



UNDER FIRE

BY RICHARD PARKER
BASED ON THE DRAMA
OF ROY COOPER, MEGRUE
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COMPILED BY THE MANAGER, 'DAKOTA COUNTY HERALD'

This is a story of the European war. It is a tale of spies—of love and intrigue among them; of patriotism and sacrifice; of war's horrors and demands. It is not a plea for preparedness or for anything else. The great conflict across the water will produce some great literature—such as the American Civil war and the Franco-Prussian war and the Napoleonic war produced—and much trash. Metropolitan critics unite in saying that "Under Fire" makes a bid for lasting popularity. Read it and judge for yourself.

CHAPTER I.

Just a Hint of Scandal.

George Wagstaff sauntered into Miss Ethel Willoughby's sitting room, attired in the daintiest and fluffiest of summer costumes. George was the daughter of Sir George Wagstaff of the British admiralty. She found the room deserted, except for her father's admiral butler, who was at the moment in the act of placing a tea-tray upon Miss Willoughby's table.

"Oh, Brewster—is Miss Willoughby in?" she inquired.

The correct Brewster immediately straightened himself up in his best manner.

"No, miss! I think not," he replied. "I dare say Ethel'll be here directly," she said—to herself as much as to the butler. "I'll wait."

"Yes, miss!" Brewster acquiesced. And with a bow of the utmost correctness he went out, closing the doors softly behind him.

George Wagstaff stood idly looking out of the window upon the view of the Thames. It was an August afternoon and the river shimmered alluringly in the slanting sunlight. But Ethel had asked her to meet a few friends; and George was fond enough of Miss Willoughby not to be repentant for having foregone the delights of a perfect summer evening out of doors. As she stood there in the window her governess entered.

"Oh! Hello, George! Am I late or are you early?" Miss Willoughby called as she saw that one of her guests was already waiting.

"Both!" said George with a smile. "I did wait two minutes with you before the others came. May I bother you now?"

"Of course!" the older girl replied. "But it's no bother," she assured her. She sat down on one end of a long settee and began to remove her gloves; whereupon her younger charge perched herself at the other end of the seat and regarded her admiringly. Miss Willoughby's fair hair had just the hint of red in it that was at the same time George's despair and delight.

And Ethel was far enough past the schoolgirl age to have lost that angularity which George still possessed—and loathed. As for coloring, they both showed the healthy glow which is the distinguishing mark of young Englishwomen of the upper class.

"You see," said George, "I'm afraid I'm going to be awfully presumptuous—"

"Nonsense!" Ethel interrupted. "You couldn't be that when you and your father have been so very good to me. . . . Come on! Out with it!"

It was true that Ethel Willoughby felt that she was deeply in the debt of the Wagstaffs—both father and daughter. Before entering their household as George's governess she had known them upon a footing of social equality. But fortune had frowned upon her. And when circumstances had become most pressing Sir George had come to her relief with the proposal that she undertake the guidance of his somewhat difficult daughter. It was not that George was greatly different from other girls of the impressionable age. But Sir George's public duties left him little time to devote to the upbringing of his motherless child. And it had struck him that Ethel Willoughby was a person who at the same time would be able to sympathize with George's impulses and direct them into the proper channels.

"What's on your mind, George?" Miss Willoughby asked again, as the girl still hesitated.

"It's about your past," George began in a deadly seriousness.

Ethel laughed at her tragic manner. "Have I—a past?" she inquired lightly.

But the romantic George was not to be diverted from her mood.

"That's just the question," she commented. "You know I shouldn't mind it in the least if you had. I believe in people living their own lives, in their own way." George prided herself that she was "advanced." She considered the ordinary insular attitude toward what is termed morality to be stodgy and Victorian. Indeed, she quite fancied the more free-and-easy continental view of life.

"What on earth are you talking about?" Ethel demanded. If the truth were known, she felt the least bit uncomfortable beneath the frank stare of her young friend.

"You remember a month ago, when you said you went to Brighton?" George continued relentlessly.

"When I said I went to Brighton? When I went to Brighton," Miss Willoughby corrected her coldly.

