The Last Shot

FREDERICK PALMER

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SYNOPSIS.

At their home on the frontier between the Browns and Grays Marta Gailand and her mother, entertaining Colonel Westerling of the Grays, see Captain Lanstron, etail intelligence officer of the Browns, injured by a fail in his aeroplane. Ten years larer. Westerling, nominal vice but real chief of staff, reinforces Bouth La Tir, meditates on war, and speculates on the comparative ages of himself and Marta, who is visiting in the Gray capital. Westerling calls on Marta. She tells him of her isaching 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. On the march with the 53d of the Browns Private Stransky, anarchist, decries war and played out patriotism and is placed under arrest Colonel Lanstron everhearing, begs him off. At their home on the frontier between

CHAPTER IV-Continued.

Then impulse broke through the restraint that seemed to characterize the Lanstron of thirty-five. The Lanstron of twenty-five, who had met catastrophe because he was "woollooked as if it had been trained to do Thus the old sergeant had seen a general remonstrate with a brave veteran Africa. The old colonel gasped at such subversion of the dignity of rank. But young Dellarme, watching with familiarity in the act. It all depended on how such a thing was done, he was thinking.

"We all have minutes when we are more or less anarchists," said Lan- flight to La Tir. stron in the human appeal of one man to another. "But we don't want to be a hand mashed up for a mistake that tonight before you act. Then, if you are of the same opinion, go to the colonel and tell him so. Come, why not?" "All right, sir, you're so decent

Hep-hep-hep! The regiment started

his place in the ranks.

keeping at his grandson's side. "Makes me feel young again, but it's with their horses' bits a jingling. Times yes, sir, hang and draw him!

Lanstron watched the marching column for a time.

"Hep-hep-hep! It's the brown of the Infantry that counts in the end," he He's all man!"

Then his livening glance swept the pheric infinity, kept growing in size until it took the form of the wings with which man flies. The plane volthe landscape for a few seconds before precision.

"Bully for you, Etzel!" Lanstron aeroplane station. "You belong in the corps. We shall not let you return to cool head and you'd charge a church kower if that were the orders."

CHAPTER V.

A Sunday Morning Call.

As a boy, Arthur Lanstron had persisted in being an exception to the induences of both heredity and environment. Though his father and both grandfathers were officers who believed theirs to be the true gentleman's profession, he had preferred any kind of mechanical toy to arranging the most gayly painted tin soldiers in formation on the nursery Moor; 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 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 re-

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

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

the heresy. "It's drilling a few hours a day, then mothing 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 semething nobody wants to happen. Now, if you manufacture comething, why, you see wool come put cloth, steel come out an automobile. If you build a bridge you see it your results every day; you see your small hand which must have lately Galland is coming!"

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 see 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 gathering," asserted himself. He put made Lanstron both chief of intellihis hand on Stransky's shoulder. It gence and chief aerostatic officer. was a strong though slim hand that | Young Colonel Lanstron's was the duty of gaining the secrets of the Gray the work of two hands in the process staff and keeping those of the Brown of its owner's own transformation, and organizing up-to-the-moment efficlency in the new forces of the air.

He had remarked truly enough that who had been guilty of bad conduct in the injury to his left hand served as a better reminder against the folly of wool-gathering than a string, even a He saw the army going to the devil. large red string, tied around his finger. Thanks to skillful surgery, the eager curlosity, was sensible of no fingers, incapable of spreading much, were yet serviceable and had a firm grip of the wheel as he rose from the aeroplane station on the Sunday morning after Marta's return home for a

He knew the pattern weaving under his feet as one knows that of his own judged by one of those minutes. I got garden from an overlooking window. Every detail of the staff map, ravines, took only a second. Think this over 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. bout it!" grumbled Stransky, taking The line was drawn in his brain.

