

# THE LAST SHOT

COPYRIGHT, 1914, by CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

by FREDERICK PALMER



## SYNOPSIS

**CHAPTER I**—At their home on the frontier between the Browns and Grays Marta Galland and her mother, entertaining Colonel Westerling of the Grays, see Captain Lanstron, staff intelligence officer of the Browns, injured by a fall in his aeroplane.

**CHAPTER II**—Ten years later. Westerling, nominal vice but real chief of staff, reinforces South La Tir, meditates on war, and speculates on the comparative ages of himself and Marta, who is visiting in the Gray Capital.

**CHAPTER III**—Westerling calls on Marta. She tells him of her teaching children the follies of war and martial patriotism, begs him to prevent war while he is chief of staff, and predicts that if he makes war against the Browns he will not win.

**CHAPTER IV**—On the march with the 53rd of the Browns Private Stransky, anarchist, decries war and played-out patriotism and is placed under arrest. Colonel Lanstron over-hearing, begs him off saying the anarchist will fight well when enraged and is "all man."

**CHAPTER V**—Lanstron calls on Marta at her home. He talks with Feller, the gardener. Marta tells Lanstron that she believes Feller to be a spy. Lanstron confesses it is true.

**CHAPTER VI**—Lanstron shows Marta a telephone which Feller has concealed in a secret passage under the tower for use to benefit the Browns in war emergencies, pointing out its value as being in the center of the fighting zone in case of war, Marta consents for it and Feller to remain for the present. Lanstron declares his love for Marta.

**CHAPTER VII**—Westerling and the Gray premier plan to use a trivial international affair to ferment warlike patriotism in army and people and striking before declaring war. Partow, Brown chief of staff, and Lanstron, made vice, discuss the trouble, and the Brown defenses. Partow reveals his plans to Lanstron.

**CHAPTER VIII**—At the frontier the two armies lie crouched for attack and defense. In the town with the non-combatants fleeing from the danger zone. Martha hears her child pupils recite the peace oath.

**CHAPTER IX**—The Gray army crosses the boarder line and attacks. The Browns check them. Artillery, infantry, aeroplanes, dirigibles engage. Stransky, rising to make the anarchist speech of his life, draws the Gray artillery fire. Nicked by a shrapnel splinter he goes Berserk and fights—"all a man."

**CHAPTER X**—Martha has her first glimpse of war in its modern, cold, scientific, murderous brutality. She allows the telephone to remain.

spades for rifles, and other sections either crawled or ran forward precipitately and fell to the task of joining the isolated beginnings into a single trench.

Again Dellarme looked toward regimental headquarters, his fixed, cheery smile not wholly masking the appeal in his eyes. The Grays had only two or three hundred yards to go when they should make their next charge in order to reach the crest. But his men had fifteen hundred to go in the valley before they were out of range. After their brave resistance facing the enemy they would receive a hail of bullets in their backs. This was the time to withdraw if there were to be assurance of a safe retreat. But there was no signal. Until there was, he must remain.

The trench grew; the day wore on. Two rifles to one were now playing against his devoted company, which had had neither food nor drink since early morning. As he scanned his thinning line he saw a look of bloodlessness and hopelessness gathering on the set faces of which he had grown so fond during this ordeal. Some of the men were crouching too much for effective aim.

"See that you fire low! Keep your heads up!" he called. "For your homes, your country and your God! Pass the word along!"

Parched throat after parched throat repeated the message hoarsely and leaden shoulders raised a trifle and dust-matted eyelashes narrowed sharply on the sights.

"For the man in us!" growled Stransky. "For the favor of nature at birth that gave us the right to wear trousers instead of skirts! For the joy of hell, give them hell!"

"For our homes! For the man in us!" they repeated, swallowing the words as if they had the taste of a stimulant.

But Dellarme knew that it would not take much to precipitate a break. He himself felt that he had been on

that knot half a lifetime. He looked at his watch and it was five o'clock. For seven hours they had held on. The Grays' trench was complete the breadth of the slope; more reserves were coming up. The brigade commander of the Grays was going to make sure that the next charge succeeded.

At last Dellarme's glance toward regimental headquarters showed the flag that was the signal for withdrawal. Could he accomplish it? The first lieutenant, with a shattered arm, had gone on a litter. The old sergeant was dead, a victim of the colonial wars. Used to fighting savage enemies, he had been too eager in exposing himself to a civilized foe. He had been shot through the throat.

"Men of the first section," Dellarme called, "you will slip out of line with the greatest care not to let the enemy know that you are going!"

