

The Red Mirage

A Story of the French Legion in Algiers

By I. A. R. WYLIE

SYNOPSIS.

When Sylvia Omney, a beautiful English girl, returns from a search in Algiers for her missing brother, her lover, Richard Farquhar, finds she has fallen in love with Captain Arnaud of the Foreign Legion. In Captain Sower's room Farquhar gets deliberately drunk, but when young Preston loses all his money to Lowe, a shady character, Farquhar forces Sower to have Preston's I. O. U.'s returned to him. Farquhar is helped to his rooms by Gabrielle Smith.

"The call of fighters to the fighting man"—do you know what it means to respond to the call of your country when it asks you to defend it against threatening enemies? Imagine what the sound of bugles and tramping feet and the sight of streaming khaki-clad men means to the Englishman these days.

CHAPTER II—Continued.

"Now lie down. Your head is aching furiously I have no doubt, and probably you have work in front of you like other mortals. I have some eau-de-Cologne upstairs. Don't fear. I am going to fetch it."

"Wait a minute. Won't you please tell me your name?"

She put her head a little on one side.

"Gabrielle—Gabrielle Smith. Not very euphonious, is it? But one's baptism is the first occasion where the great law concerning the sins of the fathers comes into operation. Now—"

"And won't you tell what you are?"

"That's a large question. I wish I knew myself. Officially I am anything from a traveling companion to an unsatisfactory nursemaid, in either case out of a job. Is that what you want?"

He closed his eyes wearily.

"I don't know—you have been awfully decent—it all seems rather like a grotesque, gigantic dream from which I can't wake up—" His voice died away.

When she came back with her eau-de-Cologne bottle and a handkerchief he was asleep.

CHAPTER III.

The Great Law in Force.

When Richard Farquhar awoke from his heavy sleep it was broad daylight. He dressed, and by midday was on duty. Those who had witnessed the scene on the preceding night glanced at him curiously, but his face betrayed nothing—neither weariness nor the self-disgust usual on such occasions. They saw he had changed, but the change was indefinable. They saw, also, that, whatever else had happened, he had not apologized to Sower. The two men exchanged the curtest and most perfunctory greeting.

By seven o'clock he stood again in the Omneys' library, and Sylvia Omney stood on the threshold waiting. She was simply dressed in a dark, clinging material which set off more perfectly the fair sweetness of her features.

"You wanted to speak to me, Richard?"

"Yes; it was good of you to come. I know I hadn't the right to ask. I behaved vilely last night."

She looked up into his face with an innocent wonder.

"Did you? I didn't see it. I only thought that you were just as I had always believed you to be—generous and chivalrous and loyal."

He still held her hand, and with a grave courtesy he led her to the great armchair by the fire. She sat there, her head bent like a frail flower, and he turned away from her for a moment, his face colorless.

"I want to tell you that I know," he went on quietly. "I thought it would save you trouble if I told you. One has a fine instinct in these things, and last night I felt suddenly that I had gone out of your life. It hurt me unbearably for a time."

"I am to marry Captain Arnaud," she said, with a note of defiance in her low voice.

"That can make no difference. I take you with me always. You understand?"

"Yes," she said.

"Then good-by."

She must have felt that he was bringing up his last reserve of self-control, yet she rose impulsively with outstretched hands.

"Good-by, Richard. Forgive me—and God bless you."

He turned abruptly and left her without answer.

Outside a gray twilight already

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shrouded the pompous London square. Above the immediate silence there sounded the note of a bugle, and after that the long-drawn-out wail of the bagpipers. Some regiment on the march forward. Richard Farquhar lifted his head and listened. It came down to him through the ages, the call of fighters to the fighting man, the command of duty. That much was left. Richard Farquhar turned and went homeward.

As he entered and saw Robert Sower standing by the fireside, his gloved hands behind his back, his whole attitude expressive of a cool self-certainty, his very pulses seemed to stop and then break into a hammering gallop of triumph. He closed the door sharply, and Sower turned.

"Well?" Farquhar said quietly.

"I have come for your apology."

"Then you have come on a fruitless errand."

A tremor seemed to pass over Sower's body. The brown, slightly protruding eyes flickered. Suddenly and terribly his self-restraint broke down.

