

BRIDE OF BATTLE

A Romance of the American Army Fighting on the Battlefields of France

By VICTOR ROUSSEAU

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WALLACE IS STUNNED BY REVELATIONS MADE TO HIM BY HIS COMMANDING OFFICER

Synopsis.—Lieut. Mark Wallace, U. S. A., is wounded at the battle of Santiago. While wandering alone in the jungle he comes across a dead man in a hut outside of which a little girl is playing. When he is rescued he takes the girl to the hospital and announces his intention of adopting her.

CHAPTER I—Continued.

"What are you going to do about her?" inquired the major, standing beside the camp bed and looking down at Wallace uneasily.

"Boil some canned cow and see if it will dissolve the cellulose out of an army biscuit."

"It shall be done. I guess that'll stay her till morning. But seriously, Wallace?"

"I suppose I'll have to assume the responsibility for her. I'll take her down to the base with me tomorrow and ship her home to my people in charge of one of the stewardesses on some liner."

"I've got a better scheme," said the major. "Let me have her, Wallace. My wife will go crazy over her. You know she's always talking of adopting a little girl. She's got her ideal type in mind, and that's it. I was to look round for one like that if ever the chance came along."

"Well, you'd better go on looking round, Major," said Wallace, irritably.

"See here, my boy, you don't really want that kid, do you?"

"I do. I'll think over your proposition, Major, of course, but my sister would give her a home and—"

"Let me send her to my wife. If you can claim her after the war, if you want to. Suppose you got killed; we'd neither of us have her. If you don't let me take her I'll make you pay for it."

"How?"

"I'll order her a bath, under the sanitary code. And you'll have to give it. And scraped beef—our beef!"

"Get out, Major, and give me a chance to yell when my wound hurts. Listen! I tell you what I'm ready to do. I'll let the regiment adopt her, with myself as godfather."

CHAPTER II.

He stopped, astonished at the way the Major took his suggestion. Howard began to stutter, paced the inside of the tent for some moments, muttering to himself, and then swung round upon his heel, facing the lieutenant.

"Good God, no, Wallace! Whatever put that infernal idea into your head?" he exploded. "See here, now! You're not well enough to talk this thing over tonight. Some day I'll tell you why your proposal is impossible."

"That's all very well, Major. I don't know what you mean, but if you don't like my proposition you know what you can do. I'm quite well enough to listen to what's worrying you. Dig it out!"

"I haven't time, Wallace. There's these stragglers to be sorted out. Not that much can be done tonight, I suppose. Sometime I'll tell you—"

He swung round on his heel and made for the entrance, stopped and returned.

"I suppose I'd better tell you now," he exclaimed. "I had thought it might be as well not to tell you ever. You don't happen to know who this child's father was—that man in the tent?"

"What do you mean, Major? Some settler caught by a bullet, I suppose."

"Hampton!" said Major Howard, grimly.

Lieutenant Wallace sat bolt upright on the bed and stared at the other in amazement.

"The man who sold our mobilization plans to Spain?" he whispered, conscious of a sudden terror for the child.

The major nodded. "It's years since we worked together in the war office," he answered, "and, frankly, I didn't know the face. You wouldn't have, would you, after the work that the bullet had done? One of those d—d dum-dums. But—you didn't see this, did you?"

He took a purse from his pocket, opened it and shook out three gold pieces into his hand. "That was on a bet about the body," he said. "And there were some papers—not the ones we wanted, but enough to identify him. It was Hampton all right."

He went to the tent door and looked out. "Here, Johnson!" he called.

The negro servant appeared almost instantaneously within the opening and stood to attention.

"Could you use three gold pieces, Johnson?" inquired Major Howard.

"Well, suh, I don't know as I'd object," replied the negro, grinning.

"It's part of a sum that was paid to an American soldier for betraying his country."

"Oh, Lord, no, Major!" answered Johnson.

"Then do what you think best with these."

The negro looked at the gold coins in his hand, stepped outside the tent

and swung his arm. The pieces fell in the jungle grass far beyond the encampment. Major Howard shielded his purse after them and went back to where Wallace still sat upright on the bed. He noticed, with a certain grimness of spirit, that one of the lieutenant's hands rested on the child's fair hair.

"Well, Wallace?" he asked.

"It's damnable."

"We can't exactly make his child the regimental pet, can we?"

Wallace was silent, and the Major sat down on the edge of the bed beside him.