"Going—going! Careful! Men of the first section going!" the parched throats repeated in a thrilling whisper.

"Those who remain keep increasing their fire!" called Dellarme again. "Cover the whole breadth of the trench!"

Every fourth man wormed himself backward on his stomach until he was below the sky-line. When his stiffened limbs brought him to his feet and he started on a dead run down into the valley and toward a cut behind another knoll across the road from the Galland house. The others followed at intervals.

Once across a road and up three series of steps of the other garden terrace, behind a breastwork of sandbags, the company rested. Most of them had fallen asleep on the ground after finishing their rations, logs of men in animal exhaustion. Some of those awake were too weary to give to each other more than a nod and smile. They had witnessed too much horror that day to talk about it. But Stransky foraged.

Marta, coming out on the veranda, saw him.

"You are tired! You are hungry!" she said with urgent gentleness. "Come in!"

He followed her into the house and dropped on a leather chair before a shining table in a room paneled with oak, wondering at her and at himself. No woman of Marta's world had ever spoken in that way to him. But it was good to sit down. Then a maid with a sad, winsome face and tender eyes brought him wine and bread and cold meat and jam. He gulped down a glassful of wine; he ate with great mouthfulness in the ravenous call of healthy, exhausted tissues, while the maid stood by to cut more bread.

"When it comes to eating after fighting—"

He looked up when the first pangs of hunger were assuaged. Enormous, broad-shouldered, physical, his cheeks flushed with wine, his eyes opened wide and brilliant with the fire that was in his nature—eyes that spoke the red business of anarchy and war.

"Say, but you're pretty!" Springing up, he caught her hand and made to kiss her in the brushness of impulse. Minna struck him a stinging blow in the face. He received it as a pestilence would receive a bite from a pup, and she stood her ground, her eyes challenging his fearlessly.

"So you are like that!" he said thoughtfully. "It was a good one, and you meant it, too."

"Decidedly!" she answered. "There's more where that came from!"

Then little Clarissa Eileen entered and pressed against her mother's skirts, subjecting Stransky to childhood's scrutiny. He waved a finger at her and grinned and drew his eyes together in a squint at the bridge of his nose, making a funny face that brought a laugh.

"Your child?" Stransky asked Minna.

"Yes."

"Where's her father? Away fighting?"

"I don't know where he is!"

"Oh!" he mused. "Was that blow for him at the same time as for me?" he pursued thoughtfully.

"Yes, for all of your kind."

"M-m-m!" came from between his lips as he rose. "Would you mind holding out your hand?" he asked with a gentleness singularly out of keeping with his rough aspect.

"Why?" she demanded.

"I've never studied any books of etiquette of polite society, and I am a poor sort at making speeches, anyhow. But I want to kiss a good woman's hand by way of apology. I never kissed one in my life, but I'm getting a lot of new experiences today. Will you?"

She held out her hand at arm's length and flushed slightly as he pressed his lips to it.

"You certainly do cut thick slices," he said smiling. "And you certainly are pretty," he added, passing out of the door as jauntily as if he were ready for another fight and just in time to see the colonel of the regiment come around the house. He stood at the salute, half proudly, half defiantly, but in nowise humbly.

"Well, Major Dellarme! It was the colonel's greeting of the company commander.

"Major?" exclaimed Dellarme.

"Yes. Partow has the power. Four of the aviators have iron crosses already and promotion, too; and you are a major. Company G got into a mess and the whole regiment would have been in one unless you held on. So I let you stay. It all came out right, as Lanstron planned—right so far. But your losses have been heavy and here you are in the thick of it again. Your company may change places with Company E, which has had a relatively easy time."

"No, sir; we would prefer to stay," Dellarme answered quietly.

"Good! Then you will take this battalion and I'll transfer Grollier to Alvery's. Bad loss, Alvery—shrapnel. The artillery has been doing ugly work, but that is all in favor of the defensive. If we can hold them on this line till tomorrow noon, it's all we want for the present," he concluded.

"We'll hold them! Don't worry!" put in Stransky.

If a private had spoken to a colonel in this fashion at drill, without being spoken to, it would have been a glaring breach of military etiquette. Now that they were at war it was different. Real comradeship between officer and man begins with war.

"We shall, eh?" chuckled the colonel. "You look big enough to hold anything, young man! Here! Isn't this the fellow that Lanstron got off?"

"Yes, sir," answered Dellarme.

"Well, was Lanstron right?"

"Yes, sir."

