

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. Sower demands an apology. Refused, he forces Farquhar to resign his commission in return for possession of Farquhar's father's written confession that he had murdered Sower's father. Gabrielle saves Farquhar from suicide.

There are types of women who drive men to wild deeds—good women, too. But there is about them that quality which fires men's minds. We don't know much about the laws of heredity, but it seems certain that the child of such a woman, whose husband committed murder, would be a sort of smoldering volcano.

CHAPTER IV.

Mrs. Farquhar Explains.

Mrs. Farquhar ran down the stairs to her son's library. It was a neglected room, which he only used on rare occasions. The old weapons hanging on the walls had belonged to his father, and the whole atmosphere seemed impregnated with the spirit of a dead, if powerful, personality.

Mrs. Farquhar closed the door with a chuckle of triumphant malice.

"They're gone at last," she said. "I assure you there isn't a more surprised woman in England than dear Sylvia. She came expecting to find me with ashes on my head instead of a wig, and I laughed in her face." Richard Farquhar turned from the window where he had been standing, and her eyes grew suddenly grave. "My dear, you're not breaking your heart over her, are you?"

"No." He came slowly into the room. "I might have done so, but fate has given me something else to come to grief over. I've had a quarrel with Sower."

She said nothing, and he went on gently: "He was dangerous. I have resigned my commission. That was his price for my father's name."

Still Mrs. Farquhar did not speak. She sat down in the great leather chair by the fireplace, and the wild, childish horror in her eyes touched him to an amazed pity. "Mother, I don't want to hurt you, but you must. I have a right now to know."

"Yes, yes." She put her hands to her white-powdered cheeks. "Yes, yes, of course. There isn't much. It was in this room, Richard. He came home one night and said he had killed a man. I—it was awful—he had no blood on him, Richard, but one felt he had blood all over; it was in his eyes, and— He said it was all right—no one could touch him, but he had to go—for always. And then he cursed me—and then he fell on his knees—here—by this chair—and buried his face in my lap—and cried. It was awful, Richard—a man like that—to cry." Her voice cracked, and became thin and broken like an old, worn-out instrument. "Then he went away—and one day a man came to me and told me he was dead—but I never knew. I always believed I should know."

He knelt beside her, and, taking her hands between his own, soothed them like a child's. There was something in the action curiously at variance with his expression, which was hard and reckless.

"But Sower—" She turned her faded, frightened eyes to him. "I never understood that, Richard; I never understood why he shielded us. It frightened me. Only once he spoke of it. He said he would never make use of the power—unless we made him. But it was his father who had been—murdered. It wasn't natural, Richard, it wasn't natural that he should forgive." "No," he agreed sternly; and then after a moment's silence: "And my father—was there no reason—had he no explanation?"

With a sudden vigorous movement she freed herself and stood up, her clenched, jeweled hands pressed against her breast, her eyes grown suddenly electric.

"I was the excuse," she said fiercely. "And I was excuse enough." "You?" He also had risen, and as they stood there facing each other, the subtle resemblance of temperament seemed to blaze through their

features like some inward fire, changing all physical dissimilarity to a convincing likeness.

"Yes. You don't understand, Richard—you are too young. But it is women like myself who drive men to such things. We are educated to be professional vampires, and the more brains we have the more deadly we are." She gave a short, ironical laugh. "Don't you want to curse me?"

"No," he answered simply. "I don't curse you any more than I believe my father does if he is alive. If he is alive I am going to find him, and if I find him, I shall tell him that I honor and love him. There was a wrong to be righted, and he did his best." He went to the door, and there turned and looked at her. "If I find my father, is there any message that I may give him—from you?" he asked.

"Tell him that that night he won me," she said with defiance. "Tell him that in the brief interludes when I dare to think I know that I love him. Tell him that."

