

BRIDE of BATTLE

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

By VICTOR ROUSSEAU

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CHAPTER XV—Continued.

And with the blow all his strength returned, all his energy and zest for battle. He forgot everything. Waving the sword, he hurled himself into the attacking ranks. They gave, and with a cheer the defenders swept on into the main street, Mark leading them.

How he fought that day he never knew; long afterward he would see visions of it in sleep, and battle pictures that forever eluded his waking consciousness. Round the little village from unexpected places, hideous death traps caught the unwary and venturesome, sometimes a street was filled with a jostling mob, too packed to use their steel, tearing at one another with fists and teeth. There was no order, and the command fell to him who



Swept on into the Main Street, Mark Leading Them.

large, the key to the day's fortunes, the tide ebbed and flowed. Company after company came up on either side. Now advancing, now driven back, the Americans fought from street to street and back again. Machine guns opened fire. Through all that nightmare Mark fought at the head of his company, looking like a madman, as they said of him afterward. When he came to himself at last he found himself, unharmed, save for his bleeding arm, from which the bandage had long since fallen, and in command of a battalion.

They had driven the Germans from the last house of the village. The day had saved the day. The reserves had come pouring in. On the ridge beyond the enemy was marshaling for a last counter-attack.

Mark looked about him. Lieutenants, captains who should have commanded companies, mingled with privates and musketeers, were following, as if hypnotized, this middle-aged private with the red cross on his arm. As Mark looked his heart swelled with the consciousness and pride of leadership. And at this glance, a roar went up that was caught up from man to man and sent echoing into the distance.

And Mark was swept away with unconquerable enthusiasm. It was his day, the day of which every soldier dreams.

"Come along, boys! Break them up!" he shouted, and ran forward.

With one resounding cheer the lines swept after him. A ripple of machine-gun fire caught them, but could not hold them. Over the fallen they pressed on, cries of triumph upon their lips, the faces, set above the gleaming bayonets, animated by a single purpose. And now they were upon them.

Mark fought in the bloody swirl. Blades thrust at him, bullets tore his tattered uniform. Once he was down, and he saw a giant rush at him with a clubbed rifle. He raised his arm, he tried to drive with his sword, lunged and missed. Then the uplifted rifle fell harmlessly beside him, and the giant fell forward, dead, over him, pinning him to the ground, and covering him with his blood. A bayonet thrust had passed clean through his body.

And, looking up bewildered, Mark thought he saw Hartley's face look into his own.

Next moment Mark was on his feet again, and Hartley had vanished. But already the last tussle was over. The Germans broke and fled.

Mark stood still, gasping. The men were crowding, all about him, waving their helmets on bayonet points, cheering him, shaking his hand. Across the field two mounted men were riding. They came up to the ridge, and one, a white-haired old officer, leaped to the ground and wrung Mark's hand.

"My thanks—our country's thanks to you!" he cried. "What is your name?" Mark looked and saw the General's insignia upon the officer's shoulder-

"Weston," he answered.

And suddenly he remembered Eleanor, and, ashamed and humiliated, and yet strangely elevated, he began to push his way back through the crowd.

He turned into the street of the jail. Dead bodies lay everywhere, and already some of the ambulance men were succoring the wounded. Broken guns, rifles, haversacks, all the paraphernalia of battle strewn the streets. The debris of the jail came into view. The sun, dancing above it, indicated, to Mark's astonishment, that hours had passed, and that it was afternoon. Mark felt suddenly sick, he trembled, and with his last reserves of strength he staggered forward.

Then he saw Colonel Howard within the office in the wall, and Eleanor kneeling beside him, holding a water-bottle to his lips. She turned, saw him, and ran to him, folded her arms about his neck and pressed her lips to his.

CHAPTER XVI.

Even as he kissed her in return he saw the startled glance that she cast behind her, and, following it with his eyes, he saw a tall figure in uniform emerge from the recesses of the office; and again he stood face to face with Kellerman.

Eleanor released him and stood, still clinging to him, at his side, her hand drawn through his arm. The contrast between the two men was extraordinary. Kellerman looked as if he had just stepped into his uniform; his gloved hands, his adjusted belt, the creases in his tunic were those of the fashion-plate. Looking at Mark, he saw a dirty, grimed, almost unrecognizable figure, with uniform that hung about him in great tatters, blotched and stained with blood.

