle as the baron; for in her girlhood she had a way of personifying all inanimate things. If the castle walls were covered with hoar frost, she said that the baron was shivering; if the wind tore around the tower, she said that the baron was groaning over the democratic tendencies of the time. On such a summer afternoon as this, the baron was growing old gracefully, at peace with his enemies.

Centuries older than the speck in the sky was the baron; but the pass road was many more, countless more, centuries older than he. It had been a trail for tribes long before Roman legions won a victory in the pass, which was acclaimed an imperial triumph. To hold the pass was to hold the range. All the blood shed there would make a red river, inundating the plain.

"Beside the old baron, we are parvenus," Marta would say. "And what a parvenu the baron would have been to the Roman aristocrat!"

"Our family is old enough—none older in the province!" Mrs. Galland would reply. "Marta, how your mind does wander! I'd get a headache just contemplating the things you are able to think of in five minutes."

The first Galland had built a house on the land that his king had given him for one of the most brilliant feats of arms in the history of the pass.

Even the tower, raised to the glory of an older family whose descendants, if any survived, were unaware of their lineage, had become known as the Galland tower. The Gallands were rooted in the soil of the frontier; they were used to having war's hot breath blow past their door; they were at home in the language and customs of two peoples; theirs was a peculiar tradition, which Marta had absorbed with her first breath. Town and plain and range were the first vista of landscape that she had seen; doubtless they would be the last.

One or two afternoons a week Colonel Hedworth Westerling, commander of the regimental post of the Grays on the other side of the white posts, stretched his privilege of crossing the frontier and appeared for tea at the Gallands. It meant a pleasant half-hour breaking a long walk, a relief from garrison surroundings, and in view of the order, received that morning, this was to be a farewell call.

He had found Mrs. Galland an agreeable reflection of an aristocratic past. The daughter had what he defined vaguely as girlish piquancy. He found it amusing to try to answer her unusual questions; he liked the variety of her inventive mind, with its flashes of downright matter-of-factness. Not until tea was served did he meet

him his new assignment; he was going to the general staff at the capital. Mrs. Galland murmured her congratulations in conventional fashion.

Marta's chair was drawn back from the table. She leaned forward in a favorite position of hers when she was intensely interested, with hands clasped over her knee, which her mother always found aggravatingly tomboyish. She had a mass of lustrous black hair and a mouth rather large in repose, but capable of changing curves of emotion. Her large, dark eyes, luminously deep under long lashes, if not the rest of her face, had beauty. Her head was bent, the lashes forming a line with her brow now, and her eyes had the still flame of wonder that they had when she was looking all around a thing and through it to find what it meant.

"Some day you will be chief of staff, the head of Gray army!" she suddenly exclaimed.

Westerling started as if he had been surprised in a secret. Then he flushed slightly.

"Why?" he asked with forced carelessness. "Your reasons? They're more interesting than your prophecy."

"Because you have the will to be," she said without emphasis, in the impersonal revelations of thought. "You want power. You have ambition."

He looked the picture of it, with his square jaw, his well-moulded head set close to the shoulders on a sturdy neck, his even teeth showing as his lips parted in an unconscious smile.

"Marta, Marta! She is—is so explosive," Mrs. Galland remarked apologetically to the colonel.

"I asked for her reasons. I brought it on myself—and it is not a bad compliment," he replied. Indeed, he had never received one so thrilling.

His smile, a smile well pleased with itself, remained as Mrs. Galland began to talk of other things, and its lingering satisfaction disappeared only with Marta's cry at sight of the speck in the sky over the Brown range. She was out on the lawn before the others had risen from their seats.

"An aeroplane! Hurry!" she called. How fast the speck grew!

Naturally, the business of war, watching for every invention that might serve its ends, was the first patron of flight. Captain Arthur Lanstron, pupil of a pioneer aviator, had been warned by him and by the chief of staff of the Browns, who was looking on, to keep in a circle close to the ground. But he was doing so well



"It Must Be Bandaged—I'm Not Going to Faint."

that he thought he would try rising a little higher. The summits of the range shot under him, unfolding a variegated rug of landscape. He dipped the planes slightly, intending to follow the range's descent and again they answered to his desire. The tower loomed before him as suddenly as if it had been shot up out of the earth. He must turn, and quickly, to avoid disaster; he must turn, or he would be across the white posts in the enemy's country.

"Oh!" groaned Marta and Mrs. Galland together.

In an agony of suspense they saw the fragile creation of cloth and bamboo and metal, which had seemed as secure as an albatross riding on the lap of a steady wind, dip far over, career back in the other direction, and then the whirring noise that had grown with its flight ceased. It was no longer a thing of winged life, defying the law of gravity, but a thing dead, falling under the burden of a living weight.