"I am the Jew, am I not—the son of a Jew?—Very well—now I shall act like one!"

He began to pace the room with short, feverish steps. "I am going to tell you something no one has ever heard before. Only three people know it, and they have held their tongues—your mother and Major Mowbray. No—don't interrupt. You can't silence me with those damned eyes of yours. You've got to listen. You don't remember your father, do you? He was in India when you were a child, and your mother does not speak very often of him. You see how well I know things. But you are very proud of him—and rightly. He was a brilliant soldier and something of an inventor. He invented a gun that, though it would be twenty years old now, would still rank head and shoulders above anything we have. It was unfortunate that he spent more than he had and gambled with what he did not possess. The British government was, as usual, dilatory and parsimonious. Colonel Farquhar offered his invention to a foreign power. My father knew everything. I was a young subaltern at the time. My father felt it his duty to inform the authorities. Previous to this he and Colonel Farquhar had been intimate. As a last act of friendship he warned your father of his purpose. Your father murdered him."

"My father lived a few hours," Sower went on deliberately. "He was a Jew, but he was a great man. He held your father in his power. He could have had his pound of flesh. He had mercy. He let your father go—on three conditions. The first condition was that he withdrew his offer to the foreign power, the second that he resigned his commission, the third that he left the country. These things he did."

"My father died in Africa," Farquhar said.

"So I have been told."

There was a long silence. Sower studied the younger man out of the corner of his eyes. There was something he did not fully understand—a phase of humanity that did not fit in with his carefully drawn up catalogue. This red-hot temperament grown suddenly cold frightened him. It was like handling an unknown explosive.

"Your father signed a confession in front of witnesses. You will understand that in view of the circumstances it was felt necessary to have some hold over him. Here is the paper."

Farquhar accepted the neatly folded document and took it nearer to the light. He read it carefully without any trace of emotion.

"I understand," he held the paper thoughtfully, as though weighing it. "Of course it is obvious that this is of great value to me. How much do you want?"

"I am in no need of money. It is your career or mine," he said. "You must resign. Half an hour since I would have been satisfied with an apology."

Farquhar nodded.

"I give you my word of honor that I shall send in my papers tonight in return for this letter."

"I accept your word. The letter is in your hands."

Farquhar started slightly and then smiled.

"Ah, I might have burned it. You are a man of remarkable discernment. Well, our bargain is closed. I dare say I have to thank you for your long silence in this matter. But virtue is its own reward. Good night."

Sower took up his hat from the table. He frowned at his own hand, which shook.

"You are confoundedly cool about it all," he said. "One would think you didn't care."

The door closed. Farquhar went back to his writing table. He did not tear up the yellow, faded letter, but propped it against a bronze candlestick and sat there staring at it with blank eyes. Then he began to write. He wrote four letters. One was to the war office. When he had finished he opened a drawer and took out an army revolver, which he examined and then loaded carefully. He switched off the electric lamp. He went over to the hearth and stamped his father's confession into the embers. The polished barrel winked like an evil silver eye in the reflected firelight.

"Mr. Farquhar—are you there?"

His hand still lifted, frozen by surprise into immobility, he saw in the glass opposite him that the door had



"No," she nodded, "you were going to kill yourself."

opened. Against the dimly lighted passage outside he recognized the neat silhouette of a woman's figure. The next instant the room was flooded with light.

"Oh, I beg your pardon. It was so quiet and dark I did not know you were in. I came for my eau-de-Cologne—" She stopped. He had turned instantly, but not in time. Her eyes rested on his hand. "Oh!" she said under her breath. She closed the door and came quietly across the room till she stood opposite him. "What were you going to do, Mr. Farquhar?"

He threw back his head. He was still very young, and in a minute more he had counted on facing the mystery

LAKE TAHOE ONCE HIGHER

Some Ancient Volcano Became Active and Great Rocky Block Sank and Formed Pool Bed.

