

The Red Mirage

A Story of the French Legion in Algiers

By I. A. R. WYLIE

SYNOPSIS.

Sylvia Omney, her lover, Richard Farquhar, finds, has fallen in love with Captain Arnaud of the Foreign Legion. In Captain Sower's room 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. To shield Arnaud, Sylvia's fiancé, Farquhar professes to have stolen war plans and tells the real culprit why he did so. As Richard Nameless he joins the Foreign Legion and sees Sylvia, now Mme. Arnaud, meet Colonel Destinn. Farquhar meets Sylvia and Gabrielle, and learns from Corporal Goetz of the colonel's cruelty. Arnaud becomes a drunkard and opium smoker. Sylvia becomes friendly with Colonel Destinn. Arnaud becomes jealous of Farquhar. Farquhar, on guard at a villa where a dance is in progress, is shot down by Arnaud. Arnaud justifies his insanely jealous action to Colonel Destinn. Arnaud goes to a dancing girl who loves him for comfort.

Opium is a deadly drug, but it makes men dream away their lives in a sort of artificial peace. Burdened with the grief of desertion, racked by disease that is fatal, buffeted by fate and thoroughly disheartened, a middle-aged man smokes opium to keep his senses deadened. Do you think his action justified?

CHAPTER X—Continued.

"I tried to kill him," he said quietly but distinctly, "and I mean to kill him. That is the only change."
"Is that any change? Has it taught your fair, pure young wife to love and honor you?" He ground his teeth together without answering, and she went on, her voice grown suddenly harsh and contemptuous. "You are a fool, Desire. You are a fool, like all men. What is there in this one woman that you should care? She is pretty, but others are prettier. I have seen her, for it amused me to have a glance at the wonder who could drive two men to the devil. And what is she? A charming doll with a child's eyes and a sparrow's brain. What else?"
The girl rose. She took one of the long-stemmed pipes from the table and lighted it at the brazier. The red embers glowed up on to her face, where was written a somber inscrutable bitterness. She came back and placed the pipe in his inert hand.



"I Tried to Kill Him," He Said Quietly but Distinctly, "and I Mean to Kill Him."

"There!" she said simply. "That is what you have come for. Forgetfulness."

He nodded. Silently he covered back among the ragged cushions and with half-closed eyes began to smoke. In the hovel there was perfect silence. As the minutes passed the subtle magic perfume sleeping beneath the rank sweetness awoke, the lurking dreams and fancies came out from among their shadows and moved lightly to and fro in the brightening circle of firelight. Arnaud smiled wistfully at them. Little by little the terrible lines of pain drawn about his features passed, leaving them a white peace. A sigh broke from his loosely parted lips.

"Sylvia—Sylvia—my wife—"
His head dropped back—the strange-stemmed pipe slipped from his powerless fingers and fell with a soft thud

to the floor. The woman bent over him and kissed him. A single tear, drawn from a well of savage pity, had dropped on the untroubled brow.

"God of our fathers," she whispered from between clenched teeth, "Thou knowest I am bad—rotten to the heart—but thou knowest also I am not so bad as the woman who sent this man to me."

She knelt down, and with her dark head against the sleeper's knee watched and waited.

All was quiet. But on the other side of the curtain an Arab crouching beside the brazier awoke. There was a slight smile about his lips as though his dreams had brought him food for amused reflection, and with a quick glance at his motionless companion he got up and slipped out into the street. It was now toward evening and the great heat of the day was broken. At a white-walled villa on one of the broad avenues he glided through a Moorish doorway into the passage. Before him lay the courtyard where two women talked, their low voices mingling musically. At last he came out into the light. His manner was inimitable in its suggested homage and a hundred unspoken flatteries.

"Madame, it's Abu-Yakoud who ventures before you," he said in his soft Arab French. "Abu-Yakoud, who has seen Mecca and who reads Destiny as an open book. Give me your hand, madame. For a little franc, I will tell you good and evil—what was and what is to come."

Sylvia Arnaud started slightly and turned.

"You shall not come in here," she said impatiently, and yet not without a childish touch of hesitation. "Begging is forbidden. Now be gone!"

She tossed a handful of money on to the white stone flags. Each coin rang out like a note of jangling laughter, which still echoed after her as she passed into the shadows of the gateway.

Abu-Yakoud bent and gathered the nickel pieces from the ground. When he looked up again he stood straight and erect, and the beard had vanished.

"Gabrielle!" he said softly.
She turned a little. The warm gold of evening was on her face and softened the stern lines to a mild and noble serenity.

"I know," she said. "Your voice betrayed you. And then—sooner or later I felt that you would come, though for what purpose God knows."

"Let us hope he does not," he answered sardonically. "I am here on my own business, and my own business has no sanctity about it. I must keep control if I am to win through to the things I want."

"The things you want?" she echoed with deep sadness. "What are they now, Stephen?"

He knelt on the marble edge of the fountain and caught her hand.

"Gabrielle!" he repeated hoarsely.