But the chill of her remark was lost upon her patient cross-examiner. George was too intent upon uncovering the romance that she thought she had stumbled upon to be so easily discouraged.

"Well, today at lunch Hugh Middleton said you couldn't have been in Brighton that week—" She paused to watch the effect of her bombshell.

"Did he? Really?" Miss Willoughby replied with well-feigned indifference. "And beneath her cold calm her heart was beating furiously. She felt for all the world like some wild thing, trapped, at bay. And she turned away to hide the alarm that she feared must reveal itself in her face."

"Yes! He was in Paris, and—" "Paris?" Ethel echoed with a faint start.

Youth is ever cruel; and George had no thought of sparing her companion. Her sole idea was that if Ethel were hiding some secret liaison she wanted to share the romance with her.

"Yes!" she went on relentlessly. "And he saw you there twice that week, and both times with Henry Streetman."

"But that's impossible!" Ethel protested.

"But Mr. Middleton seemed very positive," the younger girl said somewhat doubtfully.

"It's too absurd!" Ethel cried, forcing a laugh. "I was at Brighton, as I can very easily prove."

"Well—that's settled!" George exclaimed, with an air of relief in spite of her hopes. Her feelings had, as a matter of fact, been somewhat complex. "Of course I'd only admire you for being brave enough to defy the conventions. But father wouldn't—"

"But I haven't defied conventions," Ethel insisted, placing both her hands over George's as if to emphasize the truth of her statement.

"Oh, I don't care if you have," Sir George's daughter told her coolly.

"But you ought to care," Ethel protested. "And as your governess I cannot condone such an attitude on your part. Really, George, stupid as conventions may appear sometimes, nevertheless there is a bitter penalty exacted from people who break them."

Miss Wagstaff rose abruptly, as if impatient with the views of her governess; and, crossing the room, she seated herself nonchalantly upon the arm of a chair that was drawn up at one side of the tea table.

"Oh, pooh!" she exclaimed. "All that narrow-mindedness is old-fashioned."

The older girl regarded her reprovingly.

"What silly book have you been reading?" she inquired. After her advent into the Wagstaff home it had not taken her long to discover that George's literary tastes had developed along lines that would scarcely have met with Sir George's approval.

Miss George did not even deign to reply to Ethel's question. They had had numerous discussions—more or less heated—upon the subject of her reading, which George regarded as both footless and absurd. She had openly rebelled at reading the books that Ethel recommended to her. Jane Austen and Mrs. Gaskell were, in her opinion, hopelessly behind the times.

"I'm glad you haven't had an affair with Henry Streetman," the younger girl remarked. "I don't like him."

"Don't you?" said Ethel, relieved that George was at last convinced that her suspicions were groundless.

"No! Every time he comes into the room my back sort of goes up, just like Rowdy when he sees a cat." Rowdy was George's Scotch terrier, whose antipathy to cats was proverbial.

"Mr. Streetman has been very kind to me," her governess observed.

"Oh, don't defend him!" George cried impatiently. "I know inside that you agree with me."

Miss Willoughby did not care to continue the discussion. And with an air of dismissing both Mr. Streetman and her relations with him from her own mind as well as George's, she rose from the wide seat, and as she glanced at her watch exclaimed with surprise:

"Heavens! It's after five. I must fuss up a bit for the party."

But George would not be put off so easily.

"Well, forewarned is forearmed," she said sententially. It was clear that she did not intend to be squelched like a child. If Henry Streetman were still in her mind, she saw no reason why she should dissemble in order to please Ethel or anybody else.

"There's nothing to be forewarned about," Miss Willoughby observed, as she paused at the door that opened into her boudoir. "You surely have no right to put such a construction upon my acquaintance with Mr. Streetman. I can't let you say things of this sort

to me. It's not fair to me. It's not even fair to yourself."

While she was speaking the door opened and Brewster, the butler, stepped into the room.

"Mr. Streetman is calling," he announced in well-modulated tones.

"Oh, show him up!" Miss Willoughby ordered. And as soon as Brewster had vanished she shot a swift smile at her companion. "Speak of the devil—" she said good-naturedly.

