

The Last Shot

BY
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SYNOPSIS.

At their home on the frontier between the Browns and Grays Maria Galloway and her mother, entertaining Colonel Lanstron, staff intelligence officer of the Browns, is surprised by a fall in his aeroplane. Years later, Westering, nominal vice but real chief of staff, reinforces South La Tir, meditates on war, and speculates on the comparative ages of himself and Maria, who is visiting in the Gray capital. Westering calls on Maria. She tells him of her teaching children the foibles 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 III—Continued.

"You think I am joking?" she asked. "Why, yes!" "But I am not! No, no, not about such a ghastly subject as a war today!" She was leaning toward him, hands on knees and eyes burning like coals without a spark. "I—she paused as she had before she broke out with the first prophecy—"I will quote part of our children's oath: 'I will not be a coward. It is a coward who strikes first. A brave man even after he receives a blow tries to reason with his assailant, and does not strike back until he receives a second blow. I shall not let a burglar drive me from my house. If an enemy tries to take my land I shall appeal to his sense of justice and reason with him, but if he then persists I shall fight for my home. If I am victorious I shall not try to take his land but to make the most of my own. I shall never cross a frontier to kill my fellowmen.'"

Very impressive she made the oath. Her deliberate recital of it had the quality which justifies every word with an urgent faith.

"You see, with that teaching there can be no war," she proceeded, "and those who strike will be weak; those who defend will be strong."

"Perhaps," he said. "You would not like to see thousands, hundreds of thousands, of men killed and maimed, would you?" she demanded, and her eyes held the horror of the sight in reality. "You can prevent it—you can!" Her heart was in the appeal.

"The old argument! No, I should not like to see that," he replied. "I only do my duty as a soldier in my country."

"The old answer! The more reason why you should tell the premier you can't! But there is still another reason for telling him," she urged gently. "Now he sees her not at twenty-seven but at seventeen, girlish, the subject of no processes of reason but in the spell of an intuition, and he knew that something out of the blue in a flash was coming."

"For you will not win!" she declared. This struck her. Square jaw and sturdy body, in masculine energy, resolute and trained, were set indomitably against feminine vitality.

"Yes, we shall win! We shall win!" he said without even the physical demonstration of a gesture and in a hard, even voice which was like that of the machinery of modern war itself, a voice which the aristocratic sniff, the Louis XVI curls, or any of the old gallery-display heroes would have thought utterly lacking in histrionics suitable to the occasion. He remained rigid after he had spoken, handsome, self-possessed.

There was no use of beating feminine fists against such a stone wall. The force of the male was supreme. She smiled with a strange, quivering loosening of the lips. She spread out her hands with fingers apart, as if to let something run free from them into the air, and the flame of appeal that had been in her eyes broke into many lights that seemed to scatter into space, yet ready to return at her command. She glanced at the clock and rose, almost abruptly.

"I was very strenuous riding my hobby against yours, wasn't I?" she exclaimed in a flutter of distraction that made it easy for him to descend from his own stand. "I stated a feeling. I made a guess, a threat about your winning—and all in the air. That's a woman's privilege; one man grant, isn't it?"

It is in the soil of your three acres. I love to feel the warm, rich earth of our own garden in my hands! Hereafter I shall be a stay-at-home, and if my children win," she held out her hand in parting with the same frank, earnest grip of her greeting, "why, you will find that tea is, as usual, at four-thirty."

He had found the women of his high official world—a narrower world than he realized—much alike. Striking certain keys, certain chords responded. He could probe the depths of their minds, he thought, in a single evening. Then he passed on, unless it was in the interest of pleasure or of his career to linger. This meeting had left his curiosity baffled. He understood how Maria's vitality demanded action, which exerted itself in a feminine way for a feminine cause. The cure for such a fate was most clear to his masculine perception. What if all the power she had shown in her appeal for peace could be made to serve another ambition? He knew that he was a great man. More than once he had wondered what would happen if he were to meet a great woman. And he should not see Maria Galloway again unless war came.

CHAPTER IV.

