SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER ONE.

ary Adams, European representative of rican Manufacturers, and a West Point, uate, is visiting in Paris at the time of between France and Germany. He was into conference with the French General . The German invasion has begun on the eastern border. Adams declares this a . He urges balloon reconnoissance to the least, and detail of troops to block advance. thousand automobiles are impressed, filled troops, and are sent northward. Adams, ral Martini, Rechere (expert balloonist), e wireless telegraphy, lead the advance, car- a field war balloon. The ascent is made the main German force is discovered mobil- in Lorraine. The balloon is struck by a an shell and begin to fall swiftly into the t of the troops.

CHAPTER II.

The balloon was now within half a e of the earth, and settling steadily. eath us was a sea of troops. The lets came in a shower. Rechere e a groan and sank by my side. t through the heart. Martini's hand shattered as it gripped the rail the basket. I expected death, and od erect again, grasping the sup- rting cable at one end of the basket. seemed miserable to be thus a tar- for the bullets of a thousand sol- rs with no opportunity to reply. denly the basket gave a violent h. Instinctively my grasp tight- d on the supporting cable; and well was, for at that instant a well di- ted shell from a rapid-firer cut the le at the other end, and the car ayed, hanging by the one slender e rope. I drew myself up and got irm hold of the network surround- the gas bag. There I hung, grip- g for my very life with both hands; as I looked down I saw Martini irling over and over in mid air, and body of poor dead Rechere falling a plummet. Then the single sup- t gave way, and the basket went wn after them.

closed my eyes, sick with horror d faint from my tremendous muscu- efforts. As in a dream I was con- ous of swift flight through the air. e sounds of shooting became fainter. e whistle of bullets ceased. I real- d that the balloon, freed of its ght of passengers, apparatus, and sket, was rising rapidly into the up- air. Ah, then I would escape, after . I tried to collect my thoughts, owing that should I lose conscious- s my grip would weaken.

Suddenly I felt that I had entered a atum of cold air. It was sweet and re. It stimulated me, I opened my es, and glanced below me. Earth ld not be seen. I was in the clouds. Remember, now, that I hung by the p of two hands, from a coarse net de of half-inch rope forming a cas- for the balloon. I knew that I uld soon be compelled to rest or I st let go and follow my late com- nions. Summoning all my nerve, I w up one leg, and as luck would ve it, caught my foot in a mesh of e net. I pushed my leg through un- the rope was under my knee; then ted for a few sweet minutes hang- there like a crab, one leg swing- free. Presently I secured a similar d with the other foot; then working wly and carefully, managed to get th arms into the meshes, and for a essed interval was relieved of severe ain, though my hold was by no ans secure.

The balloon seemed now to be mov- swiftly in the wind, but neither ing nor falling. The steady gliding otion, the absolute quiet, and the eariness of body resulting from my ght grip of the net, produced a ten- ncy to sleep. I was compelled to lk to myself to keep awake, and ding that even this would not suffice determined to make myself secure. imminent risk, for I was getting efully cramped, I let go with my ght hand, and reaching in my pocket t my knife, opening it with my teeth. cut through half a dozen meshes of e net and thus made a hole large ough to admit my head and shoul- rs, pushing away the enveloping lds of the somewhat flabby balloon. y degrees I worked my whole body rough, and finally, with a prayer of anks to God found myself lying flat pon the strong net work, my back ainst the gas-bag. So great was the ief of this position that I sank into stant sleep.

It seemed an age later when I awoke, earing my name spoken by the voice a woman. I opened my eyes and ooked around me. I lay in a bed urrounded by silken drapery. My hole body ached, and my head seem- d to be several times its ordinary size. hen a voice—that of the woman—spoke again, in soft, rippling French: "Monsieur must be quiet. It is best. Monsieur is safe and will soon be well again."

I looked in the direction of the sound and saw approaching me what I thought to be the most beautiful wo- man I had ever seen. Fair and tall, of the old French type, she seemed a ver- itable 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 dy- ing day her soft, cool hands pressed upon my aching brow. Her loose slee- ves showed her fair, plump arms nigh 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, feel- ing 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 ques- tion.

She told me that I was in the Cha- teau Lagunay, on the west bank of the Meuse River, some distance northwest of Verdun. In the prettiest French, which I could readily understand, though my own pronounciation was execrable, she told me how at dawn my balloon had come crashing 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 into the house, by her 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 pleasure that "Monsieur Ad-dams" (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 re- stored to health.

I suppose it was the shock that blot- ted out, for the next few days, all recollection of my identity, or my re- cent 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 ser- vants, lived alone. She seemed very happy. And if she was happy, what of myself? Before I was able to sit up and eat 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, seat- ed 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 trussed goose; but Aimee regarded me as the very apotheosis of perfection and grace. This I had from her own sweet lips. And so completely satis- fied were we with each other that be- fore night I had kissed her a thou- sand times and obtained her consent to an ultimate marriage, with the un- derstanding 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 undigni- fied and breathlessly hasty love-mak- ing for an American of thirty-five. But in love are we not all fools?

