The Last Shot

FREDERICK PALMER

(Copyright, 1914, by Charles Scribner's Sons)

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 fall in his acroplane. Ten years later. Westerling, nominal vice but real chief of staff, reenforces South La Tir and meditates on war. He calls on Marta, who is vis ting in the Gray capital. She 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. On the march with the 53d of the Browns Private Stransky, anarchist, is placed under strest. Colonel Lanstron begs him off. Lanstron calls on Marta at her home. He talks with Feller, the gardener. Marta tells Lanstron that she believes Feller to be a spy. Lanstron confesses it is true. Lanstron shows Marta a telephone which Feller has concealed in a secret passage be a spy. Lanstron confesses it is true-Lanstron shows Marta a telephone which Peller has concealed in a secret passage under the tower for use to benefit the Browns in war emergencies. Lanstron de-diares his love for Marta. Westerling and the Gray premier plan to use a trivial in-ternational affair to foment warlike pa-briotism in army and people and strike be-fore declaring war. Partow. Brown chief of staff, and Lanstron, made vice, discuss the trouble, and the Brown defenses. Par-tow reveals his plans to Lanstron. The Gray army crosses the border line and at-tacks. The Browns check them, Artil-lery, infantry, aeroplanes and dirigibles engage. Stransky, rising to make the anarchist speech of his life, draws the Gray artillery fire. Nicked by a shrapnel splinter he goes Berserk and fights—"all a man." Marta has her first glimpse of war in its modera, cold, scientific, mur-derous brutality. The Browns fall back to the Galland house. Stransky forages.

CHAPTER XI-Continued.

room, which was like an antique shop. Old plates lay on top of old tables, with vases on the floor under the tables. Surrounded by her treasures, Mrs. Galland awaited the attack; not as a soldier awaits it, but as that venerable Roman senator of the story disputing the power of their spears nor yielding the self-respect of his own her wrapper for the night, and the light from a single candle-she still calm and philosophical among the pildeep into hidden emotions, had her once more tender and vital.

"Marta, I see that you are all on wires!"

Marta acquiesced.

ways said that you may enjoy the luxury of fussing over little things, for races? They'll creep up from one to they don't count much one way or an- | the other!" It was Stransky, other; but about big things you must never fuss or you will not be worthy larme's. of big things. Marta, you cannot stop a railroad train with your hands. This of us has his work to do and you will use them." have yours. It does no good to tire yourself out and fly to pieces, even if around the world."

in appeal.

less of a lure from logic, dropped be- of the house. side the bed in a sudden burst of sentiment and gathered the plump hand in hers and kissed it,

"Mother, you are wonderful!" she said. "Mother, you are great!"

After a time, her ear becoming accustomed to the firing as a city dwel- horror. As it was, she felt a convuller's to the distant roar of city traffic, Mrs. Galland slept. But Marta from her seat. A pause. The next could not follow her advice. If, transiently at least, she had found some- by the linden-trees; a third above the thing of the peace of the confessional, the vigor of youth was in her arteries; awake under some conditions. She in tones of the landscape by day with bursts of fire from the higher hills of dead on the road was augmented. spread to the heavens like an aurora infantry. Hill crests, set off with upper part of the town. flashes running back and forth, deassisting the automatics.

crew of a Gray dirigible burned by an explosion and brought in his agony softly to earth by a billowing piece of envelope which acted as a parachute.

Fighting proceeded in La Tir in stages of ferocity and blank silence. The upper part of the town, which the Browns still held, was in darkness; the lower part, where the Grays were, was illuminated.

"Another one of Lanny's plans!" thought Marta. "He would have them work in the light, while we fire out of obscurity!"

Soon all the town was in darkness, for the Grays had cut the wire in the main conduit shortly after she had heard the groans of the wounded man. There the automatics broke out in a mad storm, voicing their feelings at getting a company in close order in a street for the space of a minute, before those who escaped could plaster themselves against doorways or find cover in alleys. Then silence from the automatics and a cheer from the Browns that rasped out its triumph like the rubbing together of steel files.