"You said he would not come back!" cried Eleanor. "You see he has come back. What have you to say more?"

"You misunderstood me, Eleanor—" "I understand you now for the first time in my life. I liked you, Major Kellerman. I trusted you and I believed in you. When you told me that you were working to get Captain Wallace his recognition I was glad, and proud of you both, and happy. What did you do?"

"What did he do?" cried Kellerman furiously. "Why should you believe evil things of me, because he said them?"

"He never spoke one word against you!" "When the decision has already been made by an impartial court, anxious to clear a soldier's character, if that were possible?"

"Because I have a woman's instinct, Major Kellerman." "Enough of this," interposed Mark. "What are you doing here, sir?"

He snapped the last word out in irony so bitter that Kellerman winced. "So you've cheated the firing party, Private Weston!" he said, with his habitual sneer.

"O, call me Mark while you're about it," answered Wallace. "Or please remember that I am no longer under your command, nor a soldier in the American army. Technically I am a dead man, Major Kellerman, and dead men—"

"Tell no tales, eh?" responded Kellerman savagely. "Well, here we stand man to man, and the conditions warrant plain speaking. It is not my business to place you under arrest. But, if I do so, you are aware that your life will be worth about five minutes' purchase. So go, Mr. Weston, or Wallace, or whatever you call yourself now. Go—if Miss Eleanor here says the one word that will set you free. Go—and in this confusion you will have a reasonable chance to escape, with those ready wits of yours."

"The one word?" Eleanor gasped. "The one word 'yes'," responded Kellerman.

"I will never become your wife, Major Kellerman." "So you told me the other day, after leading me to suppose that it was your intention," answered Kellerman easily. "Stop, Mr. Weston, if you please, and let me finish. War doesn't leave much sentimentality in a man. We know what life is worth, and we know that life's a matter of bargaining. When we were in America I might have accepted my dismissal, Eleanor. But here we three stand under the naked heaven, like ants on a hill. All artificial distinctions have fallen away. I've loved you for many months, Eleanor, and I want to marry you. That's the bald truth of it. In order to persuade you, I am willing to let this gentleman escape—to facilitate his escape, even to make our marriage dependent on my success. That's fair, isn't it? And, what have you against me? Is it my fault that he was court-martialed and sentenced to death for striking an officer?"

The man's effrontery took Mark's breath away.

"My answer," responded Eleanor steadily, "is 'no.' And even if you could send him to his death it would still be 'no.' Because he himself would wish that. But you can't harm him. Something convinces me that all the harm

that has come to him has come from you. And it tells me, too, that your power has ended. 'No,' is my answer."

"And yours, Mr. Weston?" asked Kellerman, looking at Mark.

Mark, unable to reply, pointed toward the opening of the recess. Kellerman turned and strode toward it. Then he turned.

"There's one thing more to say," he said. "Your action in dismissing me, Miss Howard, savors of the romantic drama. Your life has been a romantic one, with a certain high-strung idealism in it, due to the circumstances of your upbringing. It was that, I believe, which made you think it your duty to follow your adopted father's unit to the front. I think you ought to know who you are. Your father died on the battlefield of Santiago. He was a fugitive from justice. He was the notorious Hampton."

Mark uttered a cry. He sprang toward Kellerman, but Kellerman dealt him a blow that sent him stumbling among the bricks.

"That's a lie, Kellerman!" said Colonel Howard quietly.

The old Colonel's eyes were wide open. He laid his hands laboriously upon the edge of the brick wall and, with a great effort, raised himself to his feet.

"That's a lie," he repeated. "It is no lie, Colonel Howard. You told the whole story to Captain Wallace in the hospital tent. Never mind how I know. I know."

"You damned, dirty spy!" said the old Colonel.

"A confession," answered Kellerman blandly. "Your words were strong ones, Colonel Howard. Deny them if you can. You said, 'A thousand years of hell wouldn't atone for that crime.' You said 'It was calculated, cold-blooded deliberation.' You said, 'The case against Hampton was absolutely proven. He was to have been hanged as soon as we captured Santiago. He was born rotten. He sold his country to pay his gambling debts.' And you called him by the worst name one man can call another. That was why you tried to persuade Mark Wallace not to adopt Hampton's child. Like father, like daughter."