She looked down at him. Her free hand she laid quietly upon his.

"You are cruel to yourself," she said.

"Why have you come, Stephen?"

"God knows. I have lied so much in all these ghastly years, Gabrielle. I have lied most of all to my own con-

science. I have called you an episode—a folly. I have heaped contempt on you, on my memory of you, and always you have risen as now—the one pure thing that I have loved, my one virtue, my own fidelity."

"Hush, Stephen, we have buried our dead."

"You have—I cannot. I tried. At first it was remorse that would not let me—the knowledge that I have ruined you—dishonored you—"

"That is not true," she interrupted proudly. "No woman—no man—has ever been dishonored by one action. Honor is not a possession to be lost or broken. It is ourselves—what we are. If you had dishonored me I should be different; but I am not different. I have grown stronger—that is all. I see clearer. I am happy."

"Happy? And your name—your position—your people—all lost!"
She smiled faintly.

"Those griefs are old and healed, Stephen. I have a name and a position. They are my own, and I am a little proud of them. I owe you my knowledge of myself and my own strength—some hours' illusion, a broader outlook, a deeper understanding of other women's failures. Let that suffice between us—"

"I cannot." He sprang up with a wild gesture of protest. "It is not remorse that haunts me. I am not the man to feel remorse. I half loved and half despised you. Then—that night when I came back and found that you knew me for what I was—a liar, a cheat, a common spy, to be bought and sold by every man—and had left me on the very eve of my atonement to you—then I knew my own madness. From that hour I wanted you."

"It's too late, Stephen," she said, "too late. I have buried my dead, dear. I cannot call the dead to life. We are free and we stand alone. We must go our ways, Stephen."

"I won't plead, Gabrielle. I know you better." Then suddenly he turned and stumbled blindly into the darkness of the passageway.

CHAPTER XI.

Behind the Mosque.

Colonel Destinn rode through Sidi-bel-Abbes, and many of those he passed looked after him. One or two of his observers were soldiers wearing a red and blue uniform of the Legion. They saluted first and grimaced only after a cautious interval.

"Nom d'un Petard! Will the devil never grow old?"

Women looked after him—Arab women from behind mysterious veils, and Europeans—all with the same feminine interest in what is strong. For Colonel Destinn sat his horse with grace and ease, and the slight erect figure carried the years lightly. How many the years were no one knew.

Thus he rode slowly through the pleasant shaded avenues, skirting the nigger quarter, till he reached the plateau. There he drew rein, his keen eyes sweeping the low girdle of olive trees and clustering native hovels to the far side, where the mosque rose up in stately purity against the turquoise sky. Through the graceful archway a

HOT WATER BED IS RESTFUL

Four Hours' Sleep in Bathtub Said to Be Equal to Eight of Usual Kind.

Sleeping in a bath tub full of water kept at blood temperature is claimed by some physicians to give the required amount of rest in half the time that sleeping in a bed requires. Popular Science Monthly says. In other words, four hours' sleep in a bathtub filled with water at the proper temperature—and always maintained at that temperature—will result in the exact amount of restfulness that eight hours in bed will give.

The explanation is that warm water completely relaxes the nerves, which ordinary sleep does not necessarily do. The most difficult part of this treatment is in maintaining the water at a constant temperature, and for the purpose of accomplishing the result a middle western manufacturer has recently brought out on the market a thermostatic water-control apparatus, which, as its name implies, maintains the water at any desired temperature.

In practice, the patient climbs into a bath tub filled with water, his head protruding through a hole in a rubber blanket, which is strapped around the edges of the tub. Water constantly

flows in at one end of the tub and out at the other.

For the hurried business man, who complains that his working day is too short, such a sleeping couch as this should have a distinct appeal. He should be willing to rest four hours at least.

Primitive Weapons.

The bolo is a kind of large single-edged knife, of considerable length, resembling a machete. It is now used as an agricultural instrument or a weapon of war, as occasion demands, by some of the natives of the Philippine Islands. The bolos is a missile weapon, consisting of two or more balls of stone or metal fastened to the ends of connected cords, and hurled so as to hopple or entangle cattle and large game. It is used by the Gauchos and Indians of South America. A similar weapon is used by some of the African tribes, and a small form by the Eskimos for catching birds.

Naturally.

"The wealthy soap manufacturer in our neighborhood has bought a handsome automobile."

"What kind is it?"

"I don't know, but I should call it a soap bubble."

double line of Arabs drifted backward and forward in a soft-flowing, unbroken stream of worship, and suddenly Colonel Destinn set spurs and galloped over the hard clay, scattering the stragglers to right and left.

"Madame Arnaud!"

She turned with a little start of surprise, and freeing herself from the cumbersome red slippers which encased her infidel feet, she came to meet him, her hand outstretched in gracious welcome.

"Why, Colonel Destinn! You!"

"There's no one here for whom it is necessary to play comedy," he answered with brutal directness. "You had my note?"

"Yes—" She crimsoned and faltered, and he swung himself to the ground, looping the bridle over his wrist.