Richard Farquhar bowed and went out. Half an hour later he reached his club. Captain Sower, he was informed, had just left with Mr. Preston and a strange gentleman. Whereupon Farquhar turned in his tracks and drove straight to Preston's lodgings. His purpose was now twofold, and fired by a white-hot fury of indignation. In the "strange gentleman" he had recognized Lowe, and Preston was a fool with a following of other fools. For in that moment Farquhar had ceased to be a man overshadowed by his own black destiny. He was once more and for the last time the officer upon whose shoulders rested the honor of a regiment, the great unity which he served.

It was a curious group of men that confronted him as he hesitated on the threshold. That which he had expected was not there. Evidently a card game had been in full swing but had been violently interrupted. The cards lay scattered on the square, green table beneath the electric light, and there was a pile of untouched, apparently forgotten money. Both Sower and Lowe were present, together with Preston and one other man, whom Farquhar did not recognize. They stood far apart from one another, as though divided by some hidden antagonism—Sower by the fireside, where he maintained an attitude of easy good-nature, touched indefinitely with regret; Lowe and the stranger kept to the shadow on opposite sides of the room. Preston was standing next the table, his hands resting clenched on the polished edge, his boyish face gray and drawn-looking. As Farquhar saw him the spirit of tension became definite, an almost visible occupant of the quiet room. And yet it was Arnaud's face which Farquhar saw first and last. Here was Sylvia Omney's future—a white-lipped man, whom some violent emotion had made temporarily old and haggard. He had been seated by the card-table, but now looked up, and for an instant they watched each other in open hatred and distrust.

Farquhar came forward, and his eyes passed swiftly from one silent figure to the other. And again it was Arnaud's face which fascinated him. "What has happened?" he asked.

No one answered for a moment. Preston drew himself up. "We were having a quiet game," he said, as though each word were torn from him by force—"Arnaud, Lowe and I—when this gentleman and Captain Sower arrived. It seems there's been a leakage somewhere. I can't explain. I hardly understand myself. Mr. Forth, perhaps you'll be good enough—"

The man addressed bowed. His clean-shaven face was expressionless. "The duplicate plans of Captain Sower's new aero-gun have been stolen," he said tersely. "They were in Captain Sower's possession, and he was instructed to give full information to the younger officers under his command. Various incidents led him to believe that the secret had not been properly kept. He put the matter into my hands, and I've followed the clue he gave me—here." He paused, stotically unconscious of the almost theatrical tension which his silence caused. Farquhar glanced about him. His own pulses were beating faster.

"Well?" It was Lowe who had broken the intolerable silence. He had never for an instant lifted his eyes from the face of the man seated beneath the light, and now he took a step forward as though to meet the answer. Arnaud looked up with a twitching smile. He put his hand to his breast pocket and drew out a thin

sheaf of transparent paper and laid it on the table.

"Le volla!" he said.

For a full minute no one spoke a word. Each man's attention was centered on the silent, deadly witness against the honor of one among them. Then Farquhar looked up and met Arnaud's eyes. He read there more than mere bravado—a nerveless, hideous fear, the panic-stricken appeal of a man who has trembled for days on the brink of ruin and feels the ground slipping beneath him. And this was Sylvia's Omney's future! Farquhar turned involuntarily to Lowe. A faint, ironical smile played around the man's hard mouth. It was the merest shadow, but it bespoke a purpose triumphantly accomplished.

"Captain Arnaud has saved a great deal of trouble," he observed brutally.



"He Came Here One Night and Said He Had Killed a Man."

Still Arnaud did not move. His white hands lay paralyzed in front of him, and his eyes had become blank and stupid looking, like those of an animal which is being done to death. Richard Farquhar took a step nearer, and, picking up the papers, held them as though weighing them.

"Wait a minute. Don't be in such a hurry. I take the responsibility for this business."

They stared at him. He was still weighing the papers and smiling rather wryly. He was thinking of Sylvia at that moment, and Preston's stricken cry of horror sounded dull and far off.

"You! What do you mean, Farquhar? I won't believe it. It's intolerable—impossible. Say you didn't—didn't sell them, Farquhar!"

"Captain Arnaud will explain," was the answer.

Arnaud rose slowly to his feet. He was staring across the table into Farquhar's face, stupidly, incredulously, and when he spoke it was in the monotone of a man under a hypnotic command.

