

The Red Mirage

A Story of the French Legion in Algiers

By I. A. R. WYLIE

SYNOPSIS.

Sylvia Ormeau, 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. Gabrielle meets Lowe, for whom she had sacrificed position and reputation, and tells him she is free from him. Sylvia meets Destinn behind the mosque.

Col. Destinn understands what a mean little soul Sylvia has and she knows he does. As a result of his power over her, do you believe she will surrender herself to him—a man without honor or mercy?

CHAPTER XI—Continued.

She tried to wrench her hands free, the while her eyes remained in helpless attendance on his.

"Colonel Destinn—you are insulting—you have no right—"

"I am not insulting. And if I were you would have to listen to me. The power I have over you is yours over me. We belong together, Madame Arnaud, by virtue of our vice. We are both corrupt, worthless—you in your way, I in mine. Hear me out, please! I am a brutal man, and I am tearing down the veil with brutal hands. But no matter—you will have it mended by tomorrow. For an hour I choose that you should see clearly. You have hounded two men to their ruin—in all innocence. You set yourself on a false pedestal which they could not reach—you set them a task which they could not accomplish without using your own methods. They had not your powers of assuming virtue nor my powers of valuing your peculiar worth. The one man virtually committed suicide at the altar of your perfection, the other murder."

He stopped entirely. It was as though his own thoughts had engulfed his knowledge of her existence. She drew her hands away, and he made no effort to retain them.

"Colonel Destinn," she said gently. "I think you must be mad. Even if the dreadful things you have said were true, why should you say them to me? I gave you my friendship because you seemed to need it—a little, as you say, because I myself was lonely and unhappy. But does that merit so much brutality in return?"

"Forgive me, madame. I am a ruffian. I have forgotten the language. See, I am pleading with you for my life, my sanity. A soul in hell—a soul that you could save cries out to you as to the last hope of its salvation. Are you a woman and have not the courage to hold out a hand from your own grief to a deeper grief, a deeper despair? Will you turn away from me, Sylvia?"

"Colonel Destinn, we shall neither of us find peace in evil," she said. "You have done wrong—you have thrown a shadow on a friendship that I treasure. Whatever we have to bear we must bear bravely and with honor."

"What do I ask of you?" He took her hands between his own and held them caressingly. "Only what you say you have given me—friendship, but friendship freed from false convention and hypocrisy, friendship that dare be itself and its own law. I need you. A man's fate lies in your hands."

He broke off, and she too was silent. In his silence there was covered irony, in hers fear. Her eyes no longer met his. She was gazing fixedly across the plateau to where a dark stream flowed out from between the banks of olive and came on swiftly, its surface, caught by the evening sun, glittering in long lines of silver.

"Look," she said under her breath. He glanced over his shoulder. A harsh bugle note rang through the peaceful evening stillness, and as though the sound had held enchantment, the stream receded, rolled back on itself in waves of light, and then amid muted thunder came to rest. Colonel Destinn nodded.

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"It is their last camp-out before we go south," he said. "We are going south. Did you know that?"

"No," she said in that same low tone.

"There is the road to be completed—my road. Until you came it was my life—the thing I deadened my brain with—a kind of narcotic. It is the finest military road in Algiers, and in three months it will be finished." He looked her deep into the eyes. "There are limits to human patience. I had not meant to outlive my ambition. It was the term I had set myself. Shall I come back, Sylvia?"

She made no answer. She seemed only in part to understand him. But instinctively she recognized that the pleasant intermezzo of romance which she had played to her own boredom



"Colonel Destinn," She Said Gently, "I Think You Must Be Mad."

had ended abruptly, leaving her at the mercy of an incalculable force. This man, as he had said, held the reins.

Colonel Destinn laid his hands on her shoulders. "Poor child!" he said almost pityingly. "You cannot choose the straight path even to the devil. Who am I to blame? Come, I will make an end for you. You need not choose; leave it to destiny—to me. There is only one thing I ask. Before I go south I must say good-by to you. You will come? It is the only answer I shall need."

A Jewish woman laden with flowers came round the corner of the mosque, singing a monotonous Arab song. Colonel Destinn bowed.

"Au revoir, Madame Arnaud." She turned from him with a little strained smile about her white lips.