He swung round upon Eleanor, and for the first time seemed to lose his self-control.

"That's who you are!" he cried. "The child of a wretched traitor, who worked in the war department with Colonel Howard and me, a man without honor, entangled with a wretched woman spy, who sold our secrets. And that man—your adopted father, whom you love and revere, spied on him in turn, watched him, read his letters, went through his pockets, snared him, trapped him, brought him to his deserts—and adopted you."

Eleanor staggered toward the Colonel, her arms raised imploringly, and cried in a choking voice:

"Say it's untrue! Only say that it's untrue!"

"It's a damned lie," said the Colonel; but there was not the least conviction in his voice.

"Tell me the truth!"

"It's true, then—it's more or less true," said Howard wearily.

"It's not true!" shouted Mark. "Remember, Colonel, the man's face had been practically blown away. How do we know that it was Hampton who was with the child? It might have been another. We don't know for sure, and we can't know. I've never believed it. I wouldn't ever dare to let myself believe it."

"You found his papers," said Kellerman.

Nobody answered him. Eleanor went up to Mark and raised her white face to his. "Tell me what you think, Captain Mark," she pleaded.

And once more Mark was mute. She read his face as if by inches. She turned toward Kellerman. "Now will you go?" she asked.

Kellerman saluted her with mock formality. "I'll go," he said, "but he's spent his chance. A spy's daughter and a spy's—"

The ambulance bearers appeared at the entrance to the recess. They bore a stretcher. Propped up in it, swathed in a bloody cloth of bandages, was Hartley.

"There he is!" he cried, pointing his hand in triumph. "I knew he'd come this way. He's here, sir!" he cried to some one outside the office.

The stretcher bearers set down their burden on a ledge of the wall. Into the little place strode the General.

His appearance there exercised a paralyzing effect upon them all. Kellerman was the first to recover his self-possession. He saluted stiffly.

"This man," he said, pointing to Mark, "is the prisoner who was to have been executed this morning."

The General, without a word, strode toward Mark and clasped him by the hand.

Kellerman gulped and moved toward the entrance for the last time. The General turned.

"Halt, sir!" he commanded. "Colonel Howard, will you have the goodness to go to the man on the—why, I beg your pardon, Colonel! Not badly hurt?"

"Nothing much, sir," answered the

Colonel, attempting to make the passage.

The General gave him his arm and assisted him, and, when he stood still, placed one arm about him to steady him.

"Do you recognize that man?" he asked.

The Colonel stiffened; Kellerman fell back against the wall.

"As I'm a living man," cried Colonel Howard, "it's Hampton!"

CHAPTER XVII.

Hartley sat up on the stretcher and fixed his eyes on Howard's face. It was evident that he was desperately wounded. One of the orderlies knelt beside him and held him.

"This man," said the General, chewing at his mustache in emotion which he could not altogether hide, "was once an officer in the service of our country. He was engaged in confidential work in the war department. He was accused of espionage—unjustly accused."

With a low cry Eleanor rushed forward and knelt beside the stricken man; she placed her arms about him and drew his head down upon her shoulder, looking piteously into the weary eyes. Hampton raised her hand to his lips and kissed it.

"Unjustly accused," repeated the General. "Major Kellerman, stand to attention, sir! You shall be heard later. He was the victim of the System, which was even then laying its plans in Washington. He was the victim of a woman named Morshelm—Hilda Morshelm, whose activities were well known, though we could then do nothing to counteract them. She made a specialty of luring young officers into gambling dens, winning large sums from them, and thus leading them down the slope toward disgrace and death."

"She had a confederate who was highly placed in the war department. When, by their united efforts, they failed to make a traitor of Captain Hampton, they compassed his ruin. How they did so I need not describe now. The facts are of record; it is enough to say that they succeeded. Hampton was driven into exile; but they were not satisfied with that. They broke his career, they drove him from the company of all decent men. But that was not enough. They broke his wife's heart; she died. They made his name one of execration. Still they were not satisfied. With devilish ingenuity they sought to cover their tracks by making it appear that Hamp-



"The Child of a Wretched Traitor."

ton was still carrying on his trade, still selling government secrets. You see why, Colonel?" he continued, turning to Howard. "Because they themselves were continuing their vile work, and the new leakages had to be accounted for."

