

# The Red Mirage

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Author of "The Native Born," "Dividing Waters," etc.

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## SYNOPSIS.

Sylvia Omney, her lover, Richard Farquhar, finds, has fallen in love with Captain Arnaud of the Foreign Legion. Farquhar forces Sower to have Preston's I O U's returned to him. Sower forces Farquhar to resign his commission. Gabrielle saves Farquhar from suicide. To shield Arnaud, Sylvia's fiancé, Farquhar professes to have stolen war plans. As Richard Nameless he joins the Foreign Legion. Farquhar meets Sylvia and Gabrielle. Arnaud becomes a drunkard and opium smoker. Sylvia becomes friendly with Colonel Destin. Arnaud becomes jealous of Farquhar and is shot down by him. 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 Destin behind the mosque. Arnaud becomes ill but Sylvia will not help him, nor interfere for Farquhar. Gabrielle, aiding Farquhar, who is under punishment, is mistaken by him for his delirium for Sylvia. Farquhar delivering a message to Destin at night finds Sylvia with him. He learns that it was Gabrielle who aided him. Gabrielle leaves Sylvia and goes to Farquhar's mother, who has come to Algiers in an effort to save her son. While on a march Farquhar saves Destin's life. Arnaud brings relief to the column attacked by Arabs.

"We can't help our relatives, but thank heaven we can choose our friends," is a sentiment voiced by many persons. Richard Farquhar, in great trouble, has cause to appreciate and cherish the love of his friends for him and to loathe his kin.

## CHAPTER XVII—Continued.

"I stole these," he said. I thought they would be my last. I was mistaken apparently. Am I to thank you?" "Give me a cigarette instead."

Their faces were close together. The red glow of their cigarettes burned up between them, and they looked each other in the eyes. Then a hand was stretched out and touched Farquhar's with an almost feminine gentleness.

"Is there anything I can do for you—when we get back? Any message?"

"Yes—I should be grateful. Will you go to Madame Arnaud? Ask for her companion—a Miss Smith—a little countrywoman of mine. Will you tell her—how it happened?"

"I promise you, Nameless."

Farquhar bowed his head for a moment.

"Tell her the mirage was not so splendid as the truth."

The night deepened with the silence. They had forgotten that their hands were still clasped together. Like children they dreamed old dreams and trod old paths. The dawn broke, and instinctively their eyes sought the west. Amid the golden clouds drifting up from the horizon the night had built a city of temples and palaces, domed with silver, whose pale ethereal minarets and glowing cupolas reached up into the translucent light of morning. For a moment or two it brightened, the slender outlines strengthening almost to reality—then faded—and as the sun rose passed wholly into the vacant day.

"Mirage?"

Goetz rose slowly and stiffly.

"The mirage is gone," he said. He pointed then to something moving swiftly over the wide sweep of plain. "Colonel Destin's calculated within the hour," he said. "There are the chasseurs."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### The Return.

In the softly-lighted courtyard of the Hotel de France a newly-imported Zigeuner Kapelle was playing the waltz from Hoffman's "Erzählungen." Sylvia Arnaud, a red and gold Carmen, danced joyously to the slow graceful strains, and her partner smiled down into her face, upturned and brilliantly lovely in its sheer ecstasy of living.

"Look at that queer old lady with the white wig! Is she a masquer? And that funny, gray little thing beside her! I call them the Proprieties. What are they doing here?"

"How should I know?" Sylvia returned with sudden impatience.

As they passed on Mrs. Farquhar turned and touched Gabrielle on the arm.

"Sylvia has just seen us," she said. "I have spoiled the evening for her. It was worth while coming. She tried to laugh at me with that young fool, but she couldn't. She is beginning to be afraid. If Richard dies I shall haunt her till she goes mad."

In the courtyard of the hotel two more or less intoxicated pterros danced a cancan to the delirious plaud-

its of an audience themselves overcome by the heat and passion that hung heavy in the night air. Sylvia Arnaud clapped her hands like a child. The noise of the dancing and music reached the lighted room that faced out on the avenue. At his place by the window Stephen Lowe seemed plunged in his own thoughts, and the man in evening dress who stood with his clenched hand on the table stamped impatiently.