"Au revoir, Colonel Destinn." The flower-seller came up to her, offering her a sprig of jasmine, and she accepted and paid for it with a mechanical self-possession. Convention had lent her the strength to appear indifferent. Yet her hand trembled. The woman looked up into her face with a bold smile.

"Let madame keep the flower ever with her," she said. "It carries a blessing to a pure heart."

Sylvia Arnaud nodded and passed on.

CHAPTER XII.

The Choice.

Sylvia Arnaud sat at her small writing table beneath the lamp, and before putting her signature to the completed letter before her reread Mrs. Farquhar's concluding sentences. "You will be pleased to hear that Richard has settled down at last," Mrs. Farquhar had written in her sprawling, reckless hand. "He has taken a ranch in Australia and is doing very well. I have even hopes that some day soon I shall have news from him of the sort dear to every woman's heart—though heaven knows why. He asked me in his last letter to be remembered to you."

Sylvia Arnaud sighed and picked up her pen.

"I am glad to hear such good things of Richard," she wrote, and then added "Sylvia Arnaud" in prim neat letters. When the envelope had been addressed and closed she sat back with a little exclamation of relief.

"How I hate letters," she said irritably. "They are the worst form of social hypocrisy without even a cup of tea or nice frocks to make them bearable. You never write letters, do you, Miss Smith?"

Miss Smith, intent on mending a beautiful bertha collar of brussels lace, did not look up.

"I have no one to whom it is worth while pretending," she said in her direct way. "And even if they were worth while, I doubt if I should think so."

"You have really no friends—no relations?"

"No one."

The light from the tall rose-colored lamp behind her fell softly on her bent head and drew warm golden colors from the thick coils of hair as usually neatly plaited into obedience. Her hands, busy with the delicate task, were also in the light, and their extraordinary whiteness and beauty caught Sylvia's wandering attention.

"What wonderful hands you have!" she said, with a delightful spontaneous enthusiasm. "One would think you spent half your days looking after them—which, of course, you can't do."

"They are heaven's customary compensation to ugly women," Miss Smith answered, smiling.

Sylvia turned away impatiently, and the old pucker of nervous restlessness crept back between her brows. For a few minutes neither woman spoke.



"Wait a Moment, I Have Something to Say to You."

Then suddenly Sylvia broke the silence—with a rush, as though a deep reluctance had been swept aside by a deeper need of speech.

"Do you believe the dead see us, Miss Smith?" she asked.

Miss Smith looked up then, her eyes full of shadowy thought.

"I don't know," she answered, half to herself. "But there is one thing of which we can be sure—our instinct, our conscience. If we feel that the dead see us, then we know that we are standing at the crossroads—between good and evil—and that we must choose." She got up quickly, for Sylvia Arnaud had dropped forward with her face buried in her hands and the white, beautiful shoulders were quivering. "Madame Arnaud, what is it? Have I hurt you?"

"No, not you. But I am unhappy—terribly unhappy. I never felt it before, but I feel tonight that my brother is dead. Until now I always had hope—and now I have none." She lifted her tear-stained, twisted young face to the woman beside her. "I think I loved my brother," she said. "You won't believe me—you think I am vain and shallow and heartless, and you may be right. I—I am not sure of anything except my brother. I have been trying to go right down into myself, but I can only find darkness and confusion. I want to stop thinking—to be like I was—but I can't. Even my love for my brother doesn't seem so certain. What is it—what has happened to me?"

Gabrielle Smith did not answer for a

moment. She touched the lightly-clasped hands with a gentle compassion, but her eyes were fixed absently in front of her.

"I don't know," she said. "I expect we all feel like that sometimes—when we stop taking ourselves for granted. Or perhaps—unknown to you—the crisis is there."

"The crisis?" Outside in the courtyard Sylvia Arnaud's ear had caught the sound of heavy footsteps. She rose with a painful change of expression, then, as she saw her companion's face, became calm, gently indifferent, without trace of the sudden outburst save for the heightened color, the feverish brightness of her eyes.