Times Have Changed. The 53d of the Browns had started for La Tir on the same day that the 128th of the Grays had started for South La Tir. While the 128th was going to new scenes, the 53d was returning to familiar ground. It had de-trained in the capital of the province from which its ranks had been recruited. After a steep incline, there was a welcome bugle note and with shouts of delight the centipede's legs broke apart! Bankers, laborers, doctors, valets, butchers, manufacturers and judges' sons threw themselves down on the greensward of the embankment to rest. With their talk of home, of relatives whom they had met at the station, and of the changes in the town was mingled talk of the crisis.

Meanwhile, an aged man was approaching. At times he would break into a kind of trot that ended, after a few steps, in shortness of breath. He was quite withered, his bright eyes twinkling out of an area of moth patches, and he wore a frayed uniform coat with a medal on the breast.

"Is this the 53d?" he queried to the nearest soldier.

"It certainly is!" someone answered. "Come and join us, veterans!" "Is Tom—Tom Fragnin here?" The answer came from a big soldier, who sprang to his feet and leaped toward the old man.

"It's grandfather, as I live!" he called out, kissing the veteran on both cheeks. "I saw sister in town, and she said you'd be at the gate as we marched by."

"Didn't wait at no gate! Marched right up to you!" said grandfather. "Marched up with my uniform and medal on! Stand off there, Tom, so I can see you. My word! You're bigger your father, but not bigger I was! No, sir, not bigger I was in my day before that wound sort o' bent me over. They say it's the lead in the blood. I've still got the bullet!"

The old man's trousers were threadbare but well darned, and the holes in the uppers of his shoes were carefully patched. He had a merry air of contentment, which his grandson had inherited.

"Well, Tom, how much longer you got to serve?" asked grandfather. "Six months," answered Tom. "One, two, three, four—" grandfather counted the numbers off on his fingers. "That's good. You'll be in time for the spring ploughing. My, how you have filled out! But, somehow, I can't get used to this kind of uniform. Why, I don't see how a girl'd be attracted to you fellows, at all!"

"They have to, for we're the only kind of soldiers there are nowadays. Not as gay as in your day, that's sure, when you were in the Hussars—in the Hussars! I tell you with our sabres gleaming, our horses' bits a-jingling, our pennons a-flying, and all the color of our uniforms—I tell you, the girls used to open their eyes at us. And we went into the charge like that—yes, sir, just that gay and grand. Colonel Galloway leading!"

"No, I kind of liked them. I made a lot of friends," admitted Tom. "They're very progressive."

"Eh, eh? You're joking!" To like the people of the southern frontier was only less conceivable than liking the people of the Grays. "That's because you didn't see deeper under them. They're all on the outside—a flighty lot! Why, if they'd done their part in that last war we'd have licked the Grays until they cried for mercy! If their army corps had stood its ground at Volmer—"

"So you've always said," interrupted Tom.

"And the way they cook tripe! I couldn't stomach it, could you? And if there's anything I am partial to it's a good dish of tripe! And their light beer—like drinking froth! And their

bread—why, it ain't bread! It's chips! 'Taint fit for civilized folks!"

"But I sort of got used to their ways," said Tom.

"Eh, eh? Grandfather looked at grandson quizzically, seeking the cause of such heterodoxy in a northern man. "Say, you ain't been falling in love?" he hazarded. "You—you ain't going to bring one of them southern girls home?"

"No!" said Tom, laughing. "Well, I'm glad you ain't, for they're naturally light-minded. I remember 'em well." He wandered on with his questions and comments. "Is it a fact, Tom, or was you just joking when you wrote home that the soldiers took so many baths?"

"Yes, they do."

"Well, that beats me! It's a wonder you didn't all die of pneumonia!" He paused to absorb the phenomenon. Then his half-childish mind, prompted by a random recollection, flitted to another subject which set him to giggling. "And the little crawlers—did they bother you much, the little crawlers?"

"The little crawlers?" repeated Tom, mystified.

"Yes. Everybody used to get 'em just from living close together. Had to comb 'em out and pick 'em out of your clothes. The chase we used to call it."