"Oh, he isn't the devil," George replied. "More of a snake, I think." There was certainly no reason to doubt her extreme dislike of the gentleman who was at that moment waiting below.

Ethel's hand was on the doorknob; but she hesitated long enough to say to George:

"I won't be five minutes. Stay and amuse him—there's a good girl!"

"Not I!" Miss George declared. "If he wants to be amused he can read Punch." And as she spoke she slipped off her perch on the chair-arm and started for the door through which Brewster had disappeared.

"Don't be rude to him, please, George!" Miss Willoughby entreated. She knew that George and Mr. Streetman must meet; and she could not refrain from trying to smooth the way for her guest.

"Oh, I'll be polite enough—in my own way," George replied grimly. She was well aware that she was an infant terrible; and she often took a mischievous delight in shocking people by some unconventionality.

Ethel Willoughby had already closed her boudoir door behind her; but George had not yet reached the hall before Brewster returned to usher in the caller, who was close upon his heels.

Henry Streetman, handsome, well-groomed, slightly foreign in appearance, bowed with extreme affability as he came face to face with George Wagstaff.

But George was decidedly cold to him. She could be frigidly haughty when she chose.

"How do you do?" she said, hardly pausing in her hasty exit from his distasteful presence. "Ethel's dressing," she told him hurriedly. "She'll be in in a minute. Goodbye!" And holding up her head in undisguised scorn, she promptly left Streetman to his own devices.

CHAPTER II.

For the Fatherland.

Henry Streetman turned and stared after George with raised eyebrows. A blind man could not have mistaken the animosity that the girl felt toward him. But that did not trouble Henry Streetman. He was not a person whose feelings were easily hurt.

He had hardly strolled to the center of the room when the butler reappeared and paused just inside the double doors that led into the passage.

"Close those doors!" Streetman commanded, quite as if he, and not Sir George Wagstaff, were Brewster's master. And while Brewster promptly

executed his order, Streetman himself stole quickly to the door that led, as he knew, to Miss Willoughby's dressing room. He stood there, silent, for a few moments, listening. And then he returned to the waiting butler.

"What news, Herr Roeder?" he inquired.

"Nothing, mein Herr!" Under Streetman's brisk questioning the man had suddenly become metamorphosed. His manner of a most correct English butler had fallen off him like a cloak. And now he saluted his interrogator in a fashion unmistakably military—and German, at that. It was as if the fellow had two personalities.

Streetman came nearer to the fellow and bent his cold eyes upon him.

"You have searched Sir George's desk?" he demanded.

"I have searched everywhere," Brewster—or Roeder—declared, still standing at attention. An onlooker could not have mistaken the fact that Streetman was the butler's superior in rank. "But I can find no trace of any papers about the navy such as you described."

"Have you tried his office?" his confederate ventured.

Henry Streetman nodded.

"Without result?" he replied, some-

what gloomily. "But somewhere he must have a copy of the admiralty instructions to the fleet. These would be in his department; and we must know at once what orders have been given to the ships at Spithead—where they are going when this review is over."

The spy, Roeder, saluted again. "I have done my best," he said apologetically.

"I am sure you have," Streetman replied. "We know the Wilhelmstrasse does not lightly overlook stupidity in one of its servants," he observed grimly. And then he motioned toward the double doors that led into the hall. "See if anyone's coming," he said.

Roeder—or Brewster—opened the doors and peered down the length of the passage.

"No one is in sight; and I hear nothing," he reported.

"Now look that door!" Streetman commanded, pointing toward the one behind which he knew that Miss Willoughby must be dressing.

The butler regarded him in alarm. "Pardon, mein Herr—but is it safe?" he ventured. "She is a woman—"

"Do not be alarmed," Streetman reassured him. "Miss Willoughby is easily handled. She believes that I work for the French secret service."

"Then she is a fool," his subordinate declared.