"I had orders to watch for him," he said. "He was to have been hanged as soon as we captured Santiago. That's why he was making for the jungle. He was detected and allowed to escape with his life, but he had been working as a Spanish agent since he was drummed out of America. His career ended at the luckiest moment for him. He seems to have had the one redeeming quality of affection for the child, though if he had had a particle of unselfishness in him he would have left her behind him. I suppose she was the only thing he had in his wretched life."

"Of course there's no palliation," suggested Wallace. "But the man may have been born good and—gone downhill."

"He was born rotten," answered the Major. "He sold his country to pay his gambling debts. Cuba was about the only place that would hold him. I imagine. And to think that swine was once in our regiment! Sorry I had to tell you, Wallace!"

He hesitated a while; Wallace had not moved; but the child at his side stirred and breathed heavily. The major's fists clenched.

"I'm trying to be just to the dead," he said. "But I feel that a thousand years of hell wouldn't atone for that crime, Wallace."

Mark Wallace looked up. "I'm not sure that I know all the facts about the case, Major," he said.

"The facts are that it was no sudden act of fear or temptation, but calculated, cold-blooded deliberation. We knew at the war office that there was a leakage. It had been traced to the mobilization division, where Kellerman and I were working. Even we were under suspicion for a time. Then it narrowed down to Hampton and another."

"Wallace, those months were the worst time I've ever spent. Hampton was my best friend, and Kellerman's, too. We spied on him—had to."

"Well, you know what happened, more or less. There was a woman between, as there generally is—a fine-



Stared at the Other in Amazement.

looking young woman, little more than a girl, named Hilda Morsheim. One of those French-German Alsations, Wallace. Kellerman got some hold on her, and she confessed. The case against Hampton was absolutely proven.

"There wasn't any trial. The fellow could have been shut up for a good many years; he had cost his country millions; he ought to have been hanged. But he was quietly cashiered and allowed to disappear. Maybe it was a foolish move, but we felt the

shame pretty badly and wanted to forget it. Hampton was let go, on the understanding that he leave the country forever. Oh, yes, he assumed the innocent air quite dramatically. Some of the war office people believed in him until the damning documents were laid before them.

"And he was still somehow in touch with things, Wallace, and the leakages went on afterward. That's why we had orders to hang him as soon as Santiago was taken. He did the kindest thing he could have done to himself when he got in the way of that sniper's bullet."

"I'll tell you who the child's mother was, Wallace, because I was unfortunate enough to know her. She was a Miss Rennie, Miss Marjorie Rennie, of a Baltimore family—fine people, and, of course, with a tradition like that, she believed in the scoundrel absolutely. She came to me twice. The first time was before the informal trial held by the department. She begged me to believe he was innocent and the victim of a trap. I wouldn't even listen. You know, when a man has to run down his friend he has to harden his heart."

"She came to me again, after Hampton was broken. She told me I had played false to my best friend and that I'd suffer for it to the last day of my life. I've never forgotten that interview, and you can guess how it made me mad to hang Hampton when we learned that he was still keeping up the game from his exile in Cuba. He must have got quite a number of confidential papers out of the war office. That's about all."

"It's enough," said Wallace. "The girl married him, then?"

"So much we learned. And also that she died later. You see, we've been pretty close on the fellow's track the last couple of years—ever since the war became a probability, in fact. Most of the officers in the regiment are since that time, but I guess they all knew something, and kept it quiet, like you."

Wallace nodded. "I fancy there's a good deal of feeling," he said.

"Quite a good deal," said the major, dryly. "And I guess you'll agree with me that this makes it—let's say, a little difficult to adopt his child officially?"

"You mean the remembrance would be too bitter?"

"I mean that that position is the one and only position that she is disqualified from holding, by reason of birth."

"Still," urged Wallace, "it isn't in the blood. The mother was decent. Why should that baby be tarnished with her father's treachery?"

"It's written in the Good Book—"

began the major.

"And there's something else about coats of fire, too, Major, which came as a sort of revision of the old law. It's just what we ought to do, because it's the only way to adjust the matter."

"Adjust it? Adjust what?" cried the Major, with sudden passion.