"No, grandfather, crawlers have gone out of fashion. And no more epidemics of typhoid and dysentery either," said Tom.

"Times have certainly changed!" grumbled Grandfather Fragnin. Interested in their own reunion, they had paid no attention to a group of Tom's comrades nearby, sprawled around a newspaper containing the latest dispatches from both capitals.

"Five million soldiers to our three million!"

"Eighty million people to our fifty million!"

"Because of the odds, they think we are bound to yield, no matter if we are in the right!"

"Let them come!" said the butcher's son. "If we have to go, it will be on a wave of blood."

"And they will come some time," said the judge's son. "They want our land."

"We gain nothing if we beat them back. War will be the ruin of business," said the banker's son.

"Yes, we are prosperous now. Let well enough alone!" said the manufacturer's son.

"Some say it makes wages higher," said the laborer's son, "but I am thinking it's a poor way of raising your pay."

"There won't be any war," said the banker's son. "There can't be without credit. The banking interests will not permit it."

"There can always be war," said the judge's son, "always when one people determines to strike at another people—even if it brings bankruptcy."

"It would be a war that would make all others in history a mere exchange of skirmishes. Every able-bodied man in line—automatics a hundred shots a minute—guns a dozen shots a minute

"But I won't fight for you!"

—and aeroplanes and dirigibles!" said the manufacturer's son.

"To the death, too!" "And not for glory! We of the 53d who live on the frontier will be fighting for our homes."

"If we lose them we'll never get them back. Better die than be beaten!" Herbert Stransky, with deep-set eyes, slightly squinting inward, and a heavy jaw, an enormous man who was the best shot in the company when he cared to be, had listened in silence to the others, his rather thick but expressive lips curving with cynicism. His only speech all the morning had been in the midst of the reception in the public square of the town when he said:

"This home-coming doesn't mean much to me. Home? Hell! The hedgerows of the world are my home!"

His appeared older than his years, and hard and bitter, except when his eyes would light with a feverish sort of fire which shone as he broke into a lull in the talk.

"Comrades," he began.

"Let us hear from the Socialist!" a Tory exclaimed.

"There won't be any war!" said Stransky, his voice gradually rising to the pitch of an agitator relishing the sensation of his own words. "Patriotism is the played-out trick of the ruling classes to keep down the proletariat. There won't be any war! Why? Because there are too many enlightened men on both sides who do the world's work. We of the 53d are a provincial lot, but throughout our army there are thousands upon thousands like me.

By this time the colonel commanding the regiment, who had noticed the excitement from a distance, appeared, forcing a gap for his passage through the crowd with sharp words. He, too, recognized Lanstron. After they had shaken hands, the colonel scowled as he heard the situation explained, with the old sergeant, still holding fast to Stransky's collar, a capable and insistent witness for the prosecution; while Stransky, the fire in his eyes dying to coals, stared straight ahead.

"It is only a suggestion, of course," said Lanstron, speaking quite as a spectator to avoid the least indication of interference with the colonel's authority, "but it seems possible that Stransky has clothed his wrongs in a garb that could never set well on his nature if he tried to wear it in practice. He is really an individualist. Enraged, he would fight well. I should like nothing better than a force of Stransky's if I had to defend a redoubt in a last stand."

"Yes, he might fight." The colonel looked hard at Stransky's rigid profile, with its tight lips and chin as firm as if cut out of stone. "You never know who will fight in the pinch, they say. But that's speculation. It's the example that I have to deal with."

"He is not of the insidious, plotting type. He spoke his mind openly," suggested Lanstron. "If you give him the 'mit of the law, why, he becomes a martyr to persecution. I should say that his remarks might pass for bar-room gassing."