From the line of defense, that included the first terrace of the Galland grounds as the angle of a redoubt, not a shot, het a sound; silence on the part of officers and men as profound as Mrs. Galland's slumber, while one She was at the door of her mother's of the Browns' search-lights, like some great witch's slow-turning eye in a narrow radius, covered the lower terraces and the road.

Marta gave intermittent glances at the garden; the glances of a guardian. She happened to be looking in that direction when figures sprang across faced the barbarous Gauls-neither the road, crouching, running with the short, quick steps of no body movement accompanying that of the legs. mind and soul. She had lain down in The search-light caught them in merciless silhouette and the automatic and the rifles from behind the sandfavored candles-revealed her features | bags on the first terrace let go. Some of the figures dropped and lay in the an effort to sleep or waking suddenly lows. Yet the magic of war, reaching road and she knew that she had seen men hit for the first time. Others, she also under its spell. Her voice was at | thought, got safely to the cover of the gutter on the garden side. Of those on the road, some were still and some she saw were moving slowly back on "Yes; jangling wires, every one, their stomachs to safety. Now the jangling every second out of tune," search-light laid its beam steadily on the road. Again silence. From the "Marta, my father"-her father had upper terrace came a great voice, like taking position in answer to lowbeen a premier of the Browns-"al- that of the guns, from a human throat:

In answer was another voice-Del-

"Perhaps there wasn't time to do everything. If they get as far as the is not the first war on earth and we first terrace-well, in case of a crisis, are not the first women who ever we have hand-grenades. But, God thought that war was wrong. Each knows, I hope we shall not have to

After an interval, more figures made a rush across the road. They, too, in you do know so much and have been Stransky's words, paid a price for seeing the garden. But the flashes She smiled as a woman of sixty, from the rifles and the automatic prowho has a secret heart-break that she | vided a target for a Gray battery. The had never given her husband a son, blue spark that flies from an overhead may smile at a daughter who is both trolley or a third rail, multiplied a son and daughter to her, and her hundredfold, broke in Marta's face. plump hand, all curves like her plump It was dazzling, blinding as a bolt of face and her plump body, spread open | lightning a few feet distant, with the thunder crash at the same second. Marta, who, in the breeding of her followed by the thrashing hum of bulgeneration, felt sentiment as more or lets and fragments against the side

"I knew that this must come!" something within her said. If she had not been prepared for it by the events of the last twelve hours she would have jumped to her feet with an exclamation of natural shock and sive, nervous thrill without rising shell burst in line with the first, out

veranda. "We've got that range, all right!" and youth cannot help remaining thought the Gray battery commander. who had judged the distance by the tiptoed across the hall into her own staff map. This was all he wanted to room and seated herself by the win- know for the present. He would let dow. The symbol of what the ear loose at the proper time to support had heard the eye saw-war, working the infantry attack, when there were enough driblets across the road to smokeless powder; war, revealed by make a charge. The driblets kept on its tongues of flame at night. Ugly coming, and, one by one, the number

Marta was diverted from this procborealis and broke their messengers ess of killing by piecemeal by a more in sheets of flame over the lower hills theatric spectacle. A brigade com--the batteries of the Browns sprin- mander of the Grays had ticked an the place of any who fell out of line, king death about the heads of the order over the wires and it had gone gunners of the Grays emplacing their from battery to battery. Not only batteries. Staccato flashes from a many field-guns, which are the ter- gineers to mend any breaches made single point counted so many bullets riers of the artillery, but some guns in the breastwork by shell fire. from an automatic, which directed by of siege caliber, the mastiffs, in a the beams of the search-lights, found sudden outburst started a havoc of ed his barrel, slightly adjusted its their targets in sections of advancing tumbling walls and cornices in the elevation, and swung it back and

marked infantry lines of the Browns from the shells shot a bemisphere of the fresh belts of cartridges which light heavenward, revealing a shadowy were to feed it were within easy reach. There were lulls between the body flying overhead, and an instant In straw hat and blue blouse, shufcrashes of the small arms and the later the heavens were illuminated by fling with his old man's walk, Feller heavy, throaty speech of the guns; a vast circle of flame as the dirigible came along the path from the gate. fulls that seemed to say that both that had dropped the dynamite re He was in retreat from the enticing sides had baused for a breathing coived its death-blow. But already picture of the regiment of field-guns spell; lulls that allowed the battle in the Brown infantry was withdrawing in front of the castle that was ready the distance to be heard in its perva- from the town, destroying buildings for action. As the infantry had never sive undertone. In one of them, when that would give cover for the attack interested him, he would be safe from of a prize-medallist graduate of the even the undertone had ceased for a in the morning as they went. Two or temptation in the yard few seconds, Maria caught faintly the three hours after midnight fell a sigreans of a wounded man-one of the lence which was to last until dawn. of the engineers.