I know not how the practical, every- day part of my mind suddenly got to work again. I was seated in the gar- den, 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—Rechere—all the exciting events of the past ten days swept upon me like an avalanche. Here I sat, in the very path of the in- vaders, passing my time in a Midsum- mer-night-dream of love and seven- teenth-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 I acquainted him with the events of the past week, of my balloon recon- noissance, of the plan of the Ger- mans. Living, as he did, in such com- plete 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 re- tainers and secreted in the woods nearby a large amount of silver plate, coin in chests, and valuable heir- looms. 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 I had no idea. Early in the evening came news of the approach of Lanc- ers on the east side of the Meuse, re- connoitering for the engineers; and shortly afterward, a French officer rode up to apprise the Count, with whom he was acquainted, of the pres- ence 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 what- ever 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. When morning dawned the Count left us, going south to offer his services to the General- issimo—a somewhat childish proceed- ing, I thought, though I did not op- pose him, as Aimee was thus left in my care. I had confided to him my tender sentiments, and after blessing us both he bade me watch her care- fully and at the approach of the en- emy to set out for Bethel, 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 no break for a considerable dis- tance north and south. Some three miles down stream the river nar- rowed, at the town of Ramune, where a massive stone bridge spanned the deep waters. This point was selected by the Germans for crossing. Leav- ing Aimee with a strong guard of armed servants, some of whom were veterans of the Franco-Prussian war, I set out on horseback for Ramune, looking like a French dandy in my elegant clothes.

I found the town in great confusion. Many persons were loading up their household goods and making ready 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 Wurtemburg and Brunswick, out of Hesse and the Mecklenburgs; and mob- ilizing rapidly had swarmed across the fro tier of Lorraine, that ancient bone of contention, and neutral Luxemburg. As I learned later, once they stepped 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 crossing without the least show of opposition.

Meanwhile the French were advanc- ing with characteristic deliberation, their main force being then at and around the great military camp of Chalons, some fifty miles to the south- west. 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 un- necessary to make any decided move. Of the detachments sent out in auto- mobiles at the time of my departure in the illfated La Jaune, I could hear nothing. It was not until months later, when I returned to Paris for a honeymoon with Aimee, that I learn- ed the facts. Our wireless message had not carried. Martini's sacrifice was vain. The scouts in their ma- chines reached the rendezvous, did a 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 Luneville, Bel- fort and Besancon, where the German Crown Prince, with his Bavarian, army manoeuvred at a safe distance, threat- ening, retreating, building mock forti- fications, and steadily pulling the Ger- man wool over the French eyes.

There was no defense possible for Ramune, an old, provincial town with weak fortifications. Yet the small garrison, with true military spirit an- nounced 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 were thrown a hundred or more sixteen-inch shells, which broke

IN A FEW MINUTES THE ENTIRE TOWN WAS ABLAZE.

and released a viscid liquid emitting a horrible stench. A shower of fiercely burning rockets was sent after the shells, and in a few minutes the en- tire 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 looken on with indescribable hor- ror 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 pity 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 Calvalry 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 se- cure, expecting to meet only gentle- men.

I bowed to the Colonel. "This is pri- vate property," I explained. "To the grounds you are welcome."

He pushed me aside with an oath and strode into the hall. He was fol- lowed immediately by another officer, brilliant with military trappings. The two surveyed me insolently, 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 toward 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 ex- pressions, for his face reddened. But at that moment Aimee, brave as a lion, 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 swordmanship was not forgotten. Though the Colonel drew his heavy calvary sabre he was not quick enough. I caught 'm 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 shout at the door startled me. The next moment I was seized from behind in 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, strug- gling violently. "Let me up," I cried. "I did but protect my sweetheart from the insult of yonder cur of a Colonel."

Then I became suddenly quiet, star- ing into the determined face above me, smooth-shaven but for a pair of fierce, upturned moustaches. The recog- nition was mutual. "Your Majesty," I said "I acknowledge your superiority. I am conquered."

My captor arose and lifted me to my feet. "Mr. Adams," he replied with a smile, "had I recognized you at first I should have been less vigorous in my treatment of your person. Now ex- plain this unseemly circumstance."

It was the Kaiser, the War Lord himself, whom I had met a dozen time.

(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 house- wives 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 nip- per 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 weather.

Fully 50,000 pairs of nippers are worn out every year, of which more than 75 per cent. are knitted by women who live in the shore town east of Penob- scot River. As a rule, a woman with active fingers can knit four pairs a day, in addition to doing her housework.

The pay for making a set of nippers is four cents, which is taken up in store trade from the agents. In actual cash value no more than three cents a pair is given for the work.

The knitters begin their labors late in November and continue until Febru- ary or later, the busiest season being from December 15 until the New Year. It it not uncommon to see aged women walking along the streets knitting nip- pers in quickstep time, holding balls of yarn in their apron pockets.

A smart knitter can use up greater length of yarn than she can cover in walking along a good road, her fingers outstripping her feet in a ratio of 7 to 5. She is counted a poor knitter who cannot knit a mile of yarn while she is walking a mile, though when knit- ting rapidly a brisk walking pace is not easily maintained.

The women carry their knitting work about with them, no matter what else they are doing. At evening prayer meetings the flash and click of the needles are not unusual accompani- ments. Cases are known in which women have taken their knitting to funerals, though near relatives of the deceased are barred from this privilege. As the communities are strictly ortho- dox, no knitting is done on Sundays.

The nipper business furnishes good revenue to railroads, steamboats and stages, and involves an expenditure of about $10,000 a year.

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