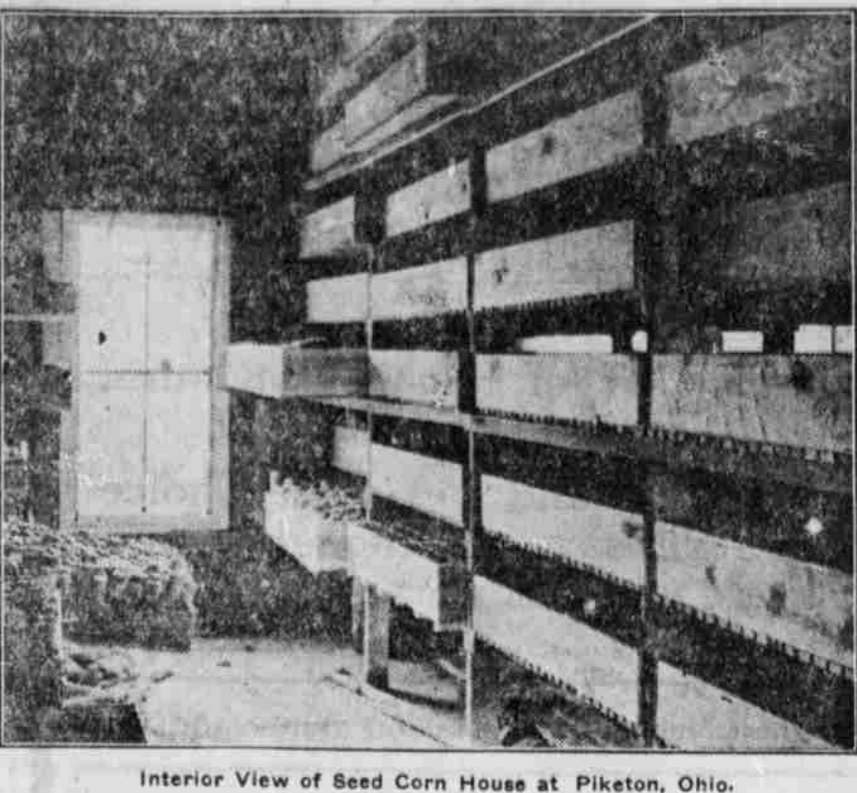
"Very well," said the colonel, taking the shortest way out of the difficulty. "We will excuse the first offense."

"Yes, sir!" said the sergeant mechanically as he released his grip of the offender. "We had two anarchists in my company in Africa," he observed in loyal agreement with orders. "They fought like devils. The only trouble was to keep them from shooting innocent natives for sport."

Stransky's collar was still crumpled on the nape of his neck. He remained stock-still, staring down the bridge of his nose. For a full minute he did not vouchsafe so much as a glance upward over the change in his fortunes. Then he looked around at Lanstron gloweringly.

"I know who you are!" he said. "You were born in the purple. You have had education, opportunity, position—everything that you and your kind want to keep for your kind. You are smarter than the others. You would hang a man with spider webs instead of hemp. But I won't fight for you. No, I won't!"

PROFITABLE SEED-CORN DRY HOUSE PLAN



Interior View of Seed Corn House at Piketon, Ohio.

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture.)

The profits to be derived from the good preservation of seed corn have been put to practical tests by the office of corn investigations of the United States Department of Agriculture. The cuts show a building constructed solely for the purpose of preserving seed corn. It has a concrete basement and flue. Warm air passes from the basement through openings in the floor, ascends through the corn, and escapes through ventilators.

This house was constructed at a cost of \$500, and in one year returned to the farm \$1,500 in profit, due to a five-bushel increase average yield on 740 acres planted with seed corn dried and stored in it. These figures were obtained as the result of 17 separate tests. The owner of the farm on which this test was made was not fully satisfied with it because it was made on small plots, and he therefore made more extensive tests. At corn-gathering time in November he selected two bushels of seed, placing one bushel in a crib and the other bushel in the seed-corn dry house. In the spring with a two-row planter he planted four rows 1,280 feet long and 3½ feet apart with the seed kept in the dry house; then four rows with the seed kept in the crib. This he repeated seven times, making eight tests in all in which four rows planted with one lot of seed were compared with the adjoining four rows planted with the other lot of seed. At harvest time four rows yielded a wagon load of ears, which constituted a weighing. From the seed kept in the crib there were produced 15,255 pounds, while from seed kept in dry

from nearly 90 degrees F. to 60 degrees F. in about three hours. Unstirred milk did not reach the lower temperature until four hours and fifteen minutes had elapsed. The stirring was done at intervals of fifteen minutes. A period of even three hours, however, is regarded as too long time to cool milk, and the specialists of the department consider that the tests demonstrate the necessity of employing some suitable form of milk cooler that is more efficient than running well water. Where ice is plentiful it is easy to cool the milk to as low as 40 degrees F. by running it over some form of cooler around which cracked ice or a mixture of ice and salt is packed.