Now that Lanstron was the organizer of the aviation corps his own on its way, with Grandfather Fragini flights were rare. Mostly they were made to La Tir. His visits to Marta were his holidays. All the time that darned solemn beside the Hussars, she was absent on her journey around the world they had corresponded. Her have certainly changed-officers' letters, so revealing of herself and her hands in their pockets, saying 'if you peculiar angles of observation, formed don't mind to a man that's insulted a bundle sacredly preserved. Her the flag! Kicking ain't good enough | mother's joking reference about her for that traitor! Ought to hang him- girlish resolution not to marry a soldier often recurred 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 mused. "I liked that wall-eyed giant. pocket. He always carried it there, as if it were literally sewn in place. In moments of emotion the scarred beavens inquiringly. A speck in the nerves would twitch as the telltale of blue, far away in the realms of atmos- 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 planed down with steady swiftness, deserted. In response to his ring a till its racing shadow lay large over maid came to the open door. Her face was sad, with a beauty that had It rose again with beautiful ease and prematurely faded. But it lighted pleasurably in recognition. Her hair was thick and tawny, lying low over shought, as he started back to the the brow; her eyes were a softly luminous brown and her full lips sensitive and yielding. Lanstron, an intiyour regiment for a while. You've a mate 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 usnever 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 would be cruel? Oh, very well, then we will let her stay!"

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

He was saying that he would stroll own being. "The trial wears on you! 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 He shifted his gaze from the bush world where the stork had left her. rising little by little. You're getting made a curtesy. Lanstron shook a and suddenly broke off with: "Miss nificance. He was absent, for it was

been on intimate terms with sugar or "How do you do, flying soldier man?" chirruped Clarissa Elleen. It was evi-

dent that she held Lanstron in high favor.

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

Clarisea 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 primly uttered; indeed, she repeated it four or five times in proof f 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 luto 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 most that surrounded the castle had been filled in. The green of rows of grape vines lay against the background of a mat of lvy 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 clased 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!" Lanetron called softly. 'Hello!" he called louder and yet

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



A Speck in the Blue Far Away.

ran at his feet. Around the corner of the wall, in his workman's Sunday clothes of black, but wearing his old thoughtfully.

As he turned away he looked up, and a glance of definite and unfaltering 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 pearer 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

gave a nervous twitch as if it held something alive and distinct from his 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-Iwhich he still pretended to examine

Lanstron started toward the steps hat Marta was ascending. She moved him," Lanstron said. eisurely, 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 plans! And why? You haven't an-

aw him, and quickened her pace.

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

chool this morning, the largest class lisarmament already in progress when ou return to headquarters. We're irsome day.

"So you put on your war-paint!"

hlef from her belt and passed it to im. "Show that you know how to be seful!

rate care.

"Heavens! You even have some on steps, asking her to follow. our ear and some on your hair; but 'il leave it on your hair; it's rather beoming. There you are!" he concluded. "Of my hair, too!"

"Very well. I always obey orders." "I oughtn't to have asked you to do at all!" she exclaimed with a sudden change of manner as they started their faces. up to the house. "But a habit of orgot. I oughtn't even to have shaken at the height of your chin!" hands with you!'

"Marta! What now, Marta?" he

He had known her in reproach, in anger, in laughing mockery, in militant seriousness, but never before like | hollow wood, which was followed, as this. The pain and indignation in her eyes came not from the sheer hurt of stron. Pressing the button, a panel 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 real-

"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 pahetically 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

Ater 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 high hedges on either side around a statue

"Now!" exclaimed Marta narrowly. to be a man of most sensitive hearing. covered. 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 flowers, as a part of this monstrous game of trickery and lies that you are play-

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. straw hat, appeared Feller, the gar- She did not see how his left hand was dener. He paused to examine a rose twitching and how he stilled its movebush and Lanstron regarded him | ment 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 throb of his whole body and raised a face white with appeal.

"Marta!" He was speaking to a profile, very sensitive and yet like ivory. T've no excuse for such an abuse of hospitality except the obsession of a loathsome work that some man must do and I was set to do. My God, Marta! 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 ex-

claimed, turning away. "Yes, of those first," he replied. "And, Marta, I did not tell you why Feller was here becauce he did not

want me to. shoulders all that time?" CHAPTER VI.

