# The Last Shot

FREDERICK PALMER

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SYNOPSIS.

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 of the Browns injured by a fail in his aeropiane. Ten years later. Westerling, nominal vice but real chief of staff, re-enforces South La Tir and meditates on war. Marta tells him of her teaching children the follies of war and martial patriotism, and begs him to prevent war while he is chief of staff. Lanstron calls on Marta at her home. She tells Lanstron that she believes Feller, the gardener, to be a spy. Lanstron confesses it is true and shows her a telephone which Feller has concealed in a secret passage under the tower for use to benefit the Browns in war emergencies. Lanstron declares his love for Marta. Westerling and the Gray premier plan to use a trivial international affair to foment warlike patriotism and strike before declaring war. Partow, Brown chief of staff, reveals his plans to Lanstron, made vice chief. The Gray army crosses the border line and attacks. The Browns check them. Artillery, in fantry, aeroplanes and dirigibles engage, Marta has her first glimpse of war in ita modern, cold, scientific, murderous bru-The Browns fall back to the Galland house. Marta sees a night attack. The Grays attack in force. Feller leaves his secret telephone and goes back to his guns. Hand to hand fighting. The Browns fall back again. Marta asks Lanstron over the phone to appeal to Partow to stop the fighting. Vandalism in the Galland house. Westerling and his staff occupy the Galland house and he begins to woo Marta who apparently throws her fortunes with the Grays and offers valuable information, She calls up Lanstron on the secret telephone and plans to give Westerling infor-

#### CHAPTER XV-Continued.

mation that will trap the Gray army.

mothers, the fate of frontiers, of insti- luncheon." tutions! Think of it! Think of machines costing countless millions machines of flesh and blood, with their destinies shaped by one little bit of lying information! Think of the folly of any civilization that stakes its triumphs on such a gamble! Am I not right? Isn't it true? Isn't it?"

"Yes, yes, Marta! But-i-" If she were weakening it was not his place to try to strengthen her purpose. "It will the sooner end fighting. won't it, Lanny?" she asked in a small, tense voice.

"Yes." "And the only real end that means real peace is to prove that the weak can hold back the strong from their threshold?"

"Yes." the veranda, perhaps waiting for news that would enable him to crush the weak; to prove that the law of five pounds of human flesh against three, and five bayonets against three, is the

law of civilization. "Yes, yes, yes!" The constriction was gone from her throat; there was a drum-beat in her soul. "Depend on me, Lanny!" It was Feller's favorite phrase spoken by the one who was to take his place. "Yes, I'm ready to make any sacrifice now. For what am 1? What is one woman compared to such a purpose? I don't care what is said of me or what becomes of me if we can win! Good-by, Lanny, till I call you up again! And God with us!"

"God with us!" as Partow had said, over and over. The saying had come to be repeated by hard-headed, agnostic staff-officers, who believed that the deity had no relation to the efficiency of gun-fire. The Brown infantrymen even were beginning to mutter it in the midst of action.

Waiting on the path of the second terrace for Westerling to come, Marta realized the full meaning of her task. Day in and day out she was to have auspense at her elbow and the horror of hypocriey on her conscience, the while keeping her wits nicely balanced. When she saw Westerling appear on the veranda and start over the lawn she felt dizzy and uncertain of her capabilities.

"I have considered all that you have said for my guidance and I have decided," she began.

She heard her own voice with the relief of a singer in a debut who, with knees shaking, finds that her notes are true. She was looking directly at Westerling in profound seriousness. Though knees shook, lips and chin could aid eyes in revealing the painful fatigue of a battle that had raged in the mind of a woman who went away for half an hour to think for

herself. "I have concluded," she went on, "that it is an occasion for the sacrifice of private ethics to a great purpose, the sooner to end the slaughter."

"All true!" whispered an inner her strength. All true!

"Yes, an end-a speedy end!" said Westerling with a fine, inflexible emphasis. "That is your prayer and mine and the prayer of all lovers of humanity."

When she told him of Bordir, the shining with the light of truth through tude, unusual with him, brought into ingly.

in his steady look; but with the mention of Engadir in the main line she detected a gleam in his eyes that had the merciless delight of a cutting edge of steel. "I have made my sacrifice to some purpose? The information is worth something to you? she asked wistfully.

"Yes, yes! Yes, it promises that way," he replied thoughtfully.