AN ENGLISH WOMAN PRAISES

She Says Americans Show Exquisite Taste in Clothing, Homes, Art and Can Sing Divinely.

An English woman writes: "If you want to see things that are new and unusual you must come to America. The women dress as beautifully as the Parisians, paint their furniture like so many Angelica Kauffmanns, sing—at any rate, a good number of them—divinely, dance like ancient Greeks and furnish their houses with a taste that I can only describe as exquisite. You will think I exaggerate. All I can say is, come and see! The majority of the country houses here now are adaptations of Italian houses, long and low, with two side wings jutting slightly forward. The one at which I am staying is of hollow tile finished with warm stucco. There are blue-green blinds and the roof is brownish red. I cannot tell you how pretty! The interior hall is paved with white and green. The woodwork is white and the walls gray. Big lounges are here with lovely cedar pillows, bringing a smell reminiscent of the forest. In many rooms they have floors of red tile intersected

"They were offered me," he said. "Lieutenant Farquhar offered them to me. I disliked it; but I am a good Frenchman, and the temptation was too great. I bought them. I can only add—that I regret—" He stammered and broke off with a real helplessness.

Farquhar turned from him to Sower. The latter's features had assumed a mask of ironical acceptance.

"In that case there is no more to be said," he observed coolly. "We can now credit Mr. Farquhar's statement."

Farquhar bowed.

"Thank you," he said simply.

Preston crossed the room and flung open the door with a cool deliberation. "Good-by, Farquhar. I hope you have decency enough left to know what to do."

For a short space which seemed an eternity Farquhar hesitated. The scorn and bitterness in the boy's eyes had stung him. An hour ago he had been half a hero, and now was nothing, beneath even contempt. Then he, too, bowed.

"I resigned my commission this morning."

"God be thanked for that."

He went down the narrow stairs into the street. Someone touched him on the arm. He turned and saw Arnaud—a new Arnaud, grown calm, almost indifferent. He was smoking, and the faint reflection from his cigar lighted up the white composure of his features.

"I want to speak to you for a moment," he said. "I want to ask you—why you did that?" Farquhar made no answer, and he went on deliberately: "You are not mad. You do not love me. You have good reason to hate me."

"You are to be Miss Omney's husband. My feelings toward her have not changed. I considered it my business to defend you. The sacrifice was not so great as it may seem. I had lost practically everything before. What remained I chose to lose in my own way."

"It wasn't all for myself. I was pretty desperate and not so cool when Lowe came with his second offer. You can guess what that was. Compared to betraying one's own country it seemed clean business. And I let you bear the brunt. How does that strike you?"

"Panic—the instinct of self-preservation. I counted on it. The future will be different."

"How do you mean?"

Farquhar turned round and faced him with deliberate significance.

"It must be," he said. "As for me, I am done for. Though no one will speak of what has happened, the fact remains. Miss Omney believes in you and so do I—to some extent. I am sufficiently in sympathy with you to credit the sincerity of your feelings. Am I justified?"

Arnaud met his eyes full.

"You are."

"Well, that is what I believe. I hold you in pawn, Captain Arnaud, for your wife's happiness. If you fail her, if you risk her faith in you a second time, I shall not hesitate to act."

He lifted his hat ceremoniously and passed along the narrow street to the great thoroughfare beyond.

Will Farquhar's influence over Arnaud be strong enough to hold the Frenchman in the straight and narrow path and cause him to be a good husband to Sylvia?

(TO BE CONTINUED)

And No Insurance.

Tomdix—Hear about the conflagration?
Hojax—No; where was it?
Tomdix—At the department store where I was employed.
Hojax—Much of a loss?
Tomdix—About nine dollars a week.
Hojax—About nine dollars a week? Why, how do you figure that out?
Tomdix—Oh, it's not a difficult problem. The boss fired me.

Disaster at Once.

She was an old lady. It was her first holiday excursion, and she entered the compartment of a railway carriage with much trepidation, and sat down rather gingerly in one of the corner seats. Just as the train was getting into motion the engine gave a shrill scream, or whistle.

