



FROM NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS  
Compiled by Wm. R. Mackrill.

**SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER ONE.**  
Henry Adams, European representative of American Manufacturers, and a West Point graduate, is visiting in Paris at the time of war between France and Germany. He is drawn into conference with the French General Staff. The German invasion has begun on the Meuse River. Adams declares this a war of attrition. He organizes a reconnaissance force and details of troops to take advantage of the Meuse River. Adams declares this a war of attrition. He organizes a reconnaissance force and details of troops to take advantage of the Meuse River.

**CHAPTER II.**  
The balloon was now within half a mile of the earth, and settling steadily. Beneath us was a sea of troops. The bullets came in a shower. Hechters gave a shout and ran to the side, shot through the heart. Martini's hand was shattered as it gripped the rail of the basket. Adams expected death. He stood erect against the ropes, the supporting cable at one end of the basket. It seemed incredible to him that a target for the bullets of a thousand soldiers with no opportunity to reply. Suddenly the basket gave a violent lurch. Instinctively my grasp tightened on the supporting cables, and I was, for that instant a well directed shell from a rapid-firer out the cable at the other end, and the car swayed, hanging by a slender wire rope. I drew myself up and got a firm hold of the network surrounding the gas bag. There I hung, gripping for my very life with both hands; and as I looked down I saw Martini whirling over and over in mid air, and the body of poor poor Hechters falling like a plummet. Then the single support gave way, and the basket went down after a few moments.

I closed my eyes, sick with horror and faint from my tremendous muscular efforts. As in a dream I was conscious of a soft light through the air. The sounds of shooting ceased. The whistle of bullets ceased. I realized that the balloon, freed of its weight of passengers, was rising rapidly into the upper air. Ah, then I would escape, after all. I tried to collect my thoughts, knowing that should my consciousness my grip would weaken.

Suddenly I felt that I had entered a stream of cold air. It was sweet and pure. It stimulated my eyes, and I glanced below me. Earth could not be seen. I was in the clouds. Remember, now, that I hang by the grip of two hands, from a coarse net made of half-inch rope forming a casing for the balloon. I knew that I must soon be compelled to rest or I must let go and follow my fate as a balloon. Summoning all my nerve, I threw up one leg, and as luck would have it, caught my foot in a mesh of the net. I pushed my leg through until the rope was under my knee, then rested for a few sweet minutes hanging there like a crane of the past.

Presently I secured a similar hold with the other foot, then working hard and carefully, managed to get both arms into the meshes, and the blessed interval was relieved of severe strain, though my hold was by no means secure. The balloon seemed now to be moving swiftly in the wind, but neither rising nor falling. The steady killing motion, the absolute quiet, and the weariness of body resulting from my tight grip of the net, produced a tendency to sleep. I was compelled to talk to myself to keep awake, and finding that even this would not suffice I determined to make myself secure. At imminent risk I worked my arms wearily cramped, I let go with my right hand, and reaching in my pocket got my knife, opening it with my teeth I cut through half a dozen meshes of the net and thus made a hole large enough to admit my head and shoulders, pushing away the folds of the somewhat flabby balloon. By degrees I worked my whole body through, and finally, with a prayer of thanks to God, found myself lying flat upon the strong net work, my back against the gas-bag. So great was the relief of this position that I sank into instant sleep.

It seemed an age later when I awoke, hearing my name spoken by the voice of a woman. I opened my eyes and looked around me. I lay in a bed surrounded by silken drapery. My whole body ached, and my head seemed to be several times its ordinary size. Then a voice—that of the woman—spoke again, in soft, rippling French: "Monsieur ne peut être inquiet. Il se sent Monsieur en saire and will soon be well again."

I looked in the direction of the sound and saw approaching me the most beautiful woman I had ever seen. Fair and tall, of the old French type, she seemed a veritable angel. Upon her head she wore a white lace cap, which served only partially to restrain her brown curls. Her dress was simple—of white, with a touch of blue at throat and shoulders. She came to the bedside and leaned over me. I shall remember to my dying day her soft, cool hands pressed upon my aching brow. Her loose sleeves showed her fair, plump arms high to the elbows, and I recall, even now, the desire, as I fell asleep, that I could have those arms about my neck.