Quietly he began a considerate catechism. Soon she was subtly understanding that her answers lacked the convincing details that he sought. She longed to avert her eyes from his for an instant, but she knew that this would be fatal. She felt the force of him directed in professional channels, free of all personal relations, beating as a strong light on her bare statements. How could a woman ever have learned two such vital secrets? How could it happen that two such eritical points as Bordir and Engadir should go undefended? No tactician, no engineer but would have realized their strategic importance. Did she know what she was saying? How did she get her knowledge? These, she understood, were the real questions that underlay Westerling's polite indirection.

"But I have not told you the sources of my information! Isn't that like a woman!" she exclaimed. "You see, "Yes?" the monosyllable was de- it did not concern me at all at the tached, dismal, labored. "A woman time I heard it. I didn't even realize can be that!" she exclaimed in an un- its importance and I didn't hear certain tone, which grew into the dis- much," she proceeded, her introductraction of clipped words and broken tion giving time for improvization. sentences. "A woman play-acting-a "You see, Partow was inspecting the woman acting the most revolting by- premises with Colonel Lanstron. My pocrisy-influences the issue between mother had known Partow in her two nations! Her deceit deals in the younger days when my grandfather lives of sons precious to fathers and was premier. We had them both to

"Yes?" put in Westerling, betraying his eagerness. Partow and Lanstron! Then her source was one of authority, not the gossip of subalterns!

"And it occurs to me now that, even while he was our guest," she interjected in sudden indignation-"that even while he was our guest Partow was planning to make our grounds a redoubt!"

"After luncheon I remember Partow saying. We are going to have a look at the crops," and they went for a walk out to the knoll where the fighting began."

"Yes! When was this?" Westerling asked keenly.

"Only about six weeks ago," swered Marta,

"Later, I came upon them unexpect-Even now Westerling might be on edly after they had returned," she went on. "They were sitting there on that seat concealed by the shrubbery. I was on the terrace steps unobserved



"I'm Going on My Experience as Soldier."

and I couldn't help overhearing them. Their voices grew louder with the interest of their discussion. I caught something about appropriations and aeroplanes and Bordir and Engadir, and saw that Lanstron was pleading spire confidence in further success. with his chief. He wanted a sum appropriated for fortifications to be ap- easily, pleasantly. "We did it-we did plied to building planes and dirigibles. Finally, Partow consented, and I recall his exact words: 'They're shockingly archaically defended, especially sion at the bald statement was re- his eyes. It was beating into hers Engadir,' he said, 'but they can wait lieved by the memory of Lanny's word with the power of an overwhelming voice. Its tone was Lanny's, in the until we get further appropriations in over the telephone after breakfast that masculine passion and a maturity of old days of their comradeship. It gave the fall!" She was so far under the Browns had lost only five thou- intellect as his egoism admitted a comspell of her own invention that she sand. Four to one was a wide ratio, rade to its throne. Such is ever the believed the reality of her words, re- she was thinking. flected in her wide-open eyes which seemed to have nothing to hide.

"That is all," she exclaimed with a shudder-"all my eavesdropping, all earnestly, as he dropped on the bench | He was fighting for victory; to gratify "It is little that I know, but such my breach of confidence! If-if it"as it is you shall have it," she began, and her voice frembled with the inconscious of his guarded scrutiny. tensity of the one purpose that was back of the seat and the relaxed atti- words escaped tumultuously and chok-

with him.

done a great service," he repeated as gratify. She was conscious of a cer- glance she had sometimes seen in he caught both her hands, which were tain softening charm, a magnetism strangers on her travels, and it had cold from her ordeal. His own were that she had sometimes felt in the made her think that she was wise to warm with the strong beating of his days when she first knew him. She carry a little revolver. She wanted heart stirred by the promise of what realized, too, that then the charm had to strike him. he had just heard. But he did not prolong the grasp. He was as eager to be away to his work as she to be alone. "I think it will. You will know after the position was taken last in the morning." he added.

in the power of five against three as its source." He bent on her a look Browns' defense, she noted no change he started back to the house. When he reached the veranda, Bouchard, the saturnine chief of intelligence, appeared in the doorway of the dining- appear in a fresh angle of misery. room; or, rather, reappeared, for he had been standing there throughout the interview of Westerling and Marta, "I lay awake pondering it last night." whose heads were just visible, above the terrace wall, to his hawk eyes.

"A little promenade in the open and my mind made up," said Westerling. clapping Bouchard on the shoulder. "Something about an attack tonight?" asked Bouchard.