"No, no!" Streetman protested. "We must not criticize the tools that serve us." And as he spoke he went to the telephone in a corner of the room. Picking up the instrument, he paused and turned to the butler with a look of amusement. "Sir George Wagstaff—Sir George of his majesty's navy—would be rather surprised if he knew that from his house we were communicating with our friends, the Germans," he observed.

"Rather!" his henchman responded, with a gleam of humor in his eyes.

"Now look that door!" Streetman ordered once more. "And now to report to headquarters again!" he exclaimed, when the butler had turned the key noiselessly in Miss Willoughby's door. "Hello! City, 4225!" he said in a low but distinct voice.

Meanwhile the butler hovered near by.

"You think, mein Herr, there will be war?" he asked respectfully.

"I do not know. But we are ready. And if war does come, it will be Germany's hour—the day at last!" He turned to the telephone once more, and began speaking into the transmitter. "Hello! City, 4225? Hello! Are you there? Who is speaking? . . . Hello! Twenty-six fourteen? . . . Hello! I am thirteen seventeen," he said, giving the number by which he was known in the German secret service. "Yes! We have no news of the English fleet; we have tried everything. . . . Very well! Goodbye!"

He put down the instrument, and a look of annoyance as well as perplexity was upon his face as he wheeled about.

"What is it, mein Herr?" his companion asked in an anxious voice. "Is it bad news?" He had long worked in conjunction with Streetman, and he was quick to detect signs of trouble upon him.

"They say they must know tonight, without fail, the destination of the English fleet," Streetman replied. . . . He cast a quick glance toward Ethel Willoughby's boudoir. "So, Miss Willoughby, you have some work to do!" he muttered, to himself more than to his confederate. "Now, unlock that door!" he ordered. "Ah! that is done, and we were not interrupted," he said in a relieved voice, when the deft Brewster had once more succeeded in turning the key silently in the lock. To expedite his prowlings about the house at all hours of the day or night, Sir George's butler had seen to it that such things as hinges and locks—whether upon doors or desks—were well oiled. It was his genius for details of that sort that had led to his assignment to his present duty.

Henry Streetman dropped upon Miss Willoughby's settee in an attitude of relaxation that revealed somewhat the marvelous strain which attends the performance of exploits inseparable from his profession.

"Dangerous work, eh, Herr Roeder? And poor pay!" he vouchsafed in a sudden burst of good-fellowship. For the moment he seemed almost human.

Herr Roeder pulled himself together stiffly.

"It is not for the money that I am here," he answered proudly. "It is for the Fatherland!" Despite the guarded tones in which he spoke, there was an earnestness born of sincere patriotism that made his words ring convincingly. One look at the man's face, aflame with an almost fanatic zeal, showed him to be the sort to whom a country may well trust her secrets.

There is a hint that young George Wagstaff, hating the sight of Streetman, suspects him instinctively and has watched him and the butler. What do you say?

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

She Couldn't Have It.

A small boy who was sitting next to a very haughty woman in a crowded car kept sniffling in a most annoying manner. At last the lady could bear it no longer and turned to the lad. "Boy, have you got a handkerchief?" she demanded.

The small boy looked at her for a few seconds, and then, in a dignified tone, came the answer: "Yes, I've, but I don't lend it to strangers."—London Chronicle

The Wheat Yield Tells the Story

of Western Canada's Rapid Progress

The heavy crops in Western Canada have caused new records to be made in the handling of grains by railroads. For, while the movement of these heavy shipments has been wonderfully rapid, the resources of the different roads, despite enlarged equipments and increased facilities, have been strained as never before, and previous records have thus been broken in all directions.

The largest Canadian wheat shipments through New York ever known are reported for the period up to October 15th, upwards of four and a quarter million bushels being exported in less than six weeks, and this was but the overflow of shipments to Montreal, through which point shipments were much larger than to New York.

Yields as high as 60 bushels of wheat per acre are reported from all parts of the country; while yields of 45 bushels per acre are common. Thousands of American farmers have taken part in this wonderful production. Land prices are still low and free homestead lands are easily secured in good localities, convenient to churches, schools, markets, railways, etc.