"Wonderful man, Lanstron!"

"He knows just a little too much!" Stransky growled.

As Fracasse's men rose from their trench for the final charge and found that the enemy had gone, an officer



"I Want to Kiss a Good Woman's Hand by Way of Apology."

of the brigade staff brought instructions to the colonel.

"The batteries are going to emplace here for your support in the morning. You will move as soon as your men have eaten and occupy positions B-31 to B-35. That gives you a narrow front for one battalion, with two battalions in reserve to drive home your attack. The chief of staff himself desires that we take the Galland house before noon. The enemy must not have the encouragement of any successes."

"So easy for Westerling to say," thought the colonel; while aloud he acknowledged the message with proper spirit.

Before the order to move was given the news of it passed from lip to lip among the men in tired whispers. Since dawn they had lived through the impressions of a whole war, and they had won. With victory they had not thought of the future, only of their hunger. After the nightmare of the charge, after hearing death whispering for hours intimately in their ears, they were too weary and too far thrown out of the adjustments of any natural habits of thought and feeling to realize the horror of eating their dinners in the company of the dead. Now they were to go through another hell, but many of them in their exhaustion were chiefly concerned as to whether or not they should get any sleep that night.

The satire of war makes the valet's son a hero; the chance of war kills the manufacturer's son and lets the day-laborer's son live; the sport of war gives the latent forces of a Stransky full play; the glory of war brings Dellarme quick promotion; the glamour and the spectacular folly of war turn the bolts of the lightnings which man has mastered against man. Perhaps the savage who learned that he

could start a name by rubbing two dry sticks together may have set fire to the virgin forest and wild grass in order to destroy an enemy—and naturally with disastrous results to himself if he mistook the direction of the wind.

Marta Galland's thoughts at dusk when she returned up the steps to the house were of the wreckage the hot whirlwind of war left. She was seeing fathers staring and mothers weeping. Her experience with the wounded drawing deep on the wells of sympathy, heightened her loathing of war and of all who planned and ordered it and led its legions. She had been engaged since dark in completing the work of moving valuable articles from the front to the rear rooms of the house, which had been begun early in the day by Minna and the coachman.

She was at the door of her mother's room, which was like an antique shop. Old plates lay on top of old tables, with vases on the floor under the tables. Surrounded by her treasures, Mrs. Galland awaited the attack; not as a soldier awaits it, but as that venerable Roman senator of the story faced the barbarous Gauls—neither disputing the power of their spears nor yielding the self-respect of his own mind and soul. She had lain down in her wrapper for the night, and the light from a single candle—she still favored candles—revealed her features calm and philosophical among the pillows. Yet the magic of war, reaching deep into hidden emotions, had her also under its spell. Her voice was at once more tender and vital.

"Marta, I see that you are all on wires!"

"Yes; jangling wires, every one, jangling every second out of tune," Marta acquiesced.

"Marta, my father"—her father had been a premier of the Browns—"always said that you may enjoy the luxury of fussing over little things, for they don't count much one way or another; but about big things you must never fuss or you will not be worthy of big things. Marta, you cannot stop a railroad train with your hands. This is not the first war on earth and we are not the first women who ever thought that war was wrong. Each of us has his work to do and you will have yours. It does no good to tire yourself out and fly to pieces, even if you do know so much and have been around the world."

She smiled as a woman of sixty, who has a secret heart-break that she had never given her husband a son, may smile at a daughter who is both son and daughter to her, and her plump hand, all curves like her plump face and her plump body, spread open in appeal.

Marta, who, in the breeding of her generation, felt sentiment as more or less of a lure from logic, dropped beside the bed in a sudden burst of sentiment and gathered the plump hand in hers and kissed it.

"Mother, you are wonderful!" she said. "Mother, you are great!"

After a time, her ear becoming accustomed to the firing as a city dweller's to the distant roar of city traffic, Mrs. Galland slept. But Marta could not follow her advice. If, transiently at least, she had found something of the peace of the confessional, the vigor of youth was in her arteries; and youth cannot help remaining awake under some conditions. She tiptoed across the hall into her own room and seated herself by the window. The symbol of what the ear had heard the eye saw—war, working in tones of the landscape by day with smokeless powder; war, revealed by its tongues of flame at night. Ugly bursts of fire from the higher hills spread to the heavens like an aurora borealis and broke their messengers in sheets of flame over the lower hills—the batteries of the Browns sprinkling death about the heads of the gunners of the Grays emplacing their batteries. Staccato flashes from a single point counted so many bullets from an automatic, which directed by the beams of the search-lights, found their targets in sections of advancing infantry. EMI crests, set off with flashes running back and forth, demarked infantry lines of the Browns assisting the automatics.