"You guess right. Call the others," Five minutes later he was seated at the head of the dining-room table with his chiefs around him waiting for their chairman to speak. He asked some categorical questions almost perfunctorily, and the answer to each was, "Ready!" with, in some instances, a qualification—the qualification made by regimental and brigade commanders that, though they could take the position in front of them, the cost would be heavy. Yes, all were willing and ready for the first general assault of the war, but they wanted to state the costs as a matter of professional self-defense.

Westerling could pose when it served his purpose. Now he rose and, going to one of the wall maps, indicated a point with his forefinger.

"If we get that we have the most vital position, haven't we?"

Some uttered a word of assent; some only nodded. A glance or two of curiosity was exchanged. Why should the chief of staff ask so elementary a question? Westerling was not unconscious of the glances or of their meaning. They gave dramatic value to his next remark. "We are going to mass for our main

attack in front at Bordir!"

"But," exclaimed four or five off cers at once, "that is the heart of the position! That is-"

"I believe it is weak-that it will fall, and tonight!" "You have information, then, infor-

-mation that I have not?" asked Bou-

"No more than you," replied Westerling. "Not as much if you have anything new."

"Nothing!" admitted Bouchard wryly He lowered his head under Westerling's penetrating look in the consciousness of failure.

"I am going on a conviction-on putting two and two together!" Westerling announced. "I am going on my experience as a soldier, as a chief of staff. If I am wrong, I take the responsibility. If I am right, Bordir will be ours before morning. It is settled!

"If you are right, then," exclaimed Turcas-"well, then it's genius or-" He did not finish the sentence. He had been about to say coincidence; while Westerling knew that if he were right all the rising skepticism in certain quarters, owing to the delay his program, would be silenced. His prestige would be unassailable

# CHAPTER XVI.

Marking Time.

Flashes from gun mouths and glow. the earth with the tread of five against | through the disorders of the commune. ing sheets of flame from rifles made ugly revelry, while the beams of search-lights swept hither and thither This kept up till shortly after midnight, when it died down and, where ness shrouded the hills. Marta knew scious of the force of a personality ing ruins and after some digging that Bordir was taken without having that mastered men and armies now found the casket, buried in heaps of to ask Lanstron or wait for confirmation from Westerling.

She was seated in the recess of the arbor the next morning, when she heard the approach of those regular. powerful steps whose character had become as distinct to her as those of a member of her own family. Five against three! five against three! they were saying to her; while down the pass road and the castle road ran the stream of wounded from last night's

slaughter. Posted in the drawing-room of the Galland house were the congratulations of the premier to Westerling. who had come from the atmosphere of a staff that accorded to him a military insight far above the analysis of on, ordinary standards. But he was too clever a man to vaunt his triumph. He knew how to carry his honors. He accepted success as his due, in a matter-of-course manner that must in-

"You were right," he said to Marta it-we took Bordir with a loss of only that she was not playing one? She twenty thousand men!"

Only twenty thousand! Her revul- was no gainsaying what she saw in

much nearer?" she asked.

beside her. He stretched his arms out on the

only help to end the slaughter!" She been hitherto oblivious. The com- she felt his breath on her cheek burnheld out her hand convulsively in queror had become simply a compan- ing hot, and she was sickeningly conparting as if she would leave the rest ionable man. Though he was not sit- scious that he was looking her over ting close to her, yet, as his eyes met in that point-by-point manner which "I think it will," he said soberly. here, she had a desire to move away she had felt across the tea-table at "I think it will prove that you have which she knew would be unwise to the hotel. This horrible thing in his not been mixed with the indescribable, intimate quality that it held now.

"In the midst of congratulations night," he declared, "I confess that I His steps were sturdier than ever was thinking less of success than of that was warm with gratitude.

She lowered her lashes before it; before gratitude that made her part "There seems to be a kind of fa-

tality about our relations," he went on.



"I'm Not a Human Being."

His tone held more than gratitude. It had the elation of discovery.

"He is going to make it harder than ever guessed!" echoed her own thought, in a flutter of confusion.

"Yes, it was strange our meeting or the frontier in peace and then in war!" she exclaimed at random. The sound of the remark struck her as too subdued; as expectant, when her purpose was one of careless deprecation.

"I have met a great many women, as you may have imagined," he proceeded. "They have passed in review. They were simply women, witty and frail or dull and beautiful, and one meant no more to me than another. Nothing meant anything to me except my profession. But I never forgot you. You planted something in mind: memory of real companionship."