"The engine has stopped!" exclaimed Westerling, any trace of emotion in his observant imperturbability that of satisfaction that the machine was of enemy's. He was thinking of the ex-

hibition, not of the man in the machine.

Marta was thinking of the man who was about to die. She rushed down the terrace steps wildly, as if her going and her agonized prayer could avert the inevitable. The plane, descending, skimmed the garden wall and passed out of sight. She heard a thud, a crackling of braces, a ripping of cloth, but no cry.

Westerling had started after her, exclaiming, "This is a case for first aid!" while Mrs. Galland, taking the steps as fast as she could, brought up the rear. Through the gateway in the garden wall could be seen the shoulders of a young officer, a streak of red coursing down his cheek, rising from the wreck. An inarticulate sob of relief broke from Marta's throat, followed by quick gasps of breath. Captain Arthur Lanstron was looking into the startled eyes of a young girl that seemed to reflect his own emotions of the moment after having shared those he had in the air.

"I flew! I flew clear over the range, at any rate!" he said. "And I'm alive. I managed to hold her so she missed the wall and made an easy bump."

He got one foot free of the wreck and that leg was all right. She shared his elation. Then he found that the other was uninjured, just as she cried in distress:

"But your hand—oh, your hand!" His left hand hung limp from the wrist, cut, mashed and bleeding. Its nerves numbed, he had not as yet felt any pain from the injury. Now he regarded it in a kind of awakening state of realization of a deformity to come.

"Wool-gathering again!" he muttered to himself crossly.

Then, seeing that she had turned white, he thrust the disgusting thing behind his back and twinged with the movement. The pain was arriving.

"It must be bandaged! I have a handkerchief!" she begged. "I'm not going to faint or anything like that!"

"Only bruised—and it's the left. I am glad it was not the right," he replied. Westerling arrived and joined Marta in offers of assistance just as they heard the prolonged honk of an automobile demanding the right of way at top speed in the direction of the pass.

"Thank you, but they're coming for me," said Lanstron to Westerling as he glanced up the road.

Westerling was looking at the wreck. Lanstron, who recognized him as an officer, though in mufti, kicked a bit of the torn cloth over some apparatus to hide it. At this Westerling smiled faintly. Then Lanstron saluted as officer to officer might salute across the white posts, giving his name and receiving in return Westerling's.

They made a contrast, these two men, the colonel of the Grays, swart and sturdy, his physical vitality so evident, and the captain of the Browns, some seven or eight years the junior, bareheaded, in dishevelled fatigue uniform, his lips twitching, his slender body quivering with the pain that he could not control, while his rather bold forehead and delicate, sensitive features suggested a man of nerve and nerves who might have left adventures in a laboratory for an adventure in the air. There was a kind of challenge in their glances; the challenge of an ancient feud of their peoples; of the professional rivalry of polite duellists. Lanstron's slight figure seemed to express the weaker number of the three million soldiers of the Browns; Westerling's bulkier one, the four million five hundred thousand of the Grays.

"You had a narrow squeak and you made a very snappy recovery at the last second," said Westerling, passing a compliment across the white posts.

"That's in the line of duty for you and me, isn't it?" Lanstron replied, his voice thick with pain as he forced a smile.

There was no pose in his fortitude. He was evidently disgusted with himself over the whole business, and he turned to the group of three officers and a civilian who alighted from a big Brown army automobile as if he were prepared to have them say their worst. They seemed between the impulses of reprimanding and embracing him.

"I hope that you are not surprised at the result," said the oldest of the officers, a man of late middle age, rather affectionately and teasingly. He wore a single order on his breast, a plain iron cross, and the insignia of his rank was that of a field-marshal.

"Not now. I should be again, sir," said Lanstron, looking full at the field-marshal in the appeal of one asking for another chance. "I was wool-gathering. But I shall not wool-gather next time. I've got a reminder more urgent than a string tied around my finger."

"Yes, that hand needs immediate attention," said the doctor. He and another officer began helping Lanstron into the automobile.

"Good-by!" he called to the young girl, who was still watching him with big, sympathetic eyes. "I am coming back soon and land in the field, there, and when I do, I'll claim a bunch of flowers."

"Do! What fun!" she cried, as the car started.

"The field-marshal was Partow, their chief of staff?" Westerling asked.

"Yes," said Mrs. Galland. "I remember when he was a young infantry officer before the last war, before he had won the iron cross and become so great. He was not of an army family—a doctor's son, but very clever and skillful."

"Getting a little old for his work!" remarked Westerling. "But apparently he is keen enough to take a personal interest in anything new."