A Crisis Within a Crisis.

Following the path to the tower leisurely, they had reached the tower. Feller's door was open. Marta looked into the room, finding in the neat arrangement of its furniture a new sigthe dinner hour.

"On my recommendation you took

'Yes, on yours, Lanny, on a friend's! You"-she put a cold emphasis on the word--'you wanted him here for your swered that yet. What purpose of the "Hello, stranger!" she called as she, war game does he serve in our garden?

His look pleaded for patience, while he tried to smile, which was rather difficult in face of her attitude.

"Not altogether in the garden; part-"We had a grand session of the ly in the tower," he replied. "You are to be in the whole secret and in such a ver!" she said. "And the points we way as to make my temptation clear, I cored off you soldlers! You'll find hope. First, I think you ought to see the setting. Let us go in."

Impelled by a curiosity that Lanesistible, or at least," she added, with stron's manner accentuated, she enflash of intensity, "we're going to be tered the room. Apparently Lanstron was familiar with the premises. Passing through the sitting-room into the "It must be the pollen from the hy- room adjoining, where Feller stored rangeas!" She flicked her handker- his tools, he opened a door that gave on to the circular stone steps leading down into the dungeon tunnel.

"I think we had better have a light," He performed the task with delib he said, and when he had fetched one from the bedchamber he descended the

> They were in a passage six feet in height and about three feet broad, which seemed to lead on indefinitely into clammy darkness. The dewy walls sparkled in fantastic and ghostly iridescence under the rays from the lantern. The dank air lay moist against

"This is far enough." He paused friendship, a habit of liking to believe and raised the lantern. With its light n one's friends, was uppermost. I full in her face, she blinked. "There,

She noted a metal button painted gray, set at the side of one of the stones of the wall, which looked unreal. She struck the stone with her knuckles and it gave out the sound of an echo, by a little laugh from Lana wound but from the burt of its door flew open, revealing a telephone mouthpiece and receiver set in the

> "Like a detective play!" were the first words that sprang to her lips. "Well?" As she faced around her eyes glittered in the lantern rays. 'Well, have you any other little tricks to show me? Are you a sleight-of-hand artist, too, Lanny? Are you going to take a machine gun out of your hat?" "That is the whole bag," he an-

> swered. "I thought you'd rather see it than have it described to you." "Having seen it, let us go!" she said, n a manner that implied further reck-

oning to come. "If out of a thousand possible sources one source succeeds, then the cost and pains of the other nine hundred and ninety-nine are more than repaid," he was saying urgently, the soldier uppermost in him. "Some of the best service we have had has been absurd in its simplicity and its audacity. In time of war more than one battle has been decided by a thing that was a trifle in itself. No matter what your It was you, Lanny, who recommend- preparation, you can never remove the ed Feller to us as a gardener, compe- element of chance. An hour gained in tent though deaf! I have proved him information about your enemy's plans may turn the tide in your favor. A didn't let him know that he was dis- Chinese peasant spy, because he happened to be intoxicated, was able to give the Japanese warning in time for Kuroki to make full dispositions for receiving the Russian attack in force at the Sha-ho. There are many other incidents of like nature in history. So

> is is my duty to neglect no possible method, however absurd." By this time he was at the head of the steps. Standing to one side, he offered his hand to assist Marta. But she seemed not to see it. Her aspect

was that of downright antagonism. "However absurd! Yes, it is absurd to think that you can make me a party to any of your plans, for-" She broke off abruptly with staring eyes, as if she had seen an apparition.

Lanstron turned and through the door of the toolroom saw Feller entering the sitting-room. He was not the bent, deferential gardener. His features were hard-set, a fighting rage burning in his eyes, his sinews taut as if about to spring upon an adversary. When he recognized the intruders he turned limp, his head dropped, hiding his face with his hat brim, and he steadied himself by resting a hand on the table edge. (TO BE CONTINUED.)

