

# 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 overhears, begs him off saying the anarchist will fight well when enraged and is "all man."

**CHAPTER V.**

**A Sunday Morning Call.**

As a boy, Arthur Lanstron had persisted in being an exception to the influence of both heredity and environment. Though his father and both grandfathers were officers who believed their to be the true gentleman's profession, he had preferred any kind of mechanical toy to arranging the most gaily painted tin soldiers in formation on the nursery floor; and he would rather read about the wonders of natural history and electricity than the campaigns of Napoleon and Frederick the Great and my Lord Nelson. Left to his own choice, he would miss the parade of the garrison for inspection by an excellency in order to ask questions of a man wiping the oil off his hands with cotton-waste, who was far more entertaining to him than the most spick-and-span ramrod of a sergeant.

Upon being told one day that he was to go to the military school the following autumn, he broke out in open rebellion.

"I don't want to go to the army!" he said.

"Why?" asked his father, thinking that when the boy had to give his reasons he would soon be argued out of the heresy.

"It's drilling a few hours a day, then nothing to do," Arthur replied. "All your work waits on war and you don't know that there will ever be any war. It waits on something nobody wants to happen. Now, if you manufacture something, why, you see wood come out of a tree, steel come out of an automobile. If you build a bridge you see it rising little by little. You're getting your results every day; you see your mistakes and your successes. You're making something, creating something; there's something going on all the while that isn't guesswork. I think that's what I want to say. You won't order me to be a soldier, will you?"

The father, loath to do this, called in the assistance of an able pleader then, Eugene Partow, lately become chief of staff of the Browns, who was an old friend of the Lanstron family. Partow turned the balance on the side of filial affection. He kept watch of the boy, but without favoring him with influence. Young Lanstron, who wanted to get results, had to earn them. He realized in practice the truth of Partow's saying that there was nothing he had ever learned but what could be of service to him as an officer.

"Finding enough work to do?" Partow would ask with a chuckle when they met in these days; for he had made Lanstron both chief of intelligence and chief aerostatic officer. Young Colonel Lanstron's was the duty of gaining the secrets of the Gray staff and keeping those of the Browns organized up-to-the-moment efficiency in the new forces of the air.

He had remarked truly enough that the injury to his left hand served as a bitter reminder against the folly of wool-gathering than a string, even a large red string, tied around his fingers. Thanks to skillful surgery, the fingers, incapable of spreading much, were yet serviceable and had a firm grip of the wheel as he rose from the propeller station on the Sunday morning after Marta's return home for a night to La Tir.

He knew the pattern weaving under his feet as one knows that of his own garden from an overlooking window. Every detail of the staff map, ravines, roads, buildings, battery positions, was stitched together in the flowing reality of actual vision. No white posts were necessary to tell him where the boundary between the two nations lay. The line was drawn in his brain.

Now that Lanstron was the organizer of the aviation corps his own flights were rare. Mostly they were made to La Tir. His visits to Marta were his holidays. All the time that she was absent on her journey around the world they had corresponded. Her letters, so revealing of herself and her peculiar angles of observation, formed a bundle sacredly preserved. Her mother's joking reference about her girlish resolution not to marry a soldier often returned to him. There, he sometimes thought, was the real obstacle to his great desire.

When he alighted from the plane he thrust his left hand into his blouse pocket. "He always carried it there, as if it were literally sewn in place. In moments of emotion the scarred nerves would twitch as the telltale of his sensitiveness; and this was something he would conceal from others no matter how conscious he was of it himself. He found the Galland veranda deserted. In response to his ring a maid came to the open door. Her face was sad, with a beauty that had prematurely faded. But it lighted pleasantly in recognition. Her hair was thick and tawny, lying low over the brow; her eyes were a softly luminous brown and her full lips sensitive and yielding. Lanstron, an intimate of the Galland household, knew her story well and the part that Marta had played in it.

Some four years previously, when a baby was in prospect for Minna, who wore no wedding ring, Mrs. Galland had been inclined to send the maid to an institution, "where they will take good care of her, my dear. That's what such institutions are for. It is quite scandalous for her and for us—never happened in our family before!"

Marta arched her eyebrows. "We don't know!" she exclaimed softly.

"How can you think such a thing, let alone saying it—you, a Galland!" her mother gasped in indignation.

"That is, if we go far back," said Marta. "At all events, we have no precedent, so let's establish one by keeping her."

"But for her own sake! She will have to live with her shame!" Mrs. Galland objected. "Let her begin afresh in the city. We shall give her a good recommendation, for she is really an excellent servant. Yes, she will readily find a place among strangers."

"Still, she doesn't want to go, and it would be cruel to send her away."

"Cruel! Why, Marta, do you think I will be cruel? Oh, very well, then we will let her stay!"