There is no war tax on land and no conscription. Write for illustrated pamphlet, reduced railroad rates and other information to Superintendent Immigration, Ottawa, Canada, or

J. M. MacLachlan, Drawer 197, Watertown, S. D.; R. A. Garrett, 311 Jackson St., St. Paul, Minn. Canadian Government Agents

FLAG SEEN IN THE CLOUDS

Superstitious in Pennsylvania Town Believed to Omen Fortelling War's Approach.

The spectacle of the American flag depicted in its natural colors vividly on low, overhanging clouds one night caused a sensation among superstitious people of Pottsville, Pa., many of whom considered the national emblem in the heavens to be an omen of approaching war.

Courthouse officials have been keeping a searchlight trained upon a big flag flying from a staff on the top of the courthouse, and believe the unusual spectacle was the reflection of the colors of the flag on the low-lying clouds.

Saved an Empress.

With the filing of the will of Mrs. Sarah Gray Crane in the Surrogate's court a trust fund of \$75,000 became available for the trustees of Amherst college. Dr. Edward A. Crane, her husband, had left the bulk of his estate in trust for the benefit of his widow. After her death it was to go to Amherst. How Doctor Crane saved the life of Empress Eugenie from a Paris mob of September 4, 1870, was told in the will. He planned the secret flight of the empress from Paris to Deauville when the republic was proclaimed after the news of the Sedan surrender. He arranged passage on Lord Burgoyne's yacht and took her to England. The empress rewarded Doctor Crane with a handsome pearl.—New York Times.

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Making More Wood Flour.

One of the new industries increased by the European war is the manufacture of wood flour in the United States. Last month over 20,000 tons valued at \$300,000 was manufactured chiefly in small mills which are scattered over the country from Maine to California. The flour is used in the manufacture of linoleums as a substitute for the cork imported from Spain before the war, and also enters largely into the composition of some of the heavier and handsomer wall papers. Wood flour is made from sawdust and other waste lumber which until a few years ago was burned at most American sawmills.

Aerial Insurance.

A German insurance company has organized a department of aerial insurance. This company is issuing policies covering damage to all property, real or movable, caused by explosive bodies or other objects thrown or falling from flying machines or caused by airships or aeroplanes themselves in making voluntary or involuntary landings, or parts thereof falling from them. The policies, however, make no provision for injury to or loss of life. It is said that numerous air raids over German cities and towns near the battle fronts, particularly in the West, have caused a demand for such policies.

Potash in Texas.

Borings in Texas to a depth of about 900 feet discovered potash salts in thick beds of salt. Some of the samples obtained were bright salmon red, resembling the Strassfurt carnalite and analyzing about 14 per cent potassium chloride. This was in a bed overlying three other salt beds with a total thickness of several hundred feet. A large basin is indicated.

Already Provided.

The minister was shaking hands with a new member of his congregation, a girl fresh from Sweden, and said, cordially, "I would like to know your address, so I can call on you."

"Oh," said the girl innocently, "I haf a man."

There is nothing so likely to make a man economize as the lack of money.

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Taken at His Word.

A commercial traveler on the first trip called upon a well-known chemist. He was nervous as he put his hand in his pocket and drew out a card.

"I represent that concern," said he. "You are fortunate," replied the chemist.

The traveler was encouraged.

"I think so, sir," he said, "and the chemist who trades with us is even more so. My firm has the finest line of cosmetics in the world."

"I shouldn't have thought it," slowly responded the man of medicines. "Her complexion looks natural." And he handed back the photograph which the young man had given him in mistake. The traveler didn't wait for his order.

Why, Thomas!

"Why is it that the telephone operators are all women?" Mrs. Thomas asked her husband.

"Well," answered Mr. Thomas, "the managers of the telephone exchanges are aware that no class of people work so faithfully as those who are in love with their job; and they know the women love their work at the switchboard."

"What is the work of a telephone operator?" Mrs. Thomas further inquired.

"Talking," answered Mr. Thomas.

Sleepy Philadelphia.

Church—I see that Philadelphia produces yearly about 50,000,000 yards of carpets.

Gotham—And there's even a nap to them.

Does Coffee Disagree?

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