The statement sometimes made that "Tahoe is an old volcanic crater" is not true, according to report of the government geological survey. The region about the lake shows evidences of volcanic activity of various kinds, and the lake waters themselves have probably been dammed at times by outpourings of lava. A lava flow appears to have temporarily filled the outlet channel below Tahoe City. The lake, however, lies in a structural depression—a dropped block of the earth's crust. During the Neocene epoch and the earlier part of the Pleistocene epoch the waters of Lake Tahoe stood much higher than now, probably on account of lava dams which have since been cut through. Distinct beaches that mark former higher levels are found up to about one hundred feet above the present lake, but it is believed that the waters formerly rose to still greater heights. At Tahoe City the most distinct of these old beaches is a terrace thirty-

five to forty feet above the level of the lake, and it is this terrace that makes the level ground on which Tahoe tavern is built.

A Different Sort of Studio. "A funny thing happened last night," she was telling him as they were seated in a car. "You know those two girls who have taken such a fancy to me. I don't know why? Well, I dined with them in their studio. It was a lovely little dinner they had got up for me. I was about to sail in, when all of a sudden they looked at each other and one of them said: 'Shall we say grace?' 'Certainly,' the other said. And with that they bowed their heads and said a silent grace. I bowed mine, too, and did the same; but I must say it was the first time I'd ever seen such a thing done in a studio where only Bohemians are supposed to live."

Effects of Blasts. Firing a number of simultaneous blasts is estimated to be about 25 per cent more effective in breaking rocks than by firing the blasts singly.

ries of life and death. His face was ghastly in its rigid resolve and dread. "I don't think it's much good lying about it, Miss Smith," he said, with a short laugh.

"No," she nodded. "You were going to kill yourself. I have seen that before. My father blew out his brains. It was an act of sudden madness. Money drove him mad. Is it money with you?"

"No. I have lost everything."

"There is always the light ahead."

"I don't understand—"

She turned to him with an expression that was new to him. The small, thin face seemed illuminated with an inward fire.

"There is a light somewhere," she said, and her voice rang with stern enthusiasm. "It must exist—and if it does not exist we must light it ourselves, with our own hands, with our own ideals. We must have it or believe in it."

His hand, resting on the mantelpiece, relaxed. The revolver rang against the marble.

"You say that," he said harshly—"you who have not had a square meal for a fortnight!"

She threw back her head.

"Who dared tell you that?"

"Never mind. I know it."

She said nothing, but the color died out of her cheeks. He turned from her and buried his face in his arms, and there was a little silence. Then he felt her hand on his shoulder.

"Do you think I should have the courage or the meanness to tell you to go on if I did not know in my own body what going on meant? Disgrace, poverty, loss—I know them all. But one can't throw down one's weapons in the first skirmish. I haven't, and you shan't. Promise me. I am not going to leave you till you do."

"Yes," he said. He held out his hand and she gave him hers. He noticed for the first time that it was white and unusually beautiful in shape. She saw the wonder in his eyes and drew back.

"Thank you! I believe that your life will be of use some day to yourself or another. I dare say I shall be even glad that I helped to save it. Good-by."

"I may see you again—"

"We may meet again, but I think not. I have a job, and am going abroad soon. May I take this with me as a souvenir?"

She had picked up the revolver from the mantelpiece, and their eyes met.

"Yes," he said simply.

Once again we see what the influence of a good woman will do for a man. How do you think Gabrielle Smith will affect Richard's life from this point forward?

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

John Adams a Hard Loser.

John Adams, second president of the United States, was not a good loser. He wanted another term, and worked hard for it. None of the candidates received a majority of the electoral votes, and the election was thrown into the house of representatives. But Adams had no choice there, for he was third in the race, and only the two having the highest number of electoral votes could be voted for. Thus the choice lay between Jefferson and Burr, and Jefferson won. Adams was very much disgruntled, and did everything in his power to make things unpleasant for his successor. He filled every vacant office he could lay his hands on, so as to leave as little patronage as possible for Jefferson. Not only so, but in the closing hours of his administration he and his party associates created twenty-three new judgeships, for which there was no necessity, and worked till the stroke of midnight on March 3d filling out and signing commissions for these "midnight judges," as they were called.

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A Hint.

He—I see where the government wants women to save their rags.

She—Well, if the government only takes a look at the clothes I have to wear, it can see one woman's doing it.

And Enough For a Square Meal.

Butcher—Will you have the round steak, ma'am?

Mrs. Youngbride—I don't care what shape it is, so it's tender.—Boston Transcript.

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