Thereupon up jumped the old lady, and, with a startled ejaculation, exclaimed: "Here they are noo, ower a pig at the very start!"

The Secret of It.

"Some of our statesmen deliver themselves of trivial platitudes with an air of the utmost profundity."
"My friend," answered the student of human nature, "were it not for the air of utmost profundity these statesmen assume before an interviewer their trivial platitudes would never get into print."

EAT LESS MEAT IF BACK HURTS

Take a glass of Sa'ts to flush Kidneys if bladder bothers you.

Eating meat regularly eventually produces kidney trouble in some form or other, says a well-known authority, because the uric acid in meat excites the kidneys, they become overworked; get sluggish; clog up and cause all sorts of distress, particularly backache and misery in the kidney region; rheumatic twinges, severe headaches, torpid liver, sleeplessness, bladder and urinary irritation.

The moment your back hurts or kidneys aren't acting right, or if bladder bothers you, get about four ounces of Jad Salts from any good pharmacy; take a tablespoonful in a glass of water before breakfast for a few days and your kidneys will then act fine. This famous salt is made from the acid of grapes and lemon juice, combined with lithia, and has been used for generations to flush clogged kidneys and stimulate them to normal activity; also to neutralize the acids in the urine so it no longer irritates, thus ending bladder disorders.

Jad Salts cannot injure anyone; makes a delightful effervescent lithia-water drink which millions of men and women take now and then to keep the kidneys and urinary organs clean, thus avoiding serious kidney disease.

Unobscuring Fate.

Full many a flower is born to blush unseen
And waste its sweetness on the desert air;
Or else to nod above the gasoline
Within the auto of some lady fair.

Have Healthy, Strong, Beautiful Eyes
Oculists and Physicians used Murine Eye Remedy many years before it was offered as a Domestic Eye Medicine. Murine is Still Com-pounded by Our Physicians and guaranteed by them as a Reliable Relief for Eyes that Need Care. Try it in your Eyes and in Baby's Eyes—No Smarting—Just Eye Comfort. Buy Murine of your Druggist—accept no Substitute, and if interested write for Book of the Eye Free. MURINE EYE REMEDY CO., CHICAGO

All With Him.
"Don't any of your friends come to see you on visiting days?" asked the kindly old lady.
"No'm," responded No. 777,444; "they're all here wit' me."

WHEN YOU WAKE UP DRINK GLASS OF HOT WATER

Wash the poisons and toxins from system before putting more food into stomach.

Says inside-bathing makes anyone look and feel clean, sweet and refreshed.

Wash yourself on the inside before breakfast like you do on the outside. This is vastly more important because the skin pores do not absorb impurities into the blood, causing illness, while the bowel pores do.

For every ounce of food and drink taken into the stomach, nearly an ounce of waste material must be carried out of the body. If this waste material is not eliminated day by day it quickly ferments and generates poisons, gases and toxins which are absorbed or sucked into the blood stream, through the lymph ducts, which should suck only nourishment to sustain the body.

A splendid health measure is to drink, before breakfast each day, a glass of real hot water with a teaspoonful of limestone phosphate in it, which is a harmless way to wash these poisons, gases and toxins from the stomach, liver, kidneys and bowels; thus cleansing, sweetening and freshening the entire alimentary canal before putting more food into the stomach.

A quarter pound of limestone phosphate costs but very little at the drug store but is sufficient to make anyone an enthusiast on inside-bathing. Men and women who are accustomed to wake up with a dull, aching head or have furred tongue, bad taste, nasty breath, sallow complexion, others who have bilious attacks, acid stomach or constipation are assured of pronounced improvement in both health and appearance shortly.

The Essentials.
"Is he a typical American?"
"Yes; he likes baseball, has a motor car, owes a mortgage, pays alimony, and thinks the motion pictures have grand opera beaten a mile."—Life.

The Old and Reliable Dr. Isaac Thompson's EYE WATER

is both a remedy for weak, inflamed eyes and an ideal eye wash. Keep your eyes well and they will help keep you.
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