"Yes, I made the prophecy that came true!" she put in. This ought to bring him back to himself and bis ambitions, she thought.

"Yes!" he exclaimed, his body stiffening free of the back of the seat. You realized what was in me. You foresaw the power which was to be mine. The fate that first brought us

warm and appealing in the full tide of dirt and stones, but uninjured,

another purpose. "The victory that I was thinking of last night was not the taking of Bordir. It was finer than any victory in war. It was selfish-not for army and country, but born of a human weakness friumphant; a human weakness of which my career had robbed me," he continued. "It gave me a joy that even the occupation of the Browns' capital could not give. I had come as an invader and I had won your confidence."

"In a cause!" she interrupted hurriedly, wildly, to stop him from going further, only to find that her intonation was such that it was drawing him

"That fatality seemed to be working itself out to the soldier so much older than yourself in renewed youth, in another form of ambition. I hoped that there was more than the cause that led you to trust me. I hoped-"

Was he testing her? Was he play ing a part of his own to make certain looked up swiftly for answer. There way of a man in the forties when the "Then the end-then peace is so clock strikes for him. But who could know better the craft of courtship "Very much nearer!" he answered than one of Westerling's experience?

> a desire. "I did not expect this I-" the

weak point in the first line of the the murk of her deception-"it will relief a new trait of which she had He was bending so close to her that will."

"Confess!" called all her own self-respect. "Make an end to your abasement!"

"Confession, after the Browns have given up Bordir! Confession that makes Lanny, not Westerling, your dupe!" came the reply, which might have been telegraphed into her mind from the high, white forehead of Partow bending over his maps. "Confession, betraying the cause of the right against the wrong; the three to the conquering five! No! You are in the thing. You may not retreat now." For a few seconds only the duel

of argument thundered in her temples -seconds in which her lips were parted and quivering and her eyes dilated with an agitation which the man at her side could interpret as he pleased. A prompting devil-a devil roused by that thing in his eyes-urging a finesse in double-dealing which only devils understand, made her lips hypnotically turn in a smile, her eyes soften, and sent her hand out to Westerling in a trancelike gesture. For an instant it rested on his arm with telling pressure, though she felt it burn with shame at the point of contact.

"We must not think of that now." she said. "We must think of nothing personal; of nothing but your work until your work is done!"

The prompting devil had not permitted a false note in her voice. Her very pallor, in fixity of idea, served her purpose. Westerling drew a deep breath that seemed to expand his whole being with greater appreciation of her. Yet that harried hunger, the hunger of a beast, was still in his glance.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

#### SAVING THE VENUS OF MILO

Extraordinary Precautions Taken to Guard Art Treasure Impossible to Replace.

When, during the war of 1870, the German army drew near the French capital, one of the first measures the Parisians took was to place the art treasures of the Louvre in safety. The paintings of Raphael, Titian, Paolo, Veronese, Rembrandt and Rubens were carefully packed and shipped to Brest. There they could, if necessary, be put on shipboard and taken from the country.

It was not so easy to save the pieces of marble statuary, for their weight and fragility made them difficult to handle; but the French determined that the famous Venus of Milo, at least, should not fall into the hands of the Prussians.

So they took her down from her pedestal and laid her in a casket carefully padded and wrapped. At night the casket was taken out through a secret door and hidden secretly in the cellar of the police prefecture, at the end of a certain passageway.

They walled in the casket and cleverly gave the wall an appearance of great age and dilapidation. In front of this wall they laid a number of valuable public documents, so that if they should happen to be found their importance would lead the discoverers together made me look you up in the to think there was nothing else hidcapital. Now it brings us together den there. In front of the papers they here on this bench after all that has built another wall. Here the Venus passed in the last twenty-four hours." of Milo remained, much to the distress She realized that he had drawn per- of those patriotic Parisians who did ceptibly nearer. She wanted to rise not know where she was and supposed and cry out: "Don't do this! Be the that she had been stolen, through the that your breakfast had."-Stray Sto-Soon after dark the attack began, chief of staff, the conqueror, crushing slege of the city by the Germans and ries.

three!" It was the conqueror whom One day the prefecture caught fire she wanted to trick, not a man whose and was pretty completely destroyed. earnestness was painting her deceit. The distress of those who knew that blacker. Far from rising, she made no the Venus was concealed there can Tenn., writes: "I strained my back, movement at all; only looked at her be imagined. As soon as the fire was which weakened hell's concert had raged, silent dark. hands and allowed him to go on, con- extinguished they hastened to the sink- caused an awful

> It is understood that the Venus has gone into hiding again this year, not to reappear until peace is restored and Paris is free from danger of the invader.-Youth's Companion.