The combatants rested on their arms, Browns saying to Grays, "We shall be ready for the morrow!" and Grays replying: "So shall we!"

Marta, at her window, her eyes following the movements of the display, now here, now there, found herself thinking of many things, as in the intermissions between the acts of a drama. She wondered if the groaning, wounded man were crying for water or if he were wishing that some one at home were near him. She thought of her talk with Lanstron and how feminine and feeble it must have the concert of a mighty loom. sounded to a mind working in the inexorable processes of the clash of millions of men. She saw his left hand twitching in his pocket, his right hand gripping it to hold it still, on that afternoon when, for the first time, she had understood his injury in the aeroplane accident as the talisman of his feelings-his controlled feelings! Always his controlled feelings!

She saw Westerling, so conscious of his strength, directing his chessmen in a death struggle against Partow. And he was coming to this house as his headquarters when the final made

sleeping; and she had seconds when Again, the faces of the children in her school were as clear as in life. She breathed her grafitude that the procession in which they moved to the rear was hours ago out of the theater of danger. In the simplicity of big things, her duty was to teach than Feller's duty was the pursuing see war, alive, naked, bloody, and she | cision of the opposing fire. would tell her children what she had seen as a warning.

shot-silence and the darkness before after a spell of harassed unconscious-

CHAPTER XII.

Hand to Hand.

With the first sign of dawn there was a movement of shadowy forms spoken commands. The search-light "Why didn't we level those ter- yielded its vigil to the wide-spread of the setting where Marta was to tender flesh of woman to share, grew



The Searchlight Caught Them in Merciless Silhouette.

distinct. Bayonets were fixed on the rifles that lay along the parapet of shoulders. Back of them in the yard was a section of infantry in reserve, also with bayonets fixed, ready to fill a doctor and stretchers to care for the wounded, and a detachment of en-

The gunner of the automatic sightforth to make sure that it worked Then an explosion greater than any smoothly, while his assistant saw that

"This is no place for you!" said one

ther, old man!" said another. "Back to your bulbs!"

Feller did not even hear them. For the moment he was actually deaf.

"Fire!" said Dellarme's whistle. "Thur-r-r!" went the automatic in soulless, mechanical repetition, its tape spinning through the cylinder, while the rifles spoke with the human irregularity of steel-tipped fingers pounding at random on a drumhead. All along the line facing La Tir the volume of fire spread until it was like The Gray batteries having tried out

their range by the flashes of the automatic the previous evening, were "Uk-ung-n-ng!" the breaking jackets whipped out their grists. The reserves, the hospital-corps men and the engineers hugged the breastwork for cover. The leaves clipped from the trees by bullets were blown aside with the hurricane breaths of shrapuel bursts; bullets whistled so near Marta sides, her mother's voice now came that she heard their shrillness above every other sound. She was amazed er's hand was pressing her arm. that the houses still remained standing-that anyone was alive. But she test of the strength of the Titans was, had a glimpse of Dellarme maintaining his set smile and unother of Fel-She hoped that her mother was still ler, who had crept up behind the automatic, making impatient "come-on! she was startled by her own calmness. come-on! what-is-the-matter-with-you?" gestures in the direction of the batteries in front of the castle.