"Wasn't it thrilling and—and terrible!" Marta exclaimed.

"Yes, like war at our own door again," replied Mrs. Galland, who knew war. She had seen war raging on the pass road. "Lanstron, the young man said his name was," she resumed after a pause. "No doubt the Lanstrons of Thorbourg. An old family and many of them in the army."

"The way he refused to give in—that was fine!" said Marta.

Westerling, who had been engrossed in his own thoughts, looked up.

"Courage is the cheapest thing an army has! You can get hundreds of young officers who are glad to take a risk of that kind. The thing is," and his fingers pressed in on the palm of his hand in a pounding gesture of the forearm, "to direct and command—head work—organization!"

"If war should come again—" Marta began. Mrs. Galland nudged her. A Brown never mentioned war to an officer of the Grays; it was not at all in the accepted proprieties. But Marta rushed on: "So many would be engaged that it would be more horrible than ever."

"You cannot make omelets without breaking eggs," Westerling answered with suave finality.

"The aeroplane will take its place as an auxiliary," he went on, his mind still running on the theme of her prophecy, which the meeting with Lanstron had quickened. "But war will, as ever, be won by the bayonet that takes and holds a position. We shall have no miracle victories, no—"

There he broke off. He did not accompany Mrs. Galland and Marta back to the house, but made his adieu at the garden-gate.

"I'm sure that I shall never marry a soldier!" Marta burst out as she and her mother were ascending the steps.

(To be continued)

BRUNSWICK

Quite a number of our people have been attending the Randall fair.

Mrs. George Coleman spent a few days last week in Akron.

Tuesday was Mrs. Clara Clement's birthday and twenty of her friends and neighbors surprised her and spent the day with her. Those from out of town were Mr. and Mrs. Frank Morton of Swanton, O., Mrs. Fred Stove of Cleveland and Mrs. Nellie Aylard and son Cecil of Medina.

Lillian Chidsy and Mildred A. Phillips were married in Medina last Saturday at Rev. Watson's and then went to Sandusky and Cedar Point for over Sunday. They visited here at her father's for the rest of the week and will go Saturday to their home in Lakewood, which is all ready for them. We wish them best wishes.

Those who attended yearly meeting at North Eaton, Sunday, were F. H. Gibbs, Ed. Gibbs, Mable Deuble, F. M. Myrick and wife, Charles Gibbs and wife, Alvin Gibbs, Howard Chapman, Mrs. Susie Enga and daughter, Mr. E. J. Cause and family, Theo. Chapman and wife, Mrs. E. E. Rice, Mrs. Sarah Oviatte, A. D. Gardner, wife and daughter, Almon Bradon and wife, Harry Osterhouse and family and E. C. Miner and wife. Two fine sermons were delivered by P. H. Welshheimer, pastor of the Canton Church of Christ, and Earl Gibbs of Kepton led the music, which was inspiring.

Letha Gibbs went home with Marjiam Gray to Senacaville to make a visit.

Our Grangers received word of the death of their brother Granger, E. Culver of Poe, and all express their sorrow in their loss of a good man.

Frank Morton and wife of Swanton, O., are visiting his sister, Mrs. D. F. Tillotson.

Glenn Kingsbury and Katherine Schneider were married Wednesday evening at the home of H. H. Hitchcock. We wish them a long, happy life together.

Arthur Huntley of Granger is clerk for Benjamin & Folley.

Mrs. Hayden Morton returned from the hospital on Tuesday.

Our schools will open on Sept. 7.

Leo Rowley of Elyria is here visiting with Alvin Gibbs.

A most enjoyable social affair was engaged in by about forty invited guests at the beautiful home of Mr. and Mrs. Howard H. Hitchcock in Brunswick, on the afternoon of Aug. 26. At this time Mr. Glenn V. Kingsbury and Miss Katherine Schneider were united in marriage.

The parlor was very tastefully decorated with the wedding bell, ferns and gladiolas, before which the minister, Rev. Chas. Searles, took his place. He was closely followed by the best man, Edwin C. Gibbs, and the maid-of-honor, carrying a large bunch

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of pink astors and then the bride, carrying white roses followed by the groom.

The ring ceremony was short and impressive, after which the young couple received the hearty congratulations of all present.

The wedding supper certainly did great credit to the hostess, Mrs. Hitchcock, also the presents received by these young people were elegant and useful. The beautiful hand-painted pillowtop, sent by Usher and Waite from California is worthy of special mention.