I awoke again, some time later, feeling much refreshed. My fair nurse brought me a glass of cool milk, and held my head in the hollow of her arm as I drank, smiling and nodding at me. Then I lay quiet for a while, and presently found myself able to speak. "Where am I?" was my first question. She told me that I was in the Chateau Lagunay, on the west bank of the Meuse River, some distance northwest of Verdun. In the morning the French would readily understand, though my own pronunciation was execrable, she told me how at dawn my balloon was seen drifting into a grove of trees near the Chateau; how the gardeners had released me from my prison in the net; and how I had been brought to the Chateau, following my father's instructions, and cared for through the night. I was seriously bruised about the head and shoulders, and they thought at first that I was dead. Later her father, a French nobleman of the old regime, came to the bedside, expressed his surprise that "Monsieur Ad-ams" (they had learned my name from papers found in my pockets) had recovered, assuring me that I need have no concern as to my perfect welcome to remain as his guest until I should be completely restored to health.

I suppose it was the shock that blotted out, for the next few days, all recollection of my identity, or my recent experience. I knew simply that I was in Paradise, with this adorable angel always at hand to minister to hunger or thirst, and to talk softly to me at intervals between naps. She told me much about herself. She was but twenty, an only child, with no mother that she could remember. She and her father, and the faithful servants, lived alone. She seemed very happy. And if she was happy, what of myself? Before I was able to sit up and eat a solid food I knew that my

heart had found its mate. Ah, I was very much in love. On the third day I was so much better that I insisted on rising, and a valet came in and assisted me to dress. My clothes were torn to shreds in the balloon wreck, and I found myself compelled to accept the count's offer of a complete outfit from his own wardrobe. Behold me, therefore, seated in an easy chair, clad in a handsome suit of plum-colored velvet, with short breeches, white silk stockings, silver-buckled shoes, and a long-tailed coat. What with lace and ruffles and all the trimmings of royalty, I felt like a trusted goose; but Aimee regarded me as the very apotheosis of perfection and grace. This I had from her own sweet lips. And so completely satisfied were we with each other that before night I had kissed her a thousand times and obtained her consent to an ultimate marriage, with the understanding that I should be acceptable to the Count, whose reserve I had not at that time courage to penetrate with my request for his daughter's hand. "But there is no hurry," I said. "Let us wait a few days, my precious." And I took her in my arms, kissing her again and again, and calling her all manner of pet names. Very undignified and breathlessly hasty love-making for an American of thirty-five. But in love are we not all fools? I know not how the practical, every-day of my mind suddenly got to work again. I was seated in the garden, on the fourth day after my descent upon Lagunay, musing upon the



**AIMEE.**  
charms of Aimee who had gone to the house to attend to the preparation of dinner. Somewhere near by a heavy door shut with a slam. It shocked me, like a pistol-shot, I jumped to my feet with a shout. The Germans—the War—the French—Martini—Recher—all the exciting events of the past ten days swept upon me like an avalanche. Here I sat, in the very path of the invaders, and entered his study. Here, in the night-dream of love and seventeenth-century indolence, I ran to the house. Preparations must be made against the arrival of the troops. At the porte-cochere I saw the count, just alighting from his ancient chaise. I hurried to his side. "A word with you in private," I said. The serious look upon my face startled him. We passed into the house and entered his study. Here, acquainted him with the events of the past week, of my balloon reconnaissance, of the plan of the Germans, living, as he did, in such complete isolation, withdrawn from the activity of the world about him since the days of the Second Empire, he had heard only rumors, and was quite un-



aware of the approaching crisis. But he rose to the occasion, showing even in these declining years unusual power of decision and action. Events moved swiftly then. The Count summoned his servants and retainers and secreted in the woods nearby a large amount of silver plate, coin in chests, and valuable heirlooms. Aimee was in great distress; but I quieted her with assurances that I would protect her, though how I would stand off a German army was no idea. Early in the evening came news of the approach of Lancers on the east side of the Meuse, reconnoitering for the engineers; and shortly afterward, a French officer rode up to apprise the Count, with whom he was acquainted, of the presence of French skirmishers a short distance to the south of the Chateau. It became evident to the Count that we would be in the zone of battle. He accordingly made haste to move to a safe distance as much as possible of his personal property. My heart went out to the old nobleman. He made no complaint. He was ready for whatever might come though it should cost him his magnificent estate. All through the night we worked