"We must get away from the crowd," he said in the same curt, imperative tone. "It is fairly quiet behind the



Those Griefs Are Old and Healed, Stephen.

mosque. Take my arm. The rough ground is excuse enough."

"If anyone saw us they would think—"

"Nothing that is not true, madame." She hesitated, half resentful, half afraid.

"I am beginning to ask myself what is the truth, colonel."

"That is what I have come to tell you."

They walked on. Overhead, from the high towers of the mosque, an Arab chant drifted down to them through the quiet air—

"I extol the greatness of the Lord, of God the most high—"

They were quite alone now. On their right the white walls sheltered them; to the left the open sunscorched plateau. Colonel Destinn stood still and faced his companion.

"Well," he said, "have you nothing to say to me?"

"I?" She lifted her lustrous brown eyes to his in simple inquiry. "What should I have to say?"

"Your husband is safe."

"Oh, Desire! Yes, I had forgotten about it almost. It was an accident. He thought I was about to be attacked. He is so nervous and excitable, and the night was dark. He explained it all—"

"Yes, Captain Arnaud explained everything." There was a block of stone beside him and he set his foot upon it, leaning forward so that their faces were on a level. "Madame Arnaud! Do you really think I believe you or in you? My child, if your husband had acted as you say, he would have been cashed for an intoxicated incapable; but he gave me his explanation. It was an explanation which men among themselves—some men—understand and accept—madness on account of a woman. I let your husband go free. Do you thank me?" She made no answer. The graceful knowledge of her power was gone. Her eyes hung on his with the blankness of a will in abeyance. "You do not thank me," he went on deliberately. "You would like to. You would like to play the role of the faithful wronged wife. But I am the one person before whom you cannot act, either to yourself or to others. I have seen through you, and your little shallow soul knows it. All artifice between us is useless. Do not move—stay there!" He caught her hands and held them in a grip of iron.

Will Sylvia be strong enough to resist the fierce fire of sensual temptation which Colonel Destinn holds to her scorching soul? Will she fall into a moral abyss?

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

A Kansas Editorial

It warmed our hearts the other day to see a top buggy, new and glistening, claim a place among the motor cars and farm wagons in the rank around Centerville's court house square. When we found out who owned that buggy we couldn't help but chuckle. Hodge's boy has the right idea; gasoline can burn up the roads, but a trusty old nag with a buggy will find the shortest way to Sarah's heart. Bide your time, Jim! The good old country buggy is still the king of stage guns in Centerville's affairs of affection. Two or three nights a week young Shaw takes Sarah for a spin in his flivver. Well, let him—and as often as he wants! Mere speed can't win a girl like Sarah. Give Shaw his choice moonlight nights and be you content with the dark ones. His eyes are always on the road. His hands are busy with the steering wheel. His voice is drowned in chugs and whirs and sputters. Here lies your incomparable advantage, Jim; you can lay down the reins! A long road and a shadowy one. Something to say and an eternity to say it.—Colliers.

Onion Seed Poor.

The average germination percentage of onions in Oregon is low this year, only 51.90% germinating, as compared with 75.13% for last year. The germination of over 34% of the onion samples was below 25%.

Onions make up over ten per cent of all germination tests made in the Oregon Branch Seed Testing Laboratory this year.

Up to Them.

"Why did Mendelssohn compose his 'Songs Without Words'?"

"Possibly to give the audience an unhampered chance to talk."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

The Inexpressible Joy

of being able to eat without any annoying distress must have its beginning in a strong, active stomach.

If you suffer from poor appetite, heartburn, cramps, biliousness, constipation or malaria, JUST TRY

HOSTETTER'S Stomach Bitters

63 Years a Family Medicine

Practical Prohibition.

"I understand you are now one of the officials of Crimmon Gulch."

"Yep," replied Bronco Bob. "I come in on the prohibition ticket."

"And how is prohibition working out?"

"Fine. We've got it fixed now so that nobody but the particular friends of us authorities can buy or sell a drop."—Wichita Eagle.

HELP FOR WORKING WOMEN

Some Have to Keep on Until They Almost Drop. How Mrs. Conley Got Help.

Here is a letter from a woman who had to work, but was too weak and suffered too much to continue. How she regained health:—

Frankfort, Ky.—"I suffered so much with female weakness that I could not do my own work, had to hire it done. I heard so much about Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound that I tried it. I took three bottles and I found it to be all you claim. Now I feel as well as ever I did and am able to do all my own work again. I recommend it to any woman suffering from female weakness. You may publish my letter if you wish."—Mrs. JAMES CONLEY, 516 St. Clair St., Frankfort, Ky.

No woman suffering from any form of female trouble should lose hope until she has given Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound a fair trial.

This famous remedy, the medicinal ingredients of which are derived from native roots and herbs, has for forty years proved to be a most valuable tonic and invigorator of the female organism.

All women are invited to write to the Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co., Lynn, Mass., for special advice.—It will be confidential.

