

LADY LARKSPUR

By MEREDITH NICOLSON

COPYRIGHT BY CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

TWO RUNAWAYS.

Synopsis.—Richard Searles, successful American playwright, confides to his friend, Bob Singleton, the fact that, inspired by the genius of a young actress whom he had seen in London, he has written a play, "Lady Larkspur," solely with the thought that she should interpret the leading character. This girl, Violet Dawning, has disappeared. Singleton, an aviator, has just returned (invited) from France. His uncle, Raymond Bashford, had contracted a marriage a short time before his death, while on a visit to Japan. He left Singleton a comparatively small amount of money and the privilege of a residence in the "garage" of his summer home, Barton-on-the-Sound, Connecticut. Mrs. Bashford is believed to be traveling in the Orient. The household at Barton is made up of broken-down employees of a New York hotel, where Bashford made his home. Singleton goes to Barton, taking with him the manuscript of "Lady Larkspur." There he finds the household strangely upset, some of its members being suspected by their comrades of pro-Germanism. Antoine, head of the establishment, informs him that he has been perplexed by the somewhat mysterious visits of a stranger, apparently a foreigner, seeking Mrs. Bashford. Antoine has formed the male members of the household into a guard for protection. Singleton reads "Lady Larkspur" with approval. "Aunt Alice" arrives unexpectedly, meets with a lively reception and turns out to be young and charming. Mrs. Farnsworth is her traveling companion. Torrence, Bashford's lawyer, suspects the two women and warns Singleton "Aunt Alice" may be an impostor. The mysterious stranger, Count Montani, makes a call and is seen to be very much interested in "Aunt Alice's" ostrich-plum fan, which had been repaired by a jeweler in Japan. Singleton is fascinated by "Aunt Alice." Antoine reports that a "spy" has been tempting a woman servant to steal the fan! The "spy" is captured at night by the guard.

CHAPTER III—Continued.

"Get some dry clothes for this man and lock him up in the toolhouse. Be sure he has blankets, and you'd better give him some hot coffee."

The captive manifested relief at my decision and broke his silence to thank me, which he did in very good English. His subsmissiveness only deepened my perplexity, but I couldn't help laughing as he walked away surrounded by the "troops," with Dutch leading the way—Dutch fully conscious that he had vindicated himself and disposed to be rather disdainful of his comrades.

I hurried to the house, where I found Alice and Mrs. Farnsworth ministering to Elsie, who had been taken there by their order. Elsie, sharing with Dutch the honors of the night, lay on a divan, where she had received first aid. Alice rose from her knees as I entered, gathering up strips of bandages, and turned to me laughingly.

"Elsie's injuries are not serious; only disagreeable bruises in the face. There will be no scars, I'm sure. We'll keep her at the house for a few days until she's quite fit again. Surely any one who has questioned Elsie's loyalty ought to be satisfied now."

"You certainly managed it very cleverly, Elsie. We're all very grateful."

Elsie, her face covered with bandages, acknowledged my thanks by wiggling her foot.

Mrs. Farnsworth said she would put Elsie to bed. Now, I thought, Alice would make some sign if she knew anything that would explain Montani and the prisoner in the toolhouse. But the whole affair only moved her to laughter and she seemed less a grown woman than ever in her white robe. My efforts to impress her with the seriousness of the attempt to secure the fan only added to her delight.

"How droll! How very droll! You couldn't possibly have arranged anything that would please me more! It's delicious! As you say in America, it's perfectly killing!"

I suggested that the holding of a prisoner without process of law might present embarrassments.

"I know," she cried, clapping her hands joyfully. "You mean we are likely to bump into dear old habeas corpus! The sheriff will come and read a solemn paper to you and you will have to lie you to court and produce the body of the prisoner. That will be splendid!"

"If won't be so funny if—"

"Constance and I so love the unusual—and it is so hard to find!" she continued. "And yet from the moment I reached the gates of these premises things have happened! Nothing is omitted! Strange visitors; fierce attacks upon our guards, and still the mystery depends in the few sma' hours, with heroes and heroines at every turn! To think that that absurd little Dutch was asleep in the garden and really captured the spy or what-

ever he is! But you are a hero, too! You shall be decorated!"

She walked to a stand and pondered a moment before a vase of roses, chose a long-stemmed red one and struck me lightly across the shoulder with it.

"Arise, sir knight! You should have knelt, but to kneel in skirts requires practice; you could hardly have managed in that monk's robe."

I couldn't be sure whether she was mocking me or whether there was really liking under this nonsense. I was beyond the point of being impatient with her. I was helpless in her hands; she would do with me as she willed, and it was my business to laugh with her, to meet her as best I could in the realm of folly.

"You must go!" she exclaimed suddenly. "Constance will be calling down the stairs for me in a moment."

"Tomorrow—" I began. The wistful look she had at times come into her eyes as she stood in the center of the room, playing with the flower.

"Tomorrow," she repeated, "and then—tomorrow!"

"There must be endless tomorrows for you and me," I said, and took the flower from her hand. The reverend died in her eyes, and they were awake with reproach and dismissal. At the door I looked back. She hadn't moved and she said, very quietly, but smiling a little: "Nothing must happen to make me sorry I came. Please remember!"

CHAPTER IV.

Pursuing Knights.

I didn't sleep until near daybreak, and was aroused at nine o'clock by Flynn, who appeared at the door in his chauffeur's togs, carrying a tray. "The wife didn't come back, sorr, but I made coffee and toast. Sorry to waken you, but I'm takin' the new car into the city."

I sat up and rubbed my eyes. "Who's going to the city?" I demanded.

"The ladies is goin' at once, sorr. They sent orders an hour ago to be



"I'm Late and You'll Have to Excuse Me, Sorr."

ready with the new machine. I'm late and you'll have to excuse me, sorr."

I sprang out of bed and plied him with questions, most of which he was unable to answer. I did, however, extract from him the information that nothing had occurred after I retired for the night that could have alarmed the women at the residence and prompted this abrupt departure. There was no reason why Alice shouldn't run to town if it pleased her to do so, and yet it was odd that she hadn't mentioned the matter. Flynn hurried away, and from the window I followed the car's course to the house, and a moment later caught a glimpse of it on its way to the gates.

I called from the window to one of the gardeners who knew how to manage a machine and told him to be ready to drive me to the village in half an hour. There was an express at ten-forty, and by taking it I would at least have the satisfaction of being somewhere in New York when the runaways arrived. Antoine packed my suitcase; I am not sure that he didn't shed tears on my belongings. The old fellow was awed into silence by the rapidity with which history had been made in the past twenty-four hours, and clearly was not pleased by my desertion.

We drove past the tool-house, where I found the prisoner seated on a wheelbarrow smoking a cigarette. He was no more communicative than when I had questioned him after his capture. He smiled in a bored fashion when I asked if he wanted anything, and said he would be obliged for cigarettes and reading matter. He

volunteered nothing as to his identity and the guards said that a thorough search of the captive's clothing had disclosed nothing incriminating. He had three hundred dollars in currency (this was to cover Elsie's bribe money, I conjectured), a handkerchief, a cigarette case, and a box of matches. I directed that he be well fed and given all the reading matter he wanted, and hurried on to catch my train.

I took a room at the Thackeray club and pondered carefully whether, in spite of my misgivings, I hadn't better see Torrence and tell him all that had happened since his call on Mrs. Bashford. If there was any chance of doing the wrong thing in any matter not prescribed in the laws governing the administration of estates, he would be sure to do it; but I was far from satisfied with the results of my own management of affairs at Barton. I finally called up the trust company and learned that Torrence was in Albany attending the trial of a will case and might not be in town for a couple of days. His secretary said he had instructions to wire my daily report to Albany. I told him there had been no developments at Barton, and went out and walked. Inquiries at hotels large and small occupied me until seven o'clock. No one had heard of a Mrs. Bashford or a Mrs. Farnsworth. My inspection of the occupants of several thousand automobiles proved equally fruitless. I ate a lonely dinner at the club and resumed my search. Hanging about theater doors, staring at the crowd, is not a dignified occupation, and by nine o'clock, having seen the most belated theatergoers vanish, I was tired and footsore. The flaming sign of Searles' "Who Killed Cock Robin?" over the door of the "As You Like It" caught my eye. I sought a seat—the last in the rack—and squeezed into my place in the middle of the last row. As I had seen the piece at least a dozen times, its novelty was gone for me, but the laughter of the delighted audience was cheering. The first act was reaching its culmination, and I watched it with a glow of pride in Searles and his skillful craftsmanship.

As the curtain fell and the lights went up amid murmurs of pleasure and expectancy, I glanced across the rows of heads. The half-tanned face of a man three rows in front of me suddenly caught my attention. There was something curiously familiar in his outlines and the gesture with which, at the moment, he was drawing his handkerchief across his forehead. It was Montani—beyond any question Montani—and I instinctively shrank in my seat and lifted my program as he turned round and swiftly surveyed the rows behind him.

I watched his black head intently until I remembered the superstition that by staring at a person in a public place you can make him look at you. Montani knew a great many things I wanted to know, but I must have time to adjust myself to the shock of his propinquity.

The house now took note of a stirring in the boxes. There was an excited buzz as the tall form and unmistakable features of Cecil Arrowsmith, the English actor, were recognized. I had read that day of his arrival in New York. With him were two women. My breath came hard and I clutched the iron frame of the seat in front of me so violently that its occupant turned and glared.

The trio settled into their places quickly, but not before I had satisfied myself that Arrowsmith's companions were Alice and Mrs. Farnsworth. As they fell into animated talk I saw that Alice was in her gayest humor. The distinguished tragedian seemed greatly amused by what she was saying to him.

"Must be members of Arrowsmith's company," one of my neighbors remarked. "They open in two weeks in Shakespearean repertoire."

Montani had risen, the better to focus an opera-glass on the box. The gong solemnly announced the second act, and Alice moved her chair to face the stage. Once more Montani scanned the party with his glass. As the lights faded Alice, with the pretty languorous gesture I so well remembered, opened her fan—the fan of ostrich plumes, that became a blur of white that held my eye through the dusk after the curtain rose.

Alice, Montani, and the fan! To this combination I had now to add the new element introduced into the situation by the apparent familiar acquaintance of Alice and Mrs. Farnsworth with Cecil Arrowsmith. And yet, as the play proceeded on its swift-moving course, I reasoned that there was nothing extraordinary in their knowing the eminent actor. He had long been a personage in England and had lately been knighted. Their appearance with him at the theater really disposed of the idea that they might be impostors. The presence of Arrowsmith had put zest into the company, and I hadn't seen a better performance of Searles' play. The trio in the box joined in the prolonged applause at the end of the act.

Singleton finds "Aunt Alice" in New York and the mystery deepens.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Dubious Compliment.

"I saw Mrs. Cad on the street today," cried Mabel angrily, "and the horrid old snob refused to speak to me, just because she was with Mrs. Millions."

"How absurd!" cried Julia, sympathetically. "Just as if you were not her equal. Why, she's just a conceited idiot!"

Lesson of the Day



"From these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion."

"We here highly resolve that government of the people, by the people, shall not perish from the earth."

NATION HONORS ALL HER HEROES

Memories of Veterans of Three Wars Are Enshrined in Country's Heart.

Memorial day is the day of the dead, the veterans of three wars; but, though newly consecrated by the fresh and poignant sacrifices of those who passed away in the great war of liberation "over there," there cannot be now, any more than in the past, any associations but those of true joy and honorable pride, far removed from the despair of causes lost, or from grief over those whose death is without meaning and end without result. For it is the holy joy of those who know that the sacrifices were not in vain that distinguished this day of days this year, covered with the realization that both those who went and those who remained joined freely in the obligation on the altar of the country with an unflinching belief in the nobility of the obligation and the deep significance of what it meant for the common good.

While the ceremonies on this side follow the usual lines, heightened by the opportunity to pay fresh homage where homage is due, the tribute that is paid "over there," beginning with the ceremony at Suresnes, near which has been developed the American cemetery nearest to Paris, at which President Wilson officiated last year, in the very presence of the dead themselves, takes on an especially moving character. For in nothing did the American expeditionary force and all its helpful accessory agencies, such as the Red Cross, so distinguish themselves as in their concern that the last resting place of those who fell abroad should be neither unknown, unmarked nor unhonored. As a result of this determined and consecrated effort of all services, the new graves of the hero dead, he they located where they fell, or removed to the permanent centers of burial that have been selected at appropriate places as the official American cemeteries, will receive every attention that is their just due from their brothers in arms "over there" and a grateful country. The graves, all separately and singly marked with the cross, or the star, save in name and title, no distinction of rank being allowed in the identifying symbol, will be decorated, one and all. And while much that has been devised as to the handling of these special cemeteries has followed the plan of the British, who have been at work at the problem much longer, yet a peculiarly American touch is given in that this annual commemoration of Memorial day, so familiar to us all, is new to our allies, and to the French, though they have gladly co-operated with the American forces in order to make the day a truly notable one and one of general and significant commemoration.

So far as the general cemeteries go we have followed the British in the

THE NATION'S DEAD.

1861—1865.

Four hundred thousand men,
The brave—the good—the true,
In tangled wood, in mountain glen,
On battle plain, in prison pen,
Lie dead for me and you!
Four hundred thousand of the brave
Have made our ransomed soil their grave.
For me and you!
Good friend, for me and you!

In many a fevered swamp,
By many a black bayou,
In many a cold and frozen camp
The weary sentinel ceased his tramp
And died for me and you!
From western plain to ocean tide
Are stretched the graves of those
Who died
For me and you!
Good friend, for me and you!

On many a bloody plain
Their ready swords they drew,
And poured their lifeblood like the rain,
A home—a heritage to gain,
To gain for me and you!
Our brothers mustered by our side;
They marched and fought and
Bravely died
For me and you!
Good friend, for me and you!

Up many a fortress wall
They charged—those boys in blue—
Mid surging smoke and volleyed ball
The bravest were the first to fall!
To fall for me and you!
These noble men—the nation's pride—
Four hundred thousand men have died
For me and you!
Good friend, for me and you!

In treason's prison-hold
Their martyr spirits grew
To stature like the saints of old;
While, amid agonies untold,
They starved for me and you!
The good, the patient and the tried,
Four hundred thousand men have died
For me and you!
Good friend, for me and you!

A debt we ne'er can pay
To them is justly due;
And to the nation's latest day
Our children's children still shall say,
"They died for me and you!"
Four hundred thousand of the brave
Made this our ransomed soil their grave
For me and you!
Good friend, for me and you!

plan for the separate graves, but they have gone a little further in that each large burying place will be dominated by a tall cross and plain altar stone, described by Kipling as "the Cross of Sacrifice and the Stone of Remembrance," the stone bearing the inscription, also suggested by Kipling, "Their name liveth forevermore." Save for this, the great concentration cemeteries of the American forces, such as Romagne-sur-Montfaucon, the largest, containing 39,000 graves of those who fell in the Meuse-Argonne battles, will represent little more than the simplicity of Quaker burying grounds, since the permanent memorial monuments that may be erected are yet to be determined. But there is no question of the monumental effect of the commemoration, nor will those who lie in the smaller cemeteries or in the little French churchyards be over-

looked today or in the years to come. This is all as it should be. And quite as those at home would wish it. And, as has happened in the case of the older celebrations, even though the day brings its fresh and deeper sorrows, at the same time there must be felt everywhere the comforting sense that the country and those who have passed away were equal to their task in the world crisis. It is but meet and proper, therefore, that all should insist that wherever they may lie each and all who paid the final debt shall be marked from among their fellows, dead and living, by such seemly and ceremonial observances as we have set up here for generations and are now repeating abroad. Respect and recognition for what they did and proper honors for the hero dead lend dignity to the living, glorify all sense of duty and discipline and lift all life into the nobler channels of a humanity that is not, as is writ of the beasts of the fields, "without aim or hope," but serves understandingly and not in vain.

PASSING OF THE GRAND ARMY

Significant That in Omaha Three Posts of Veterans Have Had to Be Consolidated.

One of the items of local news carries with it a tinge of sadness, observes the Omaha Bee. It recounts the fact that the three Omaha posts of the Grand Army of the Republic are to be consolidated because they no longer have numerical strength for more than one. This is simple notice that the great organization of men who wore the blue and marched with Grant and Sherman, is passing on more rapidly than we realize. They were boys in '65, when the conflict closed, but that was more than half a century ago, and the youngest head that sheltered under a soldier's cap then is now snow-white from age. It was inevitable that this association of men who shared together the hardships and privations, the dangers and the triumphs of war, should pass in its time, for its members are immortal only in the deeds they wrought and the glory they brought to America. Soon "the muffled drum's sad roll" will have beaten the last tattoo for the Grand Army; the last veteran will have been laid away to await the bugle sounding reveille in eternity, the last bronze button will be placed alongside the tattered old battle flags and the stained uniform, and the Grand Army of the Republic will live only in the memory of a people who will more and more enjoy the fruitage of its history.

On fame's eternal camping ground
Their silent tents are spread,
While glory guards with solemn round
The bivouac of the dead.

Day of Solemn Ceremony.

This Memorial day is a time when the people of this country unite in paying tribute to the thousands who made the supreme sacrifice in the greatest of all fratricidal wars. It is a solemn occasion, and nothing should be permitted to mar its sanctity. Certain it is that the day should not be given over to sport.

THINK of the young men—the boys in blue and in gray—who went down in the cruel slaughter of Cold Harbor and in the gloom of the Wilderness, and who wore themselves out in hospital and in prison! You can take up no college history, or town history or family history, without coming across evidences of the unspeakable sadness of this young life. The boys who there surrendered it, in the full-flood of patriotism, would otherwise have seen the telephone and the automobile and the flying machine, and the countless wonders of our great era, and would have been able to witness the solemn drama of the nations as it has been enacting. All this is life. Some of them would have fallen away from natural causes, to be sure, but many would now be looking complacently out toward the setting sun. Children and grandchildren—who have now never crossed the threshold of existence—would have been gathering about them in affectionate reverence. What infinite pathos in the toll of war!