"Thur-eesh-thur-eesh!" As welcome note swept overhead he waved his hands up and down in mad rapture and then peeped over the breastwork to ascertain if the practhem, a future generation, no less tice were good. The Brown batteries had been a little slow in coming into shadow of his conscience. She should action, but they soon broke the pre-

Silence, except an occasional rifle Then a chance shell, striking at the but the movement of the minute-hand one point which the man who fired on the clock-face became uncanny and dawn which would, she knew, concen- it six thousand yards away would have merciless to her eye in its deliberate trate the lightnings around the house. chosen as his bull's-eye, obscured Fel- regularity. Dellarme had been told She glanced into her mother's room | ler and the automatic and its gunners | to hold on until noon, she knew. Was and marveled as at a miracle to find in the havoc of explosion. Feller must he still smiling? Was Feller still her sleeping. Then she stole down- have been killed. The dust settled; happy in playing a stream of lead stairs and opened the outer door of she saw Dellarme making frantic gesthe dining-room. A step or two tures as he looked at his men. They charge of the Grays, which must have brought her to the edge of the ve- were keeping up their fusillade with come to close quarters when the guns randa. There she paused and leaned unflinching rapidity. Through the against one of the stone pillars. Del- breach left in the breastwork she had larme himself was in a half-reclining glimpses, as the dust was finally disposition, his back to a tree. He sipated, of gray figures, bayonets fixed. seemed to be nodding. Except for a pressing together as they came on few on watch over the sand-bags, his fiercely toward the opening. The because of her stupid way this mornmen were stretched on the earth, mov- Browns let go the full blast of their ing restlessly at intervals, either in magazines. Had that chance shell turned the scales? Would the Grays get into the breastwork?

All Marta's faculties and emotions were frozen in her stare of suspense yelping of the demon was not that at the breach. Then her heart leaped, of the hound after the hare, as in a cry in a gust of short breaths broke from her lips as the Browns let go a rasping, explosive, demoniacal cheer. The first attack had been checked!

After triumph, terror, faintness, and closing of her eyes, she opened them to see Feller, with his old straw beam out of the east, and the detail hat-brim torn and crownless nowstill on his head, rise from the debris watch the play of one of man's pas. and shake himself like a dog coming her chair. sions, which he dares not permit the ashore from a swim. While the engineers hastened to repair the breach been knocked down by the concusoff the gunner. The doctor, putting a tered with plaster and window-glass hand on the gunner's heart, shook his head, and two hospital-corps men removed the body to make room for the engineers.

For once Dellarme's cheery smile deserted him. There was no one left Cub Reporter Got Something of a Jolt to man the automatic, so vital in the defense, and even if somebody could be found the gun was probably out of commission. As he started toward it his smile, already summoned back, was shot with surprise at sight of the gun in place and a stranger in blue blouse, white hair showing through a crownless straw hat, trying out the mechanism with knowing fingers. Dellarme stared. Feller, unconscious of everything but the gun, righted the cartridge band, swung the barrel back and forth, and then fired a shot.

"You-you seem to know rapidincomprehension.

whether in salute as a soldier or as got." a gardener touching his hat it was hard to say.

"But how-where?" gasped Dellarme.

This time the movement of the finger was undoubtedly in salute, in perfect, swift, military salute, with head thrown back and shoulders stiff. Felwithout ceremony.

"Lanstron's class, school for officers, sir. Stood one in ballistics, prize medallist control of gun-fire. Yes, sir, plied: I know something about rapid-firers," sand-bags in front of the row of brown Feller replied, and fired a few more shots. "A little high, a little lowright, my lady, right!"

Stransky was back in his place next to the automatic and firing whenever a head appeared. He rolled his eyes in a characteristic squint of scrutiny toward the new recruit.

"Beats spraying rose-busines for bugs, eh, old man?" he asked.

"Yes, a lead solution is best for gray bugs!" Feller remarked pungently, and their glances meeting, they saw in each other's eyes the joy of hell.

"A pair of anarchists!" exclaimed Stransky, grinning, and tried a shot for another head.

As if in answer to prayer, a gunner had come out of the earth, Sutficient to the need was the fact. It was not for Dellarme to ask questions crownless straw hat. His expert sur- being broken, but also absorbs the his crowning. vey assured him that before another | water which drips from the umbrella

"No, and don't waste any time, ei- rush the enemy had certain preparations to make. He might give his fighting smile a recess and permit himself a few minutes' relaxation. Looking around to ascertain what damage had been done to the house and grounds, he became aware of Marta's presence for the first time.

