

# The Conflict

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 northeastern border. Adams, General Martin, Rechere (expert balloonist), and a secret telegrapher, lead the advance, carrying a field telegraph. The balloon is discovered and the main German force is discovered mobilizing in Lorraine. The balloon is struck by a German shell and begins to fall swiftly into the midst of the troops.

## 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. Rechere gave a groan and sank by my side, shot through the heart. Martin's hand was shattered as it slipped the rail of the basket. I expected death, and stood erect again, grasping the supporting cable as it slipped from my hand. It seemed miserable to be thus a target for the bullets of a thousand soldiers with no opportunity to retaliate. Suddenly the basket gave a violent lurch. Instinctively my grasp tightened on the supporting cable, and well it was, for at that instant a well directed shell from a rapid-firer cut the cable at the other end, and the car swayed, hanging by the one 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 Martin whirling over and over in mid air, and the body of poor Rechere falling like a plummet. Then the single support gave way, and the basket went down after them.

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

Suddenly I felt that I had entered a stratum of cold air. It was sweet and pure. It stimulated me. I opened my eyes, and glanced below me. Earth could not be seen. I was in the clouds. Remember, now, that I hung by the grip of two hands upon a coarse rope made of half-inch rope forming a casing for the balloon. I knew that I should soon be compelled to relinquish my hold, and follow my late companions. Summoning all my nerve, I threw up one leg, and as luck would have it, caught in a mesh of the net. I pushed my leg through until the rope was under my knee; then rested for a moment, one leg swinging free. Presently I secured a similar hold with the other leg, and, leaning slowly and carefully, managed to get both arms into the meshes, and for a blessed interval was relieved of all 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 gliding 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 for I was feeling woefully 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 enveloping 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 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 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 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 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, 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 prettiest French village I had ever seen. Fair and tall, though my own pronunciation 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 carried 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 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 know 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 had 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 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, with lace and ruffles and all the trimmings of royalty. I felt like a trussed goose; but Almee 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 Amoy of thirty-five. But in love we were not all fools?

I know not how the practical, everyday part of my mind, which had been asleep, I was seated in the garden, on the fourth day after my descent upon Lagunay, musing upon the



Almee.

charms of Almee who had gone to the house to attend to the preparation of dinner. Somewhat near by a heavy door shut with a slam. It knocked me, like a pistol-shot. I jumped to my feet with a start. The Germans—the War—the French—Martin—Rechere—all the exciting events of the past ten days swept upon me like an avalanche. Here, at the moment of love and seventh-century indolence. I ran to the house. Preparations must be made against the arrival of the troops. At the port-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 reconnaissance, of the plan of the Germans, of the risk for which I was now completely isolated, 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 a vigor in his 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. Almee 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 the 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 west 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. When morning dawned the Count left us, going south to offer his services to the Generalissimo—a somewhat childish proceeding, I thought, though I did not oppose him, as Almee was thus left in my care. I 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 to set out for Bethel, a small town to the northwest, where Almee 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 distance north and south. Some three miles down stream the river narrowed, at the town of Hamme, where a narrow bridge crossed the river, the deep waters. This point was selected by the Germans for crossing. Leaving Almee with a strong guard of armed servants, some of whom were veterans of the Franco-Prussian war, I set out on horseback for Hamme, to the northwest, where Almee had 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 moved, 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 Westphalia and Brunswick, out of Hesse and the Mecklenburgs; and mobilizing rapidly had swarmed across the frontier of Lorraine, that ancient bone of contention between France and Germany. As I learned later, once they stepped upon French soil they swept down like a storm, spreading their wings in all directions. The thirty miles between the frontier and the Meuse River had been covered in a few hours, the invaders moving at a swinging trot. And here they were at the crossing 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 inflated La Jaune, I could hear nothing. It was not until months later, when I returned to Paris for a honeymoon with Almee, that I learned of the facts. Our wireless message had not carried. Martin's sacrifice was vain. The scouts in their machines 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, Bellemeuse, and the river bank, 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 reason possible for Hamme, 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, where the town were thrown a hundred or more sixteen-inch shells, which broke

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 entire town was ablaze. The heat, the stench, the strange liquid to gas-dense, slow-burning, heavy vapor that settled upon the place like a pall. Such of the residents as he survived 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 pity was that it was necessary at all.

Unhindered, the German 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 Almee 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 insolently, then looked around them.

"This will do admirably," said the Colonel to his companion. He advanced to the immense drawing room, and 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 expressions, for his face reddened. But at that moment Almee, dressed in a lion's mane, 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, our welcome Colonel." 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 our ladies!"

My West Point swordsmanship was not forgotten. Though the Colonel drew his sword, Almee's shriek 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 knotted rope held my chest; a pair of strong hands looked into mine. I felt that I had met my death. "Let me up," I cried, "I did but protect my sweetheart from the hands of a brute." Then I became suddenly quiet, staring into the determined face above me, smooth-shaven but for the recognition 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 explain this unseemly circumstance." "The Kaiser," the 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 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 Penobscot 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 extra 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 February or later, the busiest season being from December 15 until the New Year. It is not uncommon to see aged women walking along the streets knitting nippers 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 1.

**Do You Use Acetylene?**  
if so,  
**We Want to Send You A SAMPLE BURNER**

We believe we have the very best and the cheapest line of Acetylene Burners. Our sample will show better than we can explain here why it would pay you to use our burners. Write us to-day, mention kind of Generator used, enclose 5 cents in stamps to cover postage, and we will send you

**A Sample Burner**  
**W. M. CRANE COMPANY**  
1431-33 Broadway,  
Room 15, New York, N. Y.

MERCHANTS USING TRADING STAMPS can save the cost of them by our plan. It increases business faster, and costs you nothing. Chicago Copy Co., Dept. F, 416-424 Milwaukee Ave., Chicago.

**FREE**  
**Oh, Boys! Oh, Boys!**  
Earn this newly invented BEECHER LOADING GUN or BASK BALL OUTFIT, consisting of seven pieces, Cap and fine Base Ball, by selling 25 splendid lead pencils at 5c each. Its dead easy. Boys we trust you. Write for pencils and circular showing our 1000000 Bells, Target and other premiums.  
Thirteenth Street Lead Pencil Co., 33 W. 13th Street, New York

Permanently Cured. No risk of relapse after first day's use of Dr. King's Great Nerve Remedy. Send for FREE, 50c trial bottle and treatise Dr. H. H. Allen, Ltd., 711 Arch St., Philadelphia, Pa.

**MINERAL HEAVE REMEDY**  
**CURES HEAVES**  
Only Sure Cure. Positive and Permanent. Absolutely Pure. \$1.00 Package cures any ordinary case. \$2.00 Package cures any case of money refunded. Sent postpaid on receipt of price. Agents Wanted. Liberal Terms.  
Mineral Heave Remedy Co., 644 4th Ave., Pittsburg, Pa.



## 486 F. P. MILITARY FORM.

Made of superior quality of Batiste, medium high bust, long on hips, full bias gore; hose supporters attached, price, \$1.00 per pair. If not for sale at your dealers, sent upon receipt of price by

**BIRDSEY SOMERS CO.,**  
3 W. 19th St.,  
New York, N. Y.  
DEPT. 25.

**FREE**  
**Two Pairs of Nottingham Lace Curtains**  
Nearly three yards long and one yard wide, they gather up nicely and furnish an elegant drapery for even very broad windows for parlor or living rooms.  
**No Money Required.**  
Send us your name and address, and we will mail you 24 pieces of famous jewelry novelties to sell at 10c. each. When sold, send us the \$2.40, and we will send you the curtains at once. Write to-day. Address  
**Columbia Novelty Co.**  
71 SARATOGA ST.  
East Boston, Mass.

**Opportunity**  
A MAGAZINE OF PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT  
CHICAGO  
Do you want to improve your circumstances? Do you want to know about the opportunities awaiting honest enterprise and ambition? Do you want hints on the improvement of home surroundings? Do you want delightful, entertaining, instructive, beautiful illustrated reading for the home circle? All these and more you will find in "OPPORTUNITY".  
**OUR OFFER**  
Fill in the coupon below, cut out this entire advertisement and send to us with 25 cents for one year's subscription. If after you have read the first number you can conscientiously say that "OPPORTUNITY" is not worth 45c a month to you, write us to stop it and we will return your money by first mail.  
**OPPORTUNITY PUBLISHERS** DATE.....  
279 Dearborn St., Chicago  
Enclosed find 25 cents for one year's subscription to "OPPORTUNITY" beginning with the current number.  
Name.....  
Post Office.....  
R. Route or Street.....  
For sale by All Newsdealers. State.....

**A Magazine for the Millions**  
Devoted to  
**Industrial, Agricultural, Commercial Development and Homemaking**  
The Best 50 Cent Magazine in America  
Do you want to improve your circumstances? Do you want to know about the opportunities awaiting honest enterprise and ambition? Do you want