There were lulls between the crashes of the small arms and the heavy, throaty speech of the guns; lulls that seemed to say that both sides had paused for a breathing spell; lulls that allowed the battle in the distance to be heard in its pervasive undertone. In one of them, when even the undertone had ceased for a few seconds, Marta caught faintly the groans of a wounded man—one of the crew of a Gray dirigible burned by an explosion and brought in his agony softly to earth by a billowing piece of envelope which acted as a parachute.

Fighting proceeded in La Tir in stages of ferocity and blank silence. The upper part of the town, which the Browns still held, was in darkness; the lower part, where the Grays were, was illuminated.

"Another one of Lanny's plans!" thought Marta. "He would have them work in the light, while we fire out of obscurity!"

## MUNSON

The home missionary services will be observed at the Reformed church on Sunday, Nov. 29.

Rev. Tobias and wife of West Salem visited at S. Lechertner's last Sunday.

A S'ahle and wife of Litchfield visited at J. Hien's this week.

There will be an entertainment at the school house, in Sub-district No. 1, Spencer township on Wednesday evening, Nov. 25.

## BIG TREAT FOR YOUNG AND OLD

### Buckeye Corn Special Tours Grow in Popularity.

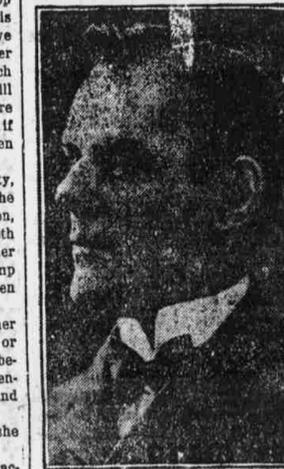
#### OF EDUCATIONAL VALUE

President Wilson Will Receive Party While in National Capital—Philadelphia and New York Also On Itinerary—Trip Will Last One Week.

It is expected that fully fifteen hundred of Ohio's most progressive citizens, including the winners in the various Junior Contests, will be members of the Buckeye Corn Special Tour, which leaves Monday, Nov. 30 on a sight-seeing tour to Washington, Philadelphia and New York, and which will last one week.

The party will be transported over the Pennsylvania lines by seven special trains composed solidly of standard steel Pullman sleepers, electric lighted, steam heated, safe, sanitary and comfortable. Each car will have its colored porter ready to respond at the press of a button. Meals en route will be served in dining cars. The party will stop at the best hotels in Washington, Philadelphia and New York. It will travel as millionaires travel.

The Buckeye Corn Special Tour has developed into a great annual statewide excursion in the interest of education and social uplift. The Agricul-



HON. A. P. SANDLES, President Agricultural Commission of Ohio. Father of the Movement.

tural Commission of Ohio, under whose auspices it is conducted, has thrown it open to the public. All are invited—old and young.

Into that week, Nov. 30-Dec. 5, will be crowded as much sight-seeing as the ordinary party sees in a month of travel. An individual could hardly hope to duplicate the service of the 1914 Buckeye Corn Special Tour at twice its cost. In fact, the Buckeye Corn Special party will be accorded honors and privileges which the ordinary party could not buy at any price.

There will be two full days of sight-seeing at the National Capital, including a boat trip up the Potomac to Mount Vernon, the home and tomb of George Washington. On Wednesday, Dec. 2, the party will be received by President Wilson at the White House.

While in Philadelphia the Buckeye Corn Special party will stop at the Bellevue-Stratford, the hotel at which princes, presidents and other notables are entertained. The mayor of Philadelphia will deliver an address of welcome in the court yard of the Municipal building. The sight-seeing in Philadelphia will consist of a tour of John Wanamaker's great store; Masonic Temple; the Curtis Publishing Company building, the home of The Saturday Evening Post. The Country Gentleman and the Ladies' Home Journal; Congress hall; Independence hall, where many of the relics of the Revolutionary War are exhibited, including Old Liberty Bell; the grave of Benjamin Franklin; the Betsy Ross House, the home of the American flag, etc.

The afternoon will be spent by a boat trip to League Island. Uncle Sam's greatest navy yard. There a special military drill and band concert will be tendered the Buckeye Corn Special party. Following that entertainment, an opportunity will be afforded for spending an hour upon a great battleship.