"Miss Galland, you-you weren't there during the fighting?" he cried as he ran toward her.

"Yes," she said rather faintly. "If I had known that I should have been scared to death!"

"But I was safe behind the pillar," she explained.

"Miss Galland, you're such a good soldier-please-and I'm sure you have making the most of the occasion. not had your breakfast, and all good soldiers never neglect their rations, not at the beginning of a war! Miss Galland, please-" Yes, as he meant it, please be a good fellow.

She could not resist smiling at the charming manner of his plea. She felt weak and strange-a little dizzy. Befrom the doorway and then her moth-

"Marta, if you remain out here, I shall!" announced Mrs. Galland.

"I was just coming in." Dellarme, his cap held before him in the jaunty fashion of officers, bowed, his face beaming his happiness at her decision.

"Come!" Mrs. Galland slipped her hand into Marta's. "Two women can't fight both armies. Come! I prescribe hot coffee. It is waiting; and, do you know, I find a meal in the kitchen very cozy."

Being human and not a heroine fed on lotos blossoms, and being exhausted and also hungry, when she was seated at table, with Minna adroitly urging her, Marta ate with the relish Now shells coming frequently fell of little Peterkin in the shell crater short or went wide. The air cleared. munching biscuits from his haversack, from the automatic? Was the second went silent, going to succeed?

Mrs. Galland had settled down conscientiously to play solitaire, a favorite pastime of hers; but she failed to win, as she complained to Marta, ing of missing the combination cards.

After a long intermission came another outburst from Dellarme's men, which she interpreted as the response to another rush by the Grays; and this the valley, but of the hare with his back to the wall. When it was over there was no cheer. What did this mean? Without warning to her mother she bolted out of the kitchen. Mrs. Galland sprang up to follow, but Minna barred the way.

"One is enough!" she said firmly, and Mrs. Galland dropped back into

In the front rooms Marta found havoc beyond her imagination. A porhe assisted Stransky, who had also tion of the ceiling had been blown out by a shell entering at an up-stairs winsion, to lift the overturned automatic dow; the hardwood floors were litand ripped into splinters in places.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

SIMPLE ENGLISH NOT NEEDED

in His Interview With Educated Chinaman.

Two San Francisco reporters were assigned to call on Chinamen and interview them on an immigration measure pending in congress. One of the reporters was a cub and an Easterner, while the other, an experienced man, assumed the management of the as-

"Gates," he said, after they had invaded several Chinese shops without any important result, "yonder is a tea-store. Beat it over by there and firers!" Dellarme exclaimed in blank talk to the boss about Chinese voting. I'll go in next door. Remember to "Yes, sir!" Feller raised his finger, use the very simplest English you

The cub went inside the tea-shop and thus addressed the proprietor:

"John, how? Me-me-Telegraph, Newspape - savvy, John? Newspape-print things. Un'stan'? We want know what John think about Chinaman-vote-all same Melican man. What John think-Chinamanler the gardener was dead and buried vote, see? Savvy, John? Vote? What think?

The Chinaman listened to all this with profound gravity and then re-

"The question of granting the right of suffrage to Chinese citizens who have come to the United States with the avowed intention of making this country their permanent home is one that has occupied the attention of thoughtful men of all parties for years. and it may in time become of paramount importance. At present, however, it seems to me that there is no exigency requiring an expression of opinion from me upon this subject. You will please excuse me."

The cub went outside and leaned against a lamp-post to rest and recover from a sudden faintness. His fellow reporter had purposely steered him against one of the best educated Chinamen in the United States.

For China Stand.

When one has a china umbrella stand it is a wise plan to place a sponge in the bottom of the jar to keep it from being cracked or broken.

INTERNATIONAL

By E. O. SELLERS, Acting Director Sun day School Course, Moody Bible Inst. tute, Chicago.)

LESSON FOR NOVEMBER 22.

JESUS AND PILATE.

LESSON TEXT-Luke 23:13-25. See also GOLDEN TEXT - Pllate saith woto them, What then shall I do unto Jesus,

who is called Christ?-Matt. 27:22 R. V.