Activities of Women, Fifteen women are seeking seats in the Washington legislature.

The former sultan of Zanzibar is stranded in Paris with his 15 wives. Baku, Caucasus, has a population

of 217,853, of whom 93,982 are women Under the provisions of the will of Mrs. Emily Zoller of New York city. her pet dog is left \$200 for his keep during the rest of his life.

Textile workers in Japan threaten to go on a strike unless the 32 women who were discharged from one of the mills are reinstated.

To avoid the use of the name of a German town a Paris magazine has opened a competition asking French Adv. girls to find a new name for Cologna.

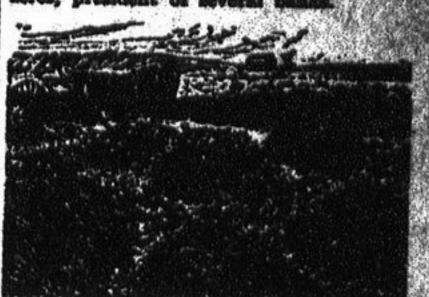
Helping the Youngsters.

One of the Chicago municipal court judges has established a library for foreign boys in the boys' court. Arrangements have been made by him with the public library to furnish books written in the native tongues of the nationalities most frequently represented in the court.-The Living Church.

Interrupted Communication. "You don't mean to say that this is the first you've heard of it?" "Absolutely." "Why, it's the talk of the neighbo

### THE COLOMEL!

About thirty years age in less warm for that domnits. All he had warm the hands, a clear break and a bright war Today he is the owner of themself.



He has found a veritable gold mine his thousand acre Alfalfa field, and what of particular interest to you and me in that his first Alfalfa Seed, twenty-five years ago or more, was purchased from the John A. Salzer Seed Co., La Crosse, Wie The Colonel says: "The best paying cross in hay or grass, or pasture food is Alfalfa. It outranks everything in money value." Salzer's Alfalfa is good on your own farm, for three to five tone of rich hay

per acre, and with the aid of "Nitragen" (see my catalog) its growth is absolutely

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Ambition and Humility.

The highest ambition is the parent of the truest humility; it makes one realize that our ultimate aim is so high that we need a power far beyond our own for the accomplishments of so transcendent a work; that if we are truly to be co-workers with Almighty God himself to the working out of the great scheme that rules the universe, the task is far too great for our unaided efforts, and we may confidently rely upon a power divine to help us in all our needs.

# U. S. GOV. LAND FREE

Under special act of Congress the agricultural land of the U. S. Forest reserve of Arkansas can now b homesteaded in tracts not to be 160 acres to each person, free of cost. 1,000,000 acres free pasturage range where cattle, hogs and sheep fatten eight months in year without grain. No overflow lands. Country very healthy, and well watered with running streams. We select these agricultural lands, take applicant to lands and locate you. Send 25 cents for State map showing location of the serve and copy of Special Act to A. V. Alexander, Locating Engineer,

Little Rock, Ark,-Adv.

His Mistake.

'John," she said to her husband, who was grumbling over his breakfast, "your love has grown cold."

"No, it hasn't," he snapped; "but my breakfast has." "That's just it! If your love hadn't grown cold you wouldn't have noticed

SUFFERED FOR FOUR YEARS.

Sinclair of Olivebill, my kidneys and bad backache and



consuited s doctor, who said that I had Diabetes my heart was affected. I suffered for four years

inflammation

the bladder. La-

ter I became so

much worse that

and was in a nervous state and very much depressed. The doctor's medicine didn't help me, so I decided to try Dodda Kidney Pills, and I cannot say enough to express my relief and thankfulness, as they cured me. Diamond Dinner Pills cured me of Constipation."

Dodds Kidney Pills, 50c, per box at your dealer or Dodds Medicine Co. Buffalo, N. Y. Write for Household Hints, also music of National Anthem (English and German words) and recipes for dainty dishes. All 3 sent free

Some Hint. "Hello, Blank! Where are you go ing in such a hurry?" "To the post office to put up a kiek

about the wretched delivery service. "What's the trouble?" "Why, that check you promised to send me ten days ago hasn't reached