Among the out-of-town guests were Mrs. Domhein and son from New York, Mr. U. S. Green and daughter, Mrs. Charlton, from Royalton; Mrs. A. U. Cinnigar from Lorain, Mrs. Aggie Wells, Mr. and Mrs. E. F. Gibbs of Medina; Mr. and Mrs. C.E. Aldin, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Lincoln of Cleveland, Mr. Nelson Hitchcock from Grafton.

Soon after the supper the bride and groom started on their wedding trip to Niagara, Buffalo and New York city. They are starting out on life's uneven journey with the good will of their many friends, to whom they will be at home on the Kingsbury farm in this town.

CHERRY CORNERS AND GARDEN ISLE

Mrs. Daniel Kime of near Burbank spent Sunday afternoon with her son Mert and family.

Mrs. Pauline Klinker and family entertained the following company last week: Mr. and Mrs. Hiram Lehr of Congress, on Monday, Mr. and Mrs. Birney of Burbank, Friday and Mr. and Mrs. Will Archer of Eselsburn, Sunday.

Mrs. Alma Dull attended the funeral of Mrs. Freyman last Tuesday which was held at the Reformed church near Pawnee.

Mrs. Jane Repp spent last Tuesday in Burbank, guest of her daughter, Mrs. Ica Myers.

Chance Repp of this place and Miss Mae Oxender of Spencer were married last week and went to house-keeping on the farm that he purchased last spring.

Emery Oiler and sister Ethel, of Pennsylvania visited last Sunday and Monday with Ira Dull and family.

Will Esselburn and Lawrence Clinker made a trip to Wooster last Wednesday.

Jack Edwards spent a couple of days last week with his mother in Lodi.

Mr. Boldman and wife of near Lodi were guests of Mr. and Mrs. Brown last Sunday.

Crist Aukerman attended the funeral of his sister-in-law, Mrs. George Aukerman held at her home in Lodi last Saturday.

Harry Underwood of Cleveland is spending a week or two at the Dave Repp home.

George Underwood and wife attended the Underwood reunion last Saturday at the home of his brother, Clark in Lodi.

Jack Edwards spent Saturday night and Sunday in Barberton, the guest of his daughter, Mrs. Pauline Bubliger and family.

Miss Lida Roush is spending a few weeks with her nephew, John Stair and family.

Mr. Cornell and wife, Fred Underwood, wife and son, were visitors at the George Underwood home last Sunday.

Ray Stair and family of Rowsburg spent Saturday night and Sunday at the home of the former's parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Stair.

Albert Kuntz and son Raymond visited relatives in Barberton on last Saturday.

Joe Aukerman and Miss Rosie Ribbick attended the fair in Cleveland last Saturday.

George Roush bought an auto one day last week.

The festival given by the E. V. aid society last Saturday night was fairly well attended and the proceeds amounted to about \$17.

Misses Lila Stair and Lida Roush spent Thursday and Friday with the former's brother, Ray Stair, and the family at Rowsburg.

BEEBETOWN

Mr. and Mrs. Rigby from Oklahoma visited at Todds' last Wednesday and Thursday.

John Easten has returned home after visiting his parents in Canada two weeks.

Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Sheerlein and family spent Sunday at Chas. Brandow's.

William and Walter Brassee went to see their mother in Elyria Sunday.

Ida and Lillian Hoyt from Cleveland called on Mr. and Mrs. William Hoyt Sunday.

Steve Rensison has been camping at Chippewa Lake.

Peter Keenan has returned home from New York where he went with a herd of cattle.

Mr. and Mrs. Edmund Tompkins and family are visiting at I. G. Lewis'.

A number of people from this vicinity attended Randall fair.

Mrs. Rensison and son Ernest are visiting at Frank Rensison's.

Mrs. Clara Smith from Cleveland is visiting at her sister's, Mrs. E. D. Ring's.

Robert McConaughy, who is sick with hay fever, has gone to Saginaw, Mich., for his health.

A party of young people spent Monday evening with Oscar Clogg. Ice cream and cake were served and a fine time enjoyed by all present.

Mr. and Mrs. Jorden were callers on friends and neighbors last Saturday.

Mrs. Nellie Green and son Hubert are visiting at the home of Wm. Kinch.

CANAAN BEND

The 8th annual reunion of the Yost family will be held at the H. A. Bowman home on Saturday.

Frank Leggett and family and Mrs. Simon Fetzer and family motored to Ashland last Sunday.

Willis Collins Sundayed at the home of his father, Henry Collins.

J. E. Fetzer and family motored to North Randall on Tuesday.

C. B. Whonseler and family spent Sunday and Monday in Cleveland.

Mrs. Simon Fetzer and daughter, Ruth and son Paul, visited at the Geo. Weimer home in Creston last Friday.

Harvey Hawk and family visited at the home of Geo. Hawk, near Creston Saturday.