Kellerman, ghastly white, leaned against the brick wall; he was tumbling nervously in his tunic pocket.

"I suppose, sir, that you are accusing—" he began.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Old Siberian City.
One of the principal Siberian cities is Tobolsk, the commercial center of the vast province of Tobolsk, which extends over an area of 500,000 square miles, a large portion of which, however, is practically uninhabited. The most prominent building in the city is the Kremlin, built in imitation of the great citadel in Moscow. This structure was erected by Swedish prisoners of war captured by Peter the Great at the battle of Poltava in 1709.

Found.
"Aha!" hissed the Pullman porter. "I have found the secret of his berth! He took a flask from under the passenger's pillow.—Cartoon."

Warmth and Smartness in Coats



Some people are stepping out of midwinter coats and turning their backs on cold weather to journey South, and others are just stepping into them bound for the joys of winter sports in the frozen North. These are the firm believers in the tonic of the cold who have learned how to enjoy arctic weather. Then there are all the rest of us who intend to keep warm and aspire to look smart, whatever icy blasts may blow our way. We refuse to be shut in by the weather and require of midwinter coats warmth and smartness. And the demand is answered with coats and other garments of fur and of textiles that are as warm and rich as furs.

All over the country fur garments of one kind or another are the mode. These earliest coverings of the body remain the most desired and rich skins are rich skins, however made up. They are the inspiration of furriers. Here is a coat made of leopard skins with their incomparable natural markings of black in a gold background, hangs straight and full from the shoulders, without a belt and has a cape collar of beaver and deep fur trim. The big collar may be up about the neck and ears and face snuggled down in its warmth until only the eyes are exposed. Such a coat carries about shine and warmth and almost makes them. It is fastened with tortoise-shell buttons and is inches shorter than the skirt.

"Velour du nord" is the name of a regal fabric that makes the other

It is one of those thick, soft cloths that are as protecting as a chamois skin, but lighter and softer than this. It is in a taupe color with wide cape collar and is bordered at the hem with this fur. The collar can be turned up about the head and the hand refuge in ample slit pockets. The belt is made of the velour.

For Undercoat or Southern Wear



Many demands are made of the latest sweaters—they must be cozy and pretty and they must not be bulky, to start with. They must be in line with the styles and at the same time—if they are to be successful—they must have attractive variations and original touches to give them distinction. Sweaters, as a part of the wardrobe, are as much a matter of course as shoes and stockings and variety is the spice that flavors them.

The last arrival in slip-over sweaters has made its entrance on fashion's stage, and its portrait appeals to us for consideration in the picture above. This young aspirant for favor can hardly fail. It is closely knit and cozy—snug fitting and easy to get on, and it is dainty. One can imagine it in any of the flower-like, lively colors which are approved for spring or in the vivid "sweater tones" of color, or in the beige and gray shades if any one denies herself the privilege of colors that are bright. For, in sweaters, young and old alike may indulge a fancy for live colors.

The pretty sweater above owes some of its charming effect to the fine lingerie blouse worn under it. The blouse is of batiste with frills of lace at the front, and its frilled turned-back collar simply froths over on the bright hued sweater, making the freshest and daintiest of vestees and neck-finishings. The blouse might be of net or

crepe georgette or of any of the linens or cottons that are kept fresh. The three knitted sweaters in white, across the front of the sweater fit in well with these white linens. There is a short, snug pullover which is defined with a narrow knitted band which seems very close fitting, as the sleeves are. These things make convenient garments to wear under suit or top coat. This sweater was made itself popular in Canada as well as along the Gulf of Mexico, for it is really a warm garment and more or less closely knitted and decorated with differing stripes. The work is done by hand.

Julia B. Strong

Blouse Fad.
The tendency to elongate the part of the blouse until it is almost like a small apron is one of the interesting style details this season. It is a curious notion, but one that is tremendously popular at present.

Black Satin, the Favorite.
Black satin is the winter season's favorite material for all purposes. Wool duvetens, cashmere velvets supporting its advance.