To Improve the Farm Egg of the Middle West.

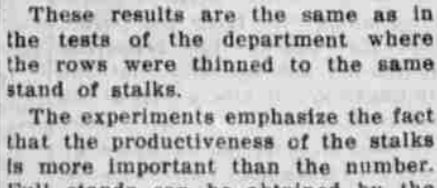
If the farmer, the country merchant and cash buyer, the railroad and the car-lot shipper will give special attention to certain points in the marketing and handling of eggs in the middle West, the farm egg of that section may be greatly improved, according to the United States Department of Agriculture.

Here are some suggestions which each individual factor in the process may follow with profit to the whole:

- ### Suggestions for the Farmer.
1. Improve your poultry stock.
 2. Keep one of the general-purpose breeds, such as the Plymouth Rock, Wyandotte, Orpington or Rhode Island Red.
 3. Provide one clean, dry, vermin-free nest for every four or five hens.
 4. Conclude all hatching by June 1 and sell or confine male birds during the remainder of the summer.
 5. Gather eggs once daily during ordinary times and twice daily during hot or rainy weather.
 6. In summer place eggs as soon as gathered in a cool, dry room.
 7. Use all small and dirty eggs at home.
 8. Market eggs frequently, twice a week if possible, during the summer.
 9. In taking eggs to market protect them from the sun's rays.
 10. In selling, insist that the transaction be on a quality basis, for if care has been given the eggs, this system will yield more money to the producer.

- ### Suggestions for the Country Merchant and Cash Buyer.
1. Candle and buy on a quality basis.
 2. Allow the farmer to see you candle his eggs.
 3. Pack carefully in strong, clean cases and fillers.
 4. Do not keep eggs in a musty cellar or near oil barrels or other odorous merchandise.
 5. Ship daily during warm weather.
- ### Suggestions to the Railroad.
1. Provide a covered portion of station platform where cases of eggs can be stacked, and see that the agent stacks them there.
 2. Provide refrigeration for the eggs on the local freight.
 3. Where refrigerator cars are used on local freights, see that the doors are kept closed when not loading.
 4. If refrigeration cannot be supplied, provide stock cars for this purpose during the summer.
 5. Where box cars are used for eggs do not allow freight which may hurt their quality, such as oil barrels, to be loaded in the same car.
- ### Suggestions for the Car-Lot Shipper.
1. Buy strictly on a quality basis.
 2. Encourage the smaller buyers to trade on a quality basis.
 3. Join the State Car-Lot Shippers' association.
 4. Co-operate with other shippers and with the state officials in bringing about this system of buying.
 5. Keep the subject agitated and before the people; in other words, educate them.

Seed Corn House at Piketon, Ohio.



Seed Corn House at Piketon, Ohio.

house there were produced 16,255 pounds. Each row of the latter produced uniformly more than each row of the former.

These results are the same as in the tests of the department where the rows were thinned to the same stand of stalks.

The experiments emphasize the fact that the productiveness of the stalks is more important than the number. Full stands can be obtained by the heavy planting of weak seed. Good yields cannot be obtained in this way. The most expensive seed to plant is that from which a stand of stalks can be obtained but from which a good yield cannot be obtained. The stand of stalks bears the same relation to the grain yield as the number of trees in an orchard bears to the amount of fruit produced. Productivity as well as number must be considered.

Stirring Milk to Cool it.

The importance of stirring milk while being cooled has been demonstrated in experiments conducted by the United States Department of Agriculture. When the cans of milk are merely set in cold water the cooling process is very slow, much too slow, in fact, to be at all satisfactory to a progressive dairyman. In particular the level of the water is hardly affected at all. The cold milk, being heavier than the warm, will remain at the bottom of the can, while the warmer and lighter milk stays at the top. Ultimately, of course, the entire canful will acquire the same temperature, but this will require such a long period of time that for practical purposes stirring is now regarded as indispensable.