"The whole of that hellish business, Major. The man was once an officer of the Seventieth. He's dead and his crimes have died with him. We want to forget that such a thing could have happened, and the only way is to leave him to God's judgment and to cast out all bitterness from our hearts. You quoted Scripture to me—well, I gave you the answer from the same Book. Let death bring oblivion to the man's memory. He's left us the child. Start here. Start fresh. I have the right to the kid, but what you have told me makes me feel strongly that there's a Providence in this affair, and I'll lend her to you—mark that word, Major!—on that condition or none."

Major Howard pulled at his mustache in agitation. "You don't really mean it, Wallace?" he asked.

"I do. If you want me to let you take her till the war's over—"

"It means forgiving that black-guard."

"It means forgetting him and letting the Judge judge."

"It goes against every instinct. I'd bring her up away from the regimental life. Besides, there are the others."

"Who else knows?"

"Well, of course, nobody else knows who the dead man was. The colonel will have to know. But he needn't know we've adopted the child. He's going South after the war. However, I'm afraid Kellerman knows. He recognized what was left of the face, or suspected somehow. I could tell from his manner."

"I don't see any overwhelming difficulty in that. You can trust Kellerman?"

The major nodded, and it occurred to Wallace that he would rather trust any of the officers than Kellerman. He had conceived a prejudice against him which he could not have explained.

"And Hampton's name was erased from the old mess list," Wallace continued.

The major, who had been pulling at his mustache and thinking deeply, came to his decision.

"Well, I'll take her on those terms,

Wallace," he said. "The fellow was a bad lot, but, as you say, there should be no reason why this little animal should suffer for his sins. The mother was decent, and there may be something in that idea of a vicarious restitution. I'll agree, Wallace, if you'll let me take over the charge of her till the war's ended. We'll enter her on the mess book and settle a fictitious parentage on her afterward, and may she never know her father's history. By the time she's old enough to understand a mascot's duties, flirt with the lieutenants, and plead for the drunks, maybe we'll have forgotten it ourselves. Good-night, my boy. Take care of your wound. I'll send in that milk and biscuit and a couple of cakes of naphtha soap, and a porcelain tub with silver trimmings, for you to make a start on her in the morning."

He glanced at the sleeping child, took Mark's hand and went quickly out of the tent. Under the sky he stood still for a few moments.

"The d—d scoundrel!" he muttered.

At that instant his alert ear heard what the sentry, posted some distance



The Major Could Not Distinguish How the Intruder Was Dressed.

away, had failed to catch—the rustling of some moving figure in the dense jungle grass at the edge of the camp.

The major remained perfectly motionless, except for his right hand, which was swiftly withdrawing his revolver from its case. Suddenly he was transformed into action. He leaped between the two last tents of the line, to see a man confront him for an instant. In the light of the quarter-moon the major could not distinguish how the intruder was dressed. It was evident, however, that he had been prowling outside the tent which held Wallace and the child.

"Halt!" shouted the major and the sentry together, and, as the man dropped into the grass, the rifle and revolver rang out simultaneously.

The sentry, shouting to the guard, came running up. The major and he searched the spot, but they found nobody.

"One of those d—d Cuban sneak-thieves!" muttered Major Howard as he replaced his revolver in its case. And he hurried away to look after his men.

Several years elapse and then Wallace, now a captain in the army, visits Eleanor at a young ladies' boarding school. Eleanor, now a young lady, gives her guardian a shock, but a pleasant one, as he takes leave of her. Don't miss the next installment.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Insects That Have Food Value. Among insects which have been and are considered of gastronomic value are caterpillars, moths, a favorite in some parts of Africa; the pupae of the silkworm in China; ants, alive and roasted, are appreciated in Burmah, as well as by the Indians of North and South America, while it is said the lumbermen of Maine enjoy an occasional meal of large wood ants. The beetle is eaten in the Nile valley, in Turkey, Lombardy, Java, Peru, and is said to be nutritious and fattening. In Central America the eggs of three aquatic bugs are made into little cakes and eaten. Mexicans make a strong drink by infusing a tiger beetle in alcohol.

Bluff That Failed. General Plumer, who has recently been recalled to France from Italy, can be very ironical when he chooses, as the following story proves:

Shortly before the war, when he held the Irish command, a regiment was being maneuvered before him on a field day, and the colonel in charge succeeded in getting his men mixed up pretty thoroughly.

However, he went grimly on, and at last, calling a halt, rode up to Plumer with an air of importance.

"I flatter myself that was extremely well done, sir," he said, evidently with the idea of trying to bluff that nothing had gone wrong.