"Both are away at church. Mrs. Galland ought to be here any minute, but Miss Galland will be later because of her children's class," said Minna. "Will you wait on the veranda?"

He was saying that he would stroll in the garden when childish footsteps were heard in the hall, and after a curly head had nestled against the mother's skirts its owner, reminded of the importance of manners in the world where the stork had left her, made a courtesy. Lanstron shook a small hand which must have lately been on intimate terms with sugar or jam.

"How do you do, flying soldier man?" chirruped Clarissa Eileen. It was evident that she held Lanstron in high favor.

"Let me hear you say your name," said Lanstron.

Clarissa Eileen was triumphant. She had been waiting for days with the revelation when he should make that old request. Now she enunciated it with every vowel and consonant correctly and proudly uttered; indeed, she repeated it four or five times in proof of complete mastery.

"A pretty name. I've often wondered how you came to give it to her," said Lanstron to Minna.

"You do like it!" exclaimed Minna with girlish eagerness. "I gave her the most beautiful name I could think of because"—she laid her hand caressingly on the child's head and a madonna-like radiance stole into her face—"because she might at least have a beautiful name when—the dull blaze of a recollection now burning in her eyes—when there wasn't much prospect of many beautiful things coming into her life; though I know, of course, that the world thinks she ought to be called Maggie."

Proceeding leisurely along the main path of the first terrace, Lanstron followed it past the rear of the house to the old tower. Long ago the moat that surrounded the castle had been filled in. The green of rows of grape vines lay against the background of a mat of ivy on the ancient stone walls, which had been cut away from the loopholes set with window glass. The door was open, showing a room that had been closed in by a ceiling of boards from the walls to the circular stairway that ran aloft from the dungeons. On the floor of flags were cheap rugs. A number of seed and nursery catalogues were piled on a round table covered with a brown cloth.

"Hello!" Lanstron called softly.

"Hello!" he called louder and yet louder.

Receiving no answer, he retraced his steps and seated himself on the second terrace in a secluded spot in the shadow of the first terrace wall, where he could see anyone coming up the main flight of steps from the road. When Marta walked she usually came from town by that way. At length the sound of a slow step from another direction broke on his ear. Some one was approaching along the path that ran at his feet. Around the corner of the wall, in his workman's Sunday clothes of black, but wearing his old straw hat, appeared Feller, the gardener. He paused to examine a rose bush and Lanstron regarded him thoughtfully.

As he turned away he looked up, and a glance of definite and unflinching recognition was exchanged between the two men. They had the garden to themselves.

"Gustave!" Lanstron exclaimed under his breath.

"Lanny!" exclaimed the gardener, turning over a branch of the rose bush. He seemed unwilling to risk talking openly with Lanstron.

"You look the good workman in his Sunday best to a T!" said Lanstron.

"Being stone-deaf," returned Feller, with a trace of drollery in his voice, "I hear very well—at times. Tell me"—his whisper was quivering with eagerness—"shall we fight? Shall we fight?"

"We are nearer to it than we have ever been in our time," Lanstron replied.

The hat still shaded Feller's face, his stoop was unchanged, but the branch in his hand shook.

"Honest?" he exclaimed. "Oh, the chance of it! The chance of it!"

"Gustave!" Lanstron's voice, still low, came in a gust of sympathy, and the pocket which concealed his hand gave a nervous twitch as if it held something alive and distinct from his own being. "The trial wears on you! Do you want to go?"

"No!" Feller shot back irritably. "No!" he repeated resolutely. "I don't want to go! I mean to be game—I—"

He shifted his gaze from the bush which he still pretended to examine and suddenly broke off with: "Miss Galland is coming!"

Lanstron started toward the steps that Marta was ascending. She moved leisurely, yet with a certain springy energy that suggested that she might have come on the run without being out of breath or seeming to have made an effort.

"Hello, stranger!" she called as she saw him, and quickened her pace.

"Hello, pedagogue!" he responded. As they shook hands they swung their arms back and forth like a pair of romping children for a moment.

"We had a grand session of the school this morning, the largest class ever!" she said. "And the points we scored off you soldiers! You'll find disarmament already in progress when you return to headquarters. We're irresistible, or at least," she added, with a flash of intensity, "we're going to be some day."

"So you put on your war-paint!"

"It must be the pollen from the hydrangeas!" She flicked her handkerchief from her belt and passed it to him. "Show that you know how to be useful!"

He performed the task with deliberate care.

"Heavens! You even have some on your ear and some on your hair; but I'll leave it on your hair; it's rather becoming. There you are!" he concluded. "Oh my hair, too!"

"Very well. I always obey orders."

"I oughtn't to have asked you to do it at all!" she exclaimed with a sudden change of manner as they started up to the house. "But a habit of friendship, a habit of liking to believe in one's friends, was uppermost. I forgot. I oughtn't even to have shaken hands with you!"