In one experiment it was found that the milk at the top of the can above the level of the surrounding water was from five to six degrees warmer than the rest of the canful. In consequence, bacteria developed at a higher rate at the top. When the milk became mixed later the increased number of the bacteria in the warmer portion resulted in hastening the souring of the entire canful.

When the water in the cooling tank was 50 degrees F. the temperature of the milk was reduced by stirring

TAKES HIS REST INDOORS

Hubby Has Given Up His Porch Bunk and Wifey is at a Loss to Understand Why.

A man living on the West side has not been feeling very well recently, and after much urging from the wife consented to sleep in a couch hammock on the rear porch of the home. The first night his wife made up a nice little bunk for him in the hammock, and in a few minutes he was sound asleep.

He had slept about an hour when he was awakened by his anxious wife, who came out to see if he was sleeping all right. Being assured that sleep and the man were boom friends, the wife withdrew and once more the man slept. This time he rested a little over an hour before his wife once more appeared on the scene and anxiously inquired how hubby was sleeping. Hubby was a little sore by this time over being aroused from a good solid sleep twice, and curtly informed the wife that he was doing all that could be expected in the sleep line. Wifey again retired into the house, and hubby was soon snoring and enjoying his rest.

"Why stood it as long as she could, but shortly before midnight she again thumped out onto the rear piazza and, after rousing hubby from his sleep for the third time, sweetly inquired if he was sleeping all right. Hubby didn't offer any explanation or design to reply, but, crawling out of the hammock, betook himself to his bedroom, locked the door, tumbled into his bed and managed to finish the night without any further inquiries as to his ability to sleep. Now he refuses to try the out-of-door sleeping stunt and wifey says she can't understand why, because she just knows it will do him a world of good."—Worcester Post.

TOOK AWAY HIS APPETITE

Lover of Mince Pie Had Decided Objection to Sharing the Delicacy With Restaurant Cat.

Until recently Detective Sergeant Tim Bailey was a lover of mince pie. Today if anyone offered him a bakery full of mince pies he would turn on his heel and do a quick counter-march. Figuratively he has had his fill of the good old pastry.

At dinner time one day not long ago Bailey went into a little restaurant near the Hall of Justice. "Three boiled eggs, a cup of Java and a 12 by 14 wedge of mince pie," he told the waiter.

Bailey polished off the eggs and coffee in great shape, and then attacked the pie. He had just begun when a big black cat that had been reposing on the counter a few feet away awoke, stretched, struck at a vagrant fly with a chubby paw, and then leaped into the display window of the place. The window was laden with delicacies to allure the hungry passerby.

The first thing that Tabby made for was the remains of the pie that had been cut for Bailey. Kite's first bite was Bailey's last. He dropped his fork with a bang, reached for his hat and rushed on to the counter.

"Saw-sy," he cried, "what are you running here, a restaurant or a kennel club?" He paid his bill, and was away down the street before the dazed keeper of the place could catch his breath.—New York Times.

Columbia's badge is a lion, and in the intercollegiate they certainly ro'd like a lion?—New York American.

PICKED UP IN THE ORCHARD

Bad Packing or Unstable Conditions in City Storehouses Given as Reason for High Price.

One reason why the retail price of fruit is so high that at least one-third of the entire crop rots either in the hands of the wholesale or retail dealers, and this is due to bad packing or unstable conditions in the city storehouses.

If you have a bit of rocky land not too steep, and which has lain idle for years, you may have a valuable apple-tree site. It would not cost much to try it.

Do not be afraid to put plenty of stable manure upon the orchard.

Wood ashes applied to stiff clay soils have a fine effect upon orchard lands.

It is a mistake to cultivate the orchard late in the fall as it keeps the sap running and the trees are apt to be injured by early cold weather.

Trees exposed to the direct rays of the sun on a hillside should be protected or they are likely to be injured by sun scald.