"Are you listening, Mr. Lowe?" "Yes, yes, I am listening. I heard everything you said. Sower was cashed. I am not surprised. His profession was his tragedy. He would have made an admirable company promoter, but the task of being an honest gentleman was too much for him. You say he has committed suicide. Have you come all this way to tell me of poor Sower's more or less providential escape, Mr. Preston?"

The young man crimsoned, but answered steadily.

"You were his friend."

A faint ironical smile crept over Lowe's suffering features.

"I was Sower's partner," he said quietly. "You were Farquhar's friend. You chose to act with us against him—of your own free will. There was a compact, an understanding. The whole scene that night was a farce, a little play-acting with you as an unconscious actor. Farquhar intervened. He blundered recklessly, but he spoiled our plans."

"You scoundrel!"

"Yes, I am a scoundrel," Lowe said simply; "but do not trouble to murder me. That would get you into difficulties, and it is not necessary."

He touched himself lightly on the chest. "I have something here which will finish me off in a month or two—less pleasantly than you would do. That is why I care not at all how much or how little you know. The partnership is ended—and I am going out of business."

He laughed sardonically and turned back to the window. The crowd beneath had broken up and fallen back on either side beneath the trees of the avenue, and from the distance there sounded a dull rhythmic beat and the ominous rattle of drums. "The Legion has returned," Lowe said quietly. "Do you want to see the saddest sight on earth, Mr. Preston?"

The young man drew nearer, reluctant yet fascinated. His hands were no longer clenched. He was looking at the gaunt figure leaning negligently against the window edge as at something monstrous, incredible.

"Have you no conscience—no remorse?" he said.

"Oh, yes, Mr. Preston, a great deal."

"Then pity my remorse. For God's sake—if you know—tell me why Farquhar did that thing—help me to understand."

The boyish passionate pleading caused Lowe to turn a moment. He smiled, and that faint glimmer of half-compassionate understanding was a light falling deep into a turbid stream—revealing many sunken, forgotten things.

"Farquhar sacrificed himself," he said. "He resigned because Sower wished it. That seems incredible. But Sower held the reins. There was an old tragedy which he used for his own ends—the tragedy of his father's death and of Captain Farquhar's disappearance."

The roll of drums was close at hand, and a woman's note of laughter fluttered up birdlike from the somber-flowing tide of sound.

Lowe turned back to the window.

"You see, Sower miscalculated," he went on. "He was a Jew from God knows where, and he lost his sense of patriotism. He did not understand this red-hot love of one's birthplace. He did not understand the reckless temperament of the man with whom he was dealing. Are you beginning to understand, Mr. Preston?"

"Yes, I am beginning to understand," Preston said dully. "And then?"

"Then history repeated itself—not in incident, but in character. Robert Sower tried to be the honorable gentleman; he tried even, strange as it may seem, to gain Farquhar's friendship. He failed, and then—you remember that scene at the card tables? That decided him. Blood and instinct were too strong. He turned and used his power."

Lowe stepped out on to the balcony, and bent forward with his elbows on the rail, watching the dense company of chasseurs force their way through the restless crowd. The clash of the band was already fainter. The chasseurs rode now in silence, and once more the dull monotonous tread predominated, strangely, persistently ominous. "You know where Farquhar is?" Preston said imperatively. "You know what has become of him?"

"Perhaps—I am not sure."

"If you know remorse you must wish to atone," Preston said hoarsely.

"A scoundrel, at the end of his day's work, has much to atone for," was the abstracted answer. "I have chosen my atonement, Mr. Preston. All atonement is inadequate, but mine shall be made—for my greatest wrong, at whatever cost—" He broke off. "The Legion," he said quietly.

Preston did not speak, silenced against his will by the scene beneath

him. The dancers from the hotel had swarmed up to the long lines of hanging lanterns at the edge of the garden. A clown climbed upon the stone gatepost and was beating wildly, hilariously on the heads of the crowd with his bladder, shouting a witticism at each laughing victim. But beyond a thin dark stream flowed from the darkness into the light and from light back into darkness. They were grotesque figures—hideous, pitiable. These also were figures of carnival—but different. They marched four deep—a hundred of them. Their heads were bowed. Beneath the flare of lights each man seemed to shrink, to cower closer to his neighbor, like a herded terrified animal. And many stumbled. Preston's hands tightened on the rails in front of him.