The false witnesses (Mark 14:55-59) did not help to formulate charges against Jesus. These rulers did, however, make three accusations. (Luke 23:2) (a) "Perverting the nation"turning it to error; (b) "forbidding to give tribute to Caesar"-treason, (see Matt 17:24-27); and (c) "that he maketh himself Christ, a king"e, g., his Messianic claims. Pilate (v. 14) seems to have dwelt upon the first as only worthy of consideration.

I. Jesus and Pilate, vv. 13-19. This incident demands that we study carefully all that the other gospel writers have recorded. We have seen the accusation recorded by Luke. Matthew and Luke tell us of Pilate's question. 'Art thou the king of the Jews?" and of the answer of Christ claiming that he was. Matthew records the silence of Jesus to the accusations of the chief priests and to Pilate at that time. Luke gives us the account of Pilate's perplexity, how Jesus was sent to Herod and of Pilate's second report to the Jews. Matthew tells of the offer Pilate made to release Barabbas or Jesus and of the message from Pilate's wife.

Trial a Mockery.

The trial before Annas and Calaphas was a hollow mockery. The Sanhedrin was fierce in its denunciation and to add disgrace and to impress Pilate that Jesus was dangerous, they led. him into his presence. Pilate soon saw the emptiness of their charges, and as we have suggested, dismissed all save that of "perverting the nation." The Roman government keenly watched for incipient rebellions. After examination he declares, "I find no fault in this man." He did not however, dare incur the hatred and violence of a Jerusalem mob. and so he temporizes. The flercest light of criticism declares Jesus to be impeccable. yet men temporize. After the disgraceful and degrading treatment Jesus received before Herod, he again stands before Pilate, and this time he is again declared to be innocent of the charges preferred against him. This is the turning point of this world's greatest tragedy. Pilate should have let him go, and would have had he not been a venal judge. "He who hesitates is lost," is amply exemplified in this case. Pilate was in a worse case and one where it became less easy to do right, whatever his inclinations (Acts 3:13) may have been, by not acting resolutely at this point. It was easy for this weak-willed man then to yield to the determined wills of the enemies of Jesus, v. 24 R. V. Pilate found no fault in Jesus, neither did Herod (v. 15), yet Pilate compromisingly says, "nothing worthy of death," hence the suggestion that he be chastised and released. This is typical of the temporizing, compromising, fickle politicians. These words at once suggested to the Jews a custom of having released unto them one whom they chose at this period of the year, and they cried out, "Away with this man, release unto us Barabbas." It was thus that these, his accusers, representing the nation, "denied the holy and just, and desirable a murderer,'

Acts 3:14. Pilate Tried to Save Christ.

II. Jesus and Barabbas, vv. 20-25. Matthew adds to that awful cry, when Pilate has washed his hands in token of innocency, "His blood be upon us" (Matt. 27:25). The other writers give us some suggestions as to who Barabbas was, and makes this choice more appalling by way of contrast.

III. The Teaching. This lesson is intended to center itself about Pllate. In it we see the struggle between conscience and personal ambition. Pilate was impressed by the words of Christ. He told the priests and the multitude that he found no fault in him. It appears that up to a certain point he tried to save Christ, and certainly to the end he strove to avoid the responsibility for his death. Sorely pressed he temporized and the conversation recorded in John 18:33-38 shows how profoundly interested he

was in this prisoner before him. Pilate knew whom he was dealing with as a politician, but did not know this "man of Galilee." He chose rather to be "Caesar's friend" than to perform a righteous act according to the dictates of his conscience. Pressed by the clamor of those whom he despised, he sacrificed his conscience rather than incur their anger.

The golden text focuses the personal application of this entire lesson. What shall I do unto Jesus, which is called Christ?" As this question fell from the lips of Pllate it was an appear to those who had asked for Barabbas, "What then shall I do?" was an acknowledgment of defeat, an acquiescence to the will of the people. and a desire to shift the responsibility for the shedding of innocent blood. This is the question of all questions which men have to face. Men are still following the course of Pilate, either school for officers in a blue blouse and The sponge not only prevents it from they consent to his crucifizion or to