heroically, clearing out much of the fine old tapestries and carpets, and some of the more valuable pictures and ornaments. The Count's valet dawned the Count left us, going south to offer his services to the General—leaving a somewhat childish proceeding, I thought, though I did not oppose him, as Aimee was thus left in my care. He had confided to him my tender sentiments, and after blessing us both he bade me watch her carefully and at the approach of the enemy set out for Benet, a small town to the northwest, where Aimee had numerous cousins. The Meuse in front of the Chateau Lagunay was perhaps a quarter of a mile wide, running swiftly beneath high, precipitous banks in which there was a break for a considerable distance north and south. Some three miles down stream the river narrowed, at the town of Ramunay, where the Germans were camped in the deep waters. This point was selected by the Germans for crossing. Leaving Aimee with a strong guard of ten men, I set out on horseback for Ramunay, leaving a French dandy in my elegant clothes. I found the town in great confusion. Many persons were loading up their household goods and preparing for departure; others had already fled. So stealthily had the Germans approached that their advance at that point was unknown half a dozen hours before my arrival.

From a stone tower on a wooded hill back of the town I looked across into the valley beyond. As far as the eye could see stretched the ranks of the invaders. They had risen out of Prussia and Baden and Saxony, out of Wurtemberg and Brunswick, out of Hesse and the Mecklenburgs; and moving rapidly had swarmed across the frontier of Lorraine, that ancient bone of contention, and neutral Luxemburg. As I learned later, once they stopped upon French soil they swept down like a storm. Spies preceded them cutting telegraph wires in all directions. The thirty miles between the frontier and the Meuse River had been covered in ten hours, the troops moving at a swinging trot, and here they were at the front, without the least show of opposition.

Meanwhile the French were advancing with characteristic deliberation, their main force being then at and around the great military camp of Chalons, some fifty miles to the southwest. They had been apprised on the previous day of the appearance at the frontier of several bodies of Lancers and Hussars. There had been no further reports, (the wires were cut about that time) and it appeared unnecessary to make any decided move. Of the detachments sent out in automobiles at the time of my departure in the hill-fated La Jaune, I could hear little scouting on their own hook, found nothing suspicious, and toured leisurely back to Paris and Chalons, where they reported that the story of a northern invasion was a canard. Therefore the mobilizing proceeded, all eyes being centered on Lunéville, Bel-fort and Bannock, where the German Crown Prince, with his Bavarian army manoeuvred at a safe distance, threatening, retreating, building mock fortifications, and steadily pulling the German wool over the French eyes.

There was no defense possible for Ramunay, an old, provincial town with weak fortifications. Yet the small garrison, with true military spirit announced its presence by a volley of cannon, which seemed to anger the Germans. A battery of mortars was brought up to the river bank into the town, where a hundred or more sixteen-inch shells, which broke

and released a viscid liquid emitting a horrible, choking, and burning odor, burning rockets were sent after the shells, and in a few minutes the entire town was ablaze. The heat turned the strange liquid to gas—a dense, slow-burning, heavy vapor that settled upon the place like a pall. Such of the residents as had failed to leave were immediately overcome. People fell in the streets by the hundred. It was a slaughter pen. Being high above the town I was not thus affected, and looked on with indescribable horror at this method of warfare. Yet it was, perhaps, no less justifiable than an attack with exploding shells and death-dealing rapid-fire guns. The city was that it was necessary at all. Unhindered, the Germans swept across the bridge and climbed the steep banks, passing through the town, now cleared of gas. I put spurs to my horse and made for the Chateau.

I had hardly arrived and arranged for carriages to take Aimee and her servants away when I was astounded at hearing the galloping of horses in the courtyard. To my dismay I found a body of German staff officers had taken possession of the grounds, and were picketing their horses upon the

lawn. I went to the door and met a ponderous Colonel of Cavalry about to enter. I had taken the precaution to arm myself with a rapier taken from the wall of the armory, and with this slender weapon I felt reasonably secure, expecting to meet only gentlemen.