"Poor devils!"

A few yards behind the last line a spahl rode alone. A short rope was attached to his saddle—and to a man who stumbled at his horse's heels. The rope was round his neck; his hands were bound behind him, and the broken link of a chain clanked in the sudden stricken stillness. His kept had been knocked off, and every line in that gaunt quiet face was visible. As though blinded by the sudden light, he reeled and was jerked brutally to his knees. A woman laughed hysterically. Instantly he had recovered. And in that recovery, that quiet acceptance of a crowning humiliation there was a dignity, a courage that held the crowd a moment longer in awe-struck silence.

"God in heaven—Farquhar!"

Lowe nodded.

"You know now," he said. "You know that your atonement has come too late."

The tragic figure passed on; an officer on horseback rode into the light, and the crowd stirred in restless relief. But above that sudden wave of movement, above the clown's half-ashamed burst of reconquered merriment there sounded a cry—a muffled wail of incredulous agony. The officer turned in his saddle. Sylvia Arnaud, in the front row of the masques, waved to him. He did not look at her, and she glanced impatiently at the boy-Mephistopheles beside her.

"What was that? Didn't you hear?" He laughed.

"Someone fainted. That queer old fury with the white wig, I believe. You're not frightened?"

"Oh, no—no!"

"Of course not. One gets accustomed to that sort of thing here, does one not? A runaway legionary! Who cares?" He offered her his arm with an elaborate bow. "May we not go on dancing, Carmen?"

## CHAPTER XIX.

### The Last Offer.

The long low-built room was full of sunshine. It poured in through the half-opened shutters and danced on the whitewashed walls and on the long table with its litter of maps and documents. The doors at the far end were thrown open, and two soldiers with fixed bayonets took up their posts on either hand. A few minutes

later a group of officers followed. They were six in number—two lieutenants, three captains and a major. They belonged to the same regiment. They exchanged desultory remarks, and from time to time one or another of them laughed. Only Josize Arnaud was silent.

A moment later the sentries presented arms and Colonel Destin entered. All six men sprang to their feet. There was more than formal military courtesy in that simultaneous movement. Their eyes were fixed on his face as on some feared and incalculable oracle.

"Pray be seated, gentlemen."

He took his place in the midst of them beneath the two tricolors draped perfectly over a miniature and emblematic bust of the republic. "Bring in the prisoner," he said sharply.

The sentries repeated the order, and in the brief interval that followed the six men relaxed into their former attitude of languid indifference. The two younger officers exchanged whispered comments, and one of them laughed.

The door opened and a sergeant entered, followed by two corporals and a man whose hands and feet were chained. There was a short silence. The sergeant made an authoritative gesture, and the man was thrust forward and the door closed again, shutting out the brief glimpse of sunlit courtyard.

"The prisoner's number?"

The sergeant drew out a bulky document from between the buttons of his tunic.

"No. 4005, called Richard Nameless of the First regiment, the Eleventh company."

"The accusation?"

"Conspiracy and mutiny on the field."

"Any previous record?"

"No, my colonel, but marked as a dangerous character."

"Very well, sergeant. You can stand back."

The man saluted and retired a few paces, leaving his prisoner alone, facing the table. Colonel Destin looked up. As their eyes met the prisoner bowed, gravely, without bravado, with an instinctive courtesy which became him strangely well. Colonel Destin's outstretched hands were clenched, and the knuckles stood out white and polished as marble. There was no trace of emotion on the implacable features, and his voice sounded formal and indifferent.

"In the ordinary course of events this case would go to the court at Oran," he said. "But I have received instructions from General Meunier to deal with all such offenses summarily. There have been signs of unrest in the Legion. General Meunier demands that an example should be made."

The major nodded.

"It's essential to discipline," he murmured vaguely.

Does Colonel Destin know that he is about to pass sentence on his own son? In case he learns, do you believe the knowledge will alter the severity of his judgment?