"Oh, excellent," was General Plumer's suave reply. "But may I ask what on earth you were trying to do?"

Pearson's Weekly.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Anticipating the cold weather, which will soon be due in Belgium and France, the American Red Cross will make another drive for clothing to be sent to the destitute and helpless Belgians and the French. It would be worse than indifference, it would be heartless, to hoard any clothing that can be spared to the population, of the occupied territory in these countries. The American Red Cross News Service in Washington, D. C., has wired the following appeal:

"Five thousand tons of clothing for the destitute people of occupied Belgium and France!

This is the objective of a drive to be conducted by the American Red Cross at the request of Herbert C. Hoover, chairman of the Belgian Relief commission, during the week beginning Monday, September 23. The clothing drive of the Red Cross last March brought in 5,000 tons of garments and it is estimated that at least as much more will be required to clothe the 10,000,000 people in the occupied territory during the coming winter.

As in the previous campaign the clothing will be collected by the chapters of the Red Cross throughout the United States, each chapter getting its allotment from its division headquarters. There are 13 of these divisions and each has already been apprised by national headquarters in Washington of the amount of clothing its chapters are expected to produce. Every kind of garment, for all ages and both sexes, is urgently needed. Garments of strong materials are wanted as they will be subjected to the hardest kind of wear. Flimsy garments, bathroom dresses, high-heeled slippers, silk hats, straw hats and derbies, which were donated in large quantities in the last clothing campaign, will not be accept-

ed. Such articles would be of little use. In his earlier message to the Red Cross asking it to undertake the work Mr. Hoover says that facing shame, women and children some of them, suffering from lack of clothing, are being driven to the streets. "They must be helped," he says. "I hope the Red Cross will take a renewed campaign to obtain clothing in America. It can obtain from us. Your first campaign brought 5,000 tons of clothing in goods. The amount of clothing in goods these war-ravaged people are in need of is many times as great. It is through the winter in danger and spiritual suffering that the challenges our charity. Let us show the courage of Belgium with the generosity of America."

Brilliant Millinery for Winter Wear



When the snow flies it will be met by such rich and adequate headwear as appears in this group of winter-time hats. It is something of a paradox to call this a season of brilliant millinery when dominant colors are quiet, with only two or three among them that can be described as bright. But along with cold weather come metal brocades and fur. They are sparingly used, but even so carry the suggestion that belongs to rich stuffs. Millinery borrows splendor from them.

But millinery deserves to be called brilliant without consideration of the colors favored by fashion. Shapes are really wonderful, the most subtly artful and the most becoming that can be imagined. They are brilliant in themselves and the craftsmanship of trimmers deserves the same adjective.

In the group there are four hats and three of them are small or medium; one is large. But the small hat predominates in a greater proportion than three to one. Two of these models are designed for street wear and two are more formal—but they are all very wearable—that is, they can be made to do much service. At the upper left of the group a hat of gray velvet with upturned brim is faced with Hudson seal and trimmed with a big flat cabochin in black and gray. If only one new hat is to be allowed the mid-winter wardrobe, this would be a good choice.

Just below this model is a wide-brimmed hat of black velvet, with a tiara drapery about the crown of black and silver gray brocade, edged with a band of beaver. With all this reserve

in color everyone will covet this picturesque model is both brilliant and serviceable—that is, it will last in with many backgrounds. A feathery hat of the same character appears at the upper right of the group. It is one of those tall crowned, narrow brimmed hats that match the dignified poise of middle age. It is a deep, soft petanque in reddish-pink and its trimming is an ornate "pine tree" ornament like it in color, but in several shades.

Strips of long-napped beaver in motor color make the youthful trim that appears below. It is fuzzy and warty looking, and, by assuming the responsibility of a pair of silver trimmings, puts itself in the class of all-round-wear hats.

Julia B. Borden

Late Fall Suit Styles. There are a great many very distinctive suits for women being shown for the late fall trade, and that their likeliness is evidenced by the number of orders which buyers are placing for them. One very smart suit has a coat with tight-fitting sleeves, narrow shoulders and somewhat fitted bodice. There is no waistline in this suit, however, and it hangs loosely about nearly to the knees, flaring out slightly and suggestive of the bell shape. The peg-top skirt is used with this model, gathered together in the back at the waist and tapering to the ankles in a narrow draped effect. Suits of this sort are most frequently trimmed with fur, beaver or skunk being used.