I bowed to the Colonel. "This is private property," I explained. "To the grounds you are welcome." He pushed me aside, with an oath and strode into the hall. He was followed immediately by another officer, brilliant with military trappings. The two surveyed me innocently, then looked around them. "This will do admirably," said the Colonel to his companion. He advanced to the immense drawing room. "I think we may even have a ball here tonight, if Monsieur—" he bowed towards me, "will but introduce the ladies."

I felt the hot blood rising in me as I replied. "There is but one lady, sir, and she is accustomed to gentlemen." He understood my lame German expressions, for his face reddened. But at that moment Aimee, by some accident, appeared on the stair, and approached us with dignity. The Colonel's face broadened in a leer. "Ah ha," he cried. "Here is my lady now, to welcome me." Advancing he threw his arm around her and but for her sudden shrinking would have kissed her. I was crazy with anger. Drawing my sword I rushed at him. "Dog," I cried in good American. "This is the way we treat scoundrels."

My West Point swordsmanship was not forgotten. Though the Colonel drew his heavy cavalry sabre he was not quick enough. I caught him in the side, below the ribs, and ran him through before his companion could interfere. Drawing back I would have pierced his bowels had not a sudden about at the door startled me. The next moment I was seized from behind by an iron grip and thrown violently to the floor, my rapier spinning a dozen feet away. A heavy knee came down upon my chest, a pair of strong hands held my own; two cold gray eyes looked into mine. I felt that I had met my master. Yet I protested, struggling violently. "Let me up," I cried. "I did but protect my sweetheart from the insult of your cur of a Colonel!" Then he became suddenly quiet, staring into the determined face above me, smooth-shaven but for a pair of fierce, upturned moustaches. The recognition was mutual. "Your Majesty," I said. "I acknowledge your superiority. I am conquered."

My captor arose and lifted me to my feet. He smiled, and I replied with a smile. "I recognized you at first I should have been less vigorous in my treatment of your person. Now explain this unseemly circumstance." It was the Kaiser, the War Lord himself, whom I had met a dozen times. (To be continued next week.)

**GREAT SKILL WITH THE NEEDLE.**  
Women of the North Earn Money by Skillful Manipulation.  
The women of New England, from early colonial days, have been noted for their wonderful skill with the needle, yet it remains for the housewives of Hancock County, Maine, to utilize this art as a means of earning sufficient funds with which to purchase winter clothing. More than a thousand women in this county alone are busily engaged each winter knitting nippers for the fishermen who sail out from Gloucester, Mass. A fisherman's nipper is a heavy short-wristed wool mit, with a forefinger protection for the thumb and first finger, and a padded palm. It is designed for protecting the hands of fishermen who haul wet lines in cold water.

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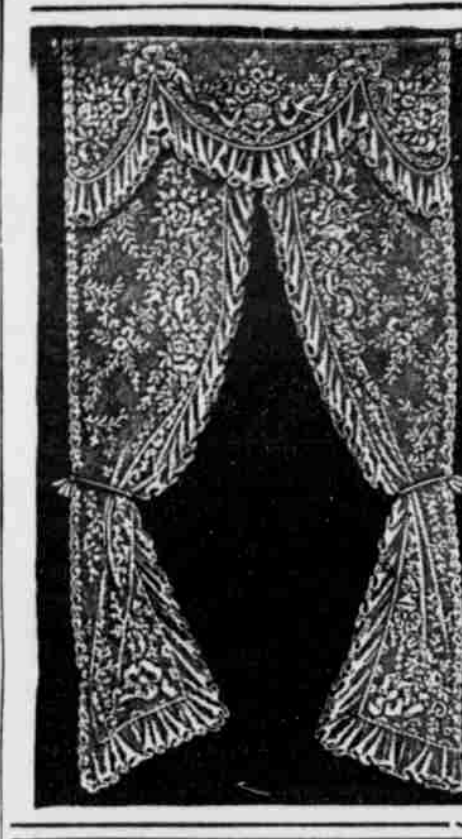
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