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## LIVED IN EVENTFUL TIMES

Capt. Thomas A. Briggs of 170 Macdon street had an unusually eventful life, the Brooklyn Eagle states. The captain admitted, when questioned, that he might have had "a few experiences" during the eighty-one years he had been on this earth, but what of that?

"I was born at Athens, Greene county, this state, September 4, 1834," said Captain Briggs. "When fourteen years of age I was cook on my father's sloop Superior, which was engaged in the brick-carrying trade. I cooked for five men for five years. At nineteen years of age I was captain of my own boat. "When the panic of 1857 came on the brick industry was hard hit. I laid up my sloop, came to New York and got a position on a sidewheel tug-boat at a salary of \$30 a month. A few months later I owned a boat and it was not long before I found myself in debt to the extent of \$16,000.

"My first job with the new tug was to tow a bark from Sag harbor to New York. When we got to Sag harbor the tug ran on a sand pile and nearly broke her back. Two years later I sold the boat with which I had cleared \$18,000. Then I built a sidewheel steamer which cost me \$20,000.

"Then came the war. I got a charter with the government for my steamer to act as a dispatch boat and this lasted for three years and eight months. When we reached the east shore of Chesapeake bay we learned that the cables had been cut by the enemy.

"One day I received orders from Colonel James, who was in command at Fort Monroe, to meet a ship in Hampton Roads and bring Jefferson Davis ashore. I had explicit orders that there should be nobody on my boat excepting myself and crew. When we drew up aside that ship Davis and his wife came up on deck and stood there for fully five minutes, she with her head on his shoulder, crying.

"Davis climbed down the rope ladder hung over the side of the ship and I noticed as he came on deck that he was weary. I tendered him a stool. He tipped his hat and thanked me. Later, that stool was broken into one thousand pieces and carried away as souvenirs. Right there I want to say that Jefferson Davis was not ill-treated, as has been said, while he was in Fort Monroe. He had everything he wanted and was accorded fine treatment.

"At another time I was off Fort Monroe when General Grant was anxious to get up to City Point. The fog was so thick that another boat captain said it was not safe to make the trip because of the mines. I made the trip all right and never once shut off steam on the way. About the time Sherman was getting ready for his historic march I made a run down the river when bullets broke the glass in the plothouse, but I came through without a scratch. I carried hundreds of wounded southerners on my boat. I remember one instance when I asked a man with his leg off at the knee if there was anything I could do for him and he said he prized above all other things at that time a drink of water."

After the war Captain Briggs returned to his up river home. He was elected an assemblyman in 1867 and was named a member of the committee on commerce and navigation. He came to New York in 1885 and engaged in the ice business. For thirteen years, two terms under President Cleveland, and one under President Harrison, he was public store and general order carman of the port of New York. Then he became contracting carman for several big eastern district manufacturers.

Captain Briggs was never sick but once in his life, and that was for so brief a period that he never learned from the attending physician the real nature of his illness.

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### No Permit.

"Here's interesting news." "What's that?" "In Sengal you have to get a government permit to take a bath." "Dat's de place for me. I'm always on de out wit' de administration."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription makes weak women strong, sick women well, no alcohol. Sold in tablets or liquid.

### Stark Realism.

Mother (entering the nursery) — Children, why do you sit about looking so solemn and unhappy? Why not play a game of some sort? One of 'em—We are playing. We're grown-up ladies making a call.—New York Times.

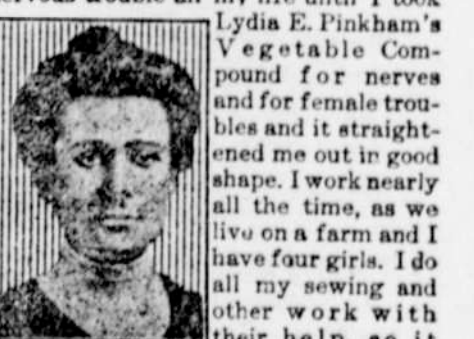
### Might Help Some.

"Preparedness, you say?" "Yes, mother. All we girls are going in for it strong." "Well, I hope that tendency will moderate your reluctance to wear rubbers in wet weather," sighed Mrs. — Louisville Courier-Journal.

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