A banquet at the Bellevue-Stratford and a theater party at Keith's will constitute the evening program of the day spent in Philadelphia. The special trains will be boarded at 11 p. m. for the run to New York city.

The day in New York promises to prove the red-letter day of the tour. The day will start with breakfast at the famous Waldorf-Astoria. The sight-seeing includes St. Patrick's Cathedral, the Grand Central Terminal; Bronx Zoo, the largest collection of animals in the world; a ten mile ride under the city on subway trains; the Aquarium; a boat tour of New York harbor, affording a view

of the Atlantic ocean, Statue of Liberty, Immigration Island, Brooklyn Bridge, etc. The boat trip, with luncheon aboard, is a complimentary entertainment by the Chamber of Commerce of the state of New York. Hon. Seth Low and other notable men of New York are manifesting great interest in this unique movement.

After the boat trip the party will tour the skyscraper district and then board elevated trains, to be carried to the Martinique and McAlpin hotels, where the party will banquet in two divisions. The evening will be spent at the Hippodrome, New York's largest theater, where the party will witness that great production, "Wars of the World." From the theater to the Pennsylvania railroad station the party will walk down the "Great White Way." At 11 p. m., Friday, Dec. 4, the Buckeye Corn Special party, in seven special trains, will start on the homeward run.

The going trip will take the party through the mill and mine districts of Pittsburgh by night. Pittsburgh by night reminds one of Dante's Inferno. It is a thrilling sight—those mighty tongues of flame and smoke. On the return trip the Allegheny mountains will be crossed shortly after daylight and many of the party for the first time will see a mountain.

## MALLET CREEK

Miss Lena Lance of Chatham has been the guest of Miss Wilda Sweet the past week.

Mr. John Stahl was visiting his relatives in Seneca county the past week.

A baby boy came Sunday to make his home at Harry Long's.

Mr. Tom Phillips is substituting for the superintendent of the Doylestown schools, who is ill.

The men of the Congregational church met at the parsonage Tuesday and repaired the roof.

The chicken-pie dinner was a great success, both as to the quality of cooking and the number in attendance. The ladies cleared over \$30. The entertainment by the old-fashioned choir was enthusiastically received. The costumes were exact reproductions of the pictures in Godey's Lady Books of long ago, and the singing would have been a credit to Ichabod Crane.

Rev. Town's daughter, who is a student at Oberlin, spent Sunday at home.

The school house of District No. 9 is to receive some redecorating and the Lester school has had a new cloak room.

All of the members of the Congregational church choir are urged to be on hand Saturday evening at the choir practice.

The York Sunday schools will unite for the celebration of Christmas. There will be music by a union choir and recitations by the little people.

Miss Kelly, who is working for the Bell Telephone Co., of Cleveland spent Sunday at her home in York.

Miss Grace Nettleton, who is studying at the Schaeffer Missionary Training School of Cleveland writes enthusiastically about her work.

The ladies of the Congregational church and of the W. C. T. U. recently united in sending a barrel of provisions to the school.

## WESTERN STAR

Curt Stahel and family of Barber-ton were Star visitors over Sunday.

Mrs. Eichelberger of Nebraska, who has been visiting at Levi Nash's for several days, returned home this week.

Mr. and Mrs. Dan Cressley of Akron were Star visitors over Sunday.

The W. M. A. ladies gave a farewell party to Mrs. Brannen Friday evening. She is moving to Wadsworth this week. We are sorry to lose such a good neighbor and all wish her good luck in her new home.

Ely Reimer is able to be out again.

Correspondents will please send their letters in one day earlier next week, as we issue a day earlier on account of Thanksgiving.

## SHARON

A business meeting of the L. C. A. was held at the bank Tuesday afternoon. It was found that the association possessed sufficient means to cover the debt remaining on the vault, part having been the proceeds of the play recently given and the remainder having been raised by subscription. The vault was completed the past week, costing in all \$537. The question of selling cemetery lots was discussed, also the advisability of presenting again the play of Nov. 7. The association in general decided in favor of this, so let all attend the "Spinsters' Fortnightly Club," Saturday, Nov. 28. Admission 10 and 20 cents.

A representative of the Logan Gas and Fuel Company is in town this week leasing farms for drilling purposes.

Mrs. George Cassidy and children and Mrs. Bertha Halliwell and daughter returned the first of the week to their respective homes at Gillette, Wyoming and Berthoud, Colo.

Mesdames B. H. Nichols and Chas. Dunn left Tuesday for a visit with Mrs. John Bradeberry, near Millersburg.