Desire Arnaud glanced at her as he entered. She had resumed her correspondence and did not turn, but the quiet disparagement of her attitude seemed too usual to affect him. He crossed the room and, tossing his key on the table, sank wearily in the chair which Gabrielle had just vacated. His uniform was soiled and dust-stained, and the fine yellow sand of the desert seemed to have crept into the deep furrows of his face, marking them out as with a merciless pencil.

Gabrielle Smith turned from him, and went quietly to the tea table and began to pour out. But he did not seem to see her. The whole man had sunk into a heavy stupor, beyond the reach of sound apparently, without knowledge of his surroundings. Yet as his wife rose from her place he stirred, his eyes followed under the heavy white-lashed lids.

"Wait a moment. I have something to say to you."

She stopped. Her fair head was thrown back slightly; her features would have been expressionless but for the faint suggestion of contempt about the mouth.

Has Arnaud learned of Sylvia's meeting with Col. Destinn, and in his madness, is he about to shoot her and then commit suicide?

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

HOW THE GRIPPE IS SPREAD

Gathering of Large Crowds in Badly Ventilated Places is One of the Chief Causes.

It may be interesting to a considerable number of persons to know that the handy term, "la grippe," which is quite as expressive if deprived of the "la" and reduced to four letters, comes to us from the French verb "gripper," meaning to seize, clutch or nab, and all three of these terms in English are required fully to express the condition of the victim of the dread visitation. Even among physicians there is a tendency to indefiniteness in naming diseases of the naso-pharyngeal organs, nearly every kind of severe cold, influenza, coryza or catarrh being called grippe. Dr. Charles Halpin Nammack, visiting physician of Bellevue hospital, says, in the New York Medical Record, that the present epidemic, which is a national affair, has depended for its spread and success on three main factors: The tremendous variation in climatic conditions; the crowding together of great masses of people in badly ventilated cars, moving picture shows and other halls, and the contamination of the air which they have been obliged to breathe, by the coughing, sneezing and spitting of those already suffering from some form of respiratory infection, usually of the common cold type. Under direction of the New York board of health the police of that city arrested in one week more than 1,600 persons for expectorating in public places. Of these, 1,400 suffered conviction and fines. It is noted that epidemics of grippe as a clinical entity have been recognized for almost a hundred years, but it was not until 1892 that the bacilli were discovered in the sputum of the sufferer.

Minerals in New Mexico.

In the days when New Mexico was a hinterland an Indian showed some specimens of rock he had found on Baldy Peak to white men, who recognized them as copper ore, and who, guided by the Indian, found the ledge and located a prospect. The men doing development work on this copper prospect in 1866 found placer gold and traced it to its parent ledge. The placers yielded \$2,250,000 and the gold mine about \$1,150,000, but the rich ore was exhausted in a few years, and for over forty years desultory prospecting for other ore bodies was carried on without notable results. In recent years prospecting based on the geologic relations of the old ore body resulted in the discovery of a new body of rich ore, which has yielded nearly \$250,000 in ten months and is still producing.

New Use for Hopvines.

One of the latest results of the efforts of Germany's scientists to aid the fatherland is the discovery that hopvines make an excellent material for paper, jute and charcoal.

India is now said to be producing more coal than all the other British dependencies.

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Patriotism rarely consists of voting a straight ticket.

There is also the sort of morality that is due to cold feet.

Most men are busy enough not to want to serve on a jury.

When a man says plain talk he means unpleasant talk.

A friend is a useful institution if you don't use him too much.

Sometimes a line of hot air is dignified by calling it a propaganda.

It seems impossible for one to do his duty and keep off everybody's toes.

While one is paying interest he shouldn't lead too many reform movements.

Complications sometimes represent that part of an illness the doctors fail to understand.

It wasn't a lack of raw material which eliminated the shell game as a side line of the circus.—Atchison Globe.

Obliging.

At a certain church in the Jersey town it is the invariable custom of the clergyman to kiss the bride after the ceremony. A young woman who was about to be married in this church did not relish the prospect and instructed her prospective husband to tell the clergyman that she did not wish him to kiss her. The bridegroom obeyed the instructions given.

"Well, Harry," said the young woman when he appeared, "did you tell the minister that I did not wish him to kiss me?"

"Yes."

"And what did he say?"

"He said that, in that case, he would charge only half the usual fee."

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