OVERSIGHT THAT WAS FATAL

Light-Fingered Gentleman Might Have Got Away With the Coat But for One Thing.

A fellow stole a coat hanging in front of a clothing stere the other aftternoon. But the proprietor was on the job, and before the thief was half a block away he had the police and most of the neighbors on his trail. The poor fellow who had taken the coat was really coatless before the crime. And as he ran he struggled into the abstracted article, which fitted him pretty well, all things considered. And when he was apprehended, about four blocks from the starting point, he protested his innocence stoutly.

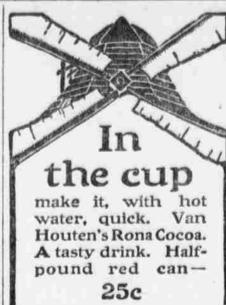
"What d'ye mean I stole the coat?" he said. "I've had this coat all summer. Why, I sin't had it off my back for a week!

"You sin't, sin't you?" sneered the policeman. "An' have you wore that there coat hanger inside it acrost yer

Saying that the arm of the law grasped the iron book projecting above the collar, dragged the victim to the corner and called the wagon.

Parlor Tricks. Bill-Did you ever take part in any parlor magte?

Jill-Oh, yes; that's how my wife hypnotized me into marrying her



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THE FOLLY OF DISCONTENT

Vain Longing and Aspirations, as This Little Fable Shows, Are Things of Moment.

A fashionable woman, coming from the opera, in the rosy nest of a limousine, passed a group of laborers at midnight. Machines, like terrible animals, were burrowing into the earth. Steam was hissing, as if from the mouths of a million serpents. Rocks flew in every direction. Torchlights danced. There was the thunder of labor. The night shift was in full swing.

And the woman, glancing from the window at a certain workman, for an

instant thought: "How I wish I had that brawny laborer's strength and joy of life! How I envy him his power, his physical perfection, the wonder of his manhood, his freedom from the shackles that bind me. He is his own master. while I am a slave—the slave of a

man I despise!" At that moment the laborer paused long enough by the deep chasm where his engine rocked, to glance into the motor as it sped by him. And he

thought: "Oh, to be like her! To know leissure and wealth and rest! To be free from drudgery and toll, to come and go as I pleased! To throw off the chains of debt and worry, and have the days and nights stretch ahead of

me like a field of flowers!" But in another instant the motor was gone. The torchlights flared brighter than ever. And each had forgotten the other.-Judge.

How It Happened, "How did the cashier of your bank get into jail?"

"Left the 's' off speculation." Occasionally it is cheaper to move than to try to live it down.

MESMERIZED

A Poisonous Drug Still Freely Used. Many people are brought up to believe that coffee is a necessity of life, and the strong hold that the drug, caffeine, in coffee has on the system makes it hard to loosen its grip even when one realizes its injurious

A lady writes: "I had used coffee for years; it seemed one of the necessities of life. A few months ago my health, which had been slowly failing, became more impaired, and I knew that unless relief came from some source I would soon be a physi-

cal wreck. "I was weak and nervous, had sick headaches, no ambition, and felt tired of life. My husband was also losing his health. He was troubled so much with indigestion that at times he could

eat only a few mouthfuls. "Finally we saw Postum advertised and bought a package. I followed directions for making carefully, and added cream, which turned it to the loveliest rich-looking and tasting drink I ever saw served at any table.

and we have used Postum ever since. "I gained five pounds in weight in as many weeks, and now feel well and strong in every respect. My headaches have gone, and I am a new woman. My husband's indigestion has left him, and he can now eat

anything." Name given by Postum Co.. Battle Creek, Mich. Read "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs.

Postum comes in two forms: Regular Postum-must be well boiled. 15c and 25c packages.

Instant Postum-is a soluble powder. A teaspoonful dissolves quickly in a cup of hot water and, with cream and sugar, makes a delicious beverage Instantly. 30c and 50c tins.

The cost per cup of both kinds is about the same. "There's a Reason" for Postum.

-sold by Grocers