"Marta! What now, Marta?" he asked.

He had known her in reproach, in anger, in laughing mockery, in militant seriousness, but never before like this. The pain and indignation in her eyes came not from the sheer hurt of a wound but from the hurt of its source. It was as if he had learned by the signal of its loss that he had a deeper hold on her than he had realized.

"Yes, I have a bone to pick with you," she said, recovering a grim sort of fellowship. "A big bone! If you're half a friend you'll give me the very marrow of it."

"I am ready!" he answered more pathetically than philosophically.

"There's not time now; after luncheon, when mother is taking her nap," she concluded as they came to the last step and saw Mrs. Galland on the veranda.

After luncheon Mrs. Galland kept battling with her nods until nature was victorious and she fell fast asleep. Marta, grown restless with impatience, suggested to Lanstron that they stroll in the garden, and they took the path past the house toward the castle tower, stopping in an arbor with his

hospitality except the obsession of a loathsome work that some man must do and I was set to do. My God, Marta! I cease to be natural and human. I am a machine. I keep thinking, what if war comes and some error of mine let the enemy know where to strike the blow of victory; or if there were information I might have gained and failed to gain that would have given us the victory—if, because I had not done my part, thousands of lives of our soldiers were sacrificed needlessly!"

At that she turned on him quickly, her face softening.

"You do think of that—the lives?"

"Yes, why shouldn't I?"

"Of those on your side!" she exclaimed, turning away.

"Yes, of those first," he replied.

"And, Marta, I did not tell you why Feller was here because he did not want me to."

Hedges on either side around a statue of Mercury.

"Now!" exclaimed Marta narrowly. "It was you, Lanny, who recommended Feller to us as a gardener, competent though deaf! I have proved him to be a man of most sensitive hearing. I didn't let him know that he was discovered. You brought him here—you, Lanny, you are the one to explain."

"True, he is not deaf!" Lanstron replied.

"He is a spy?" she asked.

"Yes, a spy. You can put things in a bright light, Marta!" He found words coming with difficulty in face of the pain and disillusion of her set look.

"Using some man as a pawn; setting him as a spy in the garden where you have been the welcome friend!" she exclaimed. "A spy on what—on my mother, on Minna, on me, on the flower, as a part of this monstrous game of trickery and lies that you are playing?"

There was no trace of anger in her tone. It was that of one mortally hurt. Anger would have been easier to bear than the measuring, penetrating wonder that found him guilty of such a horrible part. Those eyes would have confused Partow himself with the steady, welling intensity of their gaze. She did not see how his left hand was twitching and how he stilled its movement by pressing it against the bench.

"You will take Feller with you when you go!" she said, rising.

Lanstron dropped his head in a kind of shaking throeb of his whole body and raised a face white with appeal.

"Marta!" He was speaking to a profile, very sensitive and yet like ivory. "I've no excuse for such an abuse of

(To be continued)

—The newly elected officers of the Medina W. C. T. U. are: Pres., Mrs. Frederick Haas; sec., Mrs. Mildred Hartman. They are both delegates to the State convention at Newark, Oct. 14, 15, 16.

**PROPOSALS FOR BONDS**

Sealed proposals will be received at the office of the Village Clerk of the Village of Medina, Ohio, until 12 o'clock noon of October 10, 1914.

For the Sewer Improvement of Union Street from North Court Street to Huntington Street; Huntington Street from Bronson Street to North Street; Bronson Street from Huntington Street to Foundry Street; and Foundry Street from Bronson Street to the north line of Lot No. 563, in Sewer District No. 1; Also Mill Street from north line Elmwood Street and South Broadway from Grant Street to South Street in Sewer District No. 2, dated August 25, 1914, in the aggregate sum of Thirty Three Hundred and Thirty-two Dollars (\$33,320.00), payable as follows:

- One bond for \$333.00 payable April 1, 1914.
  - One bond for \$333.00 payable April 1, 1917.
  - One bond for \$333.00 payable April 1, 1919.
  - One bond for \$333.00 payable April 1, 1920.
  - One bond for \$333.00 payable April 1, 1921.
  - One bond for \$333.00 payable April 1, 1922.
  - One bond for \$333.00 payable April 1, 1923.
  - One bond for \$333.00 payable April 1, 1924.
  - One bond for \$335.00 payable April 1, 1925.
- With interest upon said bonds at the rate of five and one-half per cent per annum payable annually evidenced by coupons.
- Also for the extension of water mains upon Union Street from North Court Street to Huntington Street; Huntington Street from Union Street to North Street in Sewer District No. 1, and Mill Street from South Court Street to Elmwood Street and Broadway Street from Grant Street to South Street in Sewer District No. 2. Said bonds being in the aggregate sum of Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500.00) dated September 15, 1914, and payable as follows:
- One bond for \$500.00 payable September 15, 1916.
  - One bond for \$500.00 payable September 15, 1917.
  - One bond for \$500.00 payable September 15, 1918.
  - One bond for \$500.00 payable September 15, 1919.
  - One bond for \$500.00 payable September 15, 1920.
- Said bonds bearing interest at the rate of six per cent per annum payable semi-annually.
- Said bonds are issued for the purpose of providing funds for the payment of that portion of the cost and expense of making the above stated Sewer Improvement and Extension of Water Main assessed against said Village, under authority of the Laws of the State of Ohio and the ordinances of said village in such case made and provided.
- Said bonds will be sold to the highest and best bidder for not less than par and the accrued interest to the date of their delivery.
- All bids must state the number of bonds bid for and the gross amount of the bid and accrued interest to date of delivery, and be accompanied by a certified check payable to the Treasurer of Medina Village for 200.00 per cent of the amount of the bonds bid for, upon the condition that if the bid is accepted the bidder will receive and pay for such bonds within ten days from the date of the award, said check to be retained by the Village as stipulated damages, in the event that the bidder shall fail to perform such condition.
- Each bidder, as part of his bid agree to furnish free of cost to said village by check upon which said bonds are to be executed.
- The right is reserved to reject any and all bids.
- Bids must be sealed and endorsed "Proposals for Sewer Improvement" or "Proposal for Extension of Water Main", as the case may be, and George L. McNeal, Village Clerk, 2-4

**OBERLIN BUSINESS COLLEGE BEGINS UPON YEAR OF GREAT PROSPERITY**

The Oberlin Business College opened its Fall Term last week with a large attendance and a fine class of students. The new building which is being used for the first time this term gives this school an equipment not surpassed anywhere in the country. Students are in attendance from all over Ohio and several other states. The reputation of this school for offering a higher standard of training is attracting students from all parts of the country. New students may enter the business department at any time and the shorthand department at the opening of the Second Fall Term, November 2, 1914.

**Saving On Drink Bill.**

Columbus, O.—According to government computation the per capita drink bill of the country is in excess of \$21 a year. Prohibition Kansas, through her strict laws, keeps tab on all liquor shipped into that state for all purposes, and her officials place the consumption of liquor a little above \$1 per capita a year. Therefore, Kansas saves on her drink bill alone \$20 a year for each man, woman and child. Dry statisticians here in Columbus are figuring a saving of \$100,000,000 annually on the drink bill of Ohio, should the prohibition amendment be adopted, as the state has a population of at least 5,000,000. This, the drys argue, is sufficient evidence in itself to cause the citizens to vote for the prohibition amendment.

**WHERE MEN FAIL**  
(Franklin News.)

When men use the ballot in the given spirit, they fail to measure up to the full stature of true American and the high standard of American citizenship. The average American is a lover of fair play, yet he has no patience with the fellow that is sore because some fancied grievance or slight received in the distribution of the spoils of office, and who is imbued with the spirit of retaliation when entering the booth on election day. When men have no higher conception than this of their duties as members of the body politic, then is the ballot debauched and made an instrument of personal revenge. The person or persons who use this great privilege in this way violate the very spirit and letter of the law conferring universal suffrage. The man who sells his vote to the highest bidder is generally regarded as being unworthy of trust, and no doubt rightly so. Admitting the elector who sells his vote to be a questionable character, how shall the man be rated that goes to the polls with malicious intent to get even? Are those who are so governed any higher in the scale of citizenship than those who sell strictly for cash?

If you want clean hands—  
USE  
**VANCO**  
ALL GROCERS.

LOST—Pair of eye-glasses in case Sunday afternoon near B. O. track south of town on Ryan Road. Return to F. W. McDowell and receive reward.

**H. A. WAITE**  
Funeral Director  
and  
Embalmer  
North Side Public Square Office Phone 4080

**CANNEL COAL**  
CLEAN TO HANDLE  
HOT  
LASTING  
Try a Ton For the Open Fire and For Kindling Low Fires  
Well Worth the price \$5.50 per ton  
**Medina Coal Co.**  
Phone 1171

**Perfect Frocks for Hot Weather**  
Made At Home In A Day  
are described and charmingly illustrated in the new  
**McCALL PATTERNS**  
AND  
**FASHION PUBLICATIONS**  
Now On Sale  
WATCH OUR SPECIAL PIECE GOODS SALES  
and make your own clothes at home. There was a time when home dress making was so easy and satisfactory.  
The up-to-date woman's wardrobe is incomplete without the long tunic in some development. The model illustrated here is among the hundreds of new styles shown at our pattern department.  
**Ask For Free Fashion Sheet**  
**C. J. DE ARMITT.**  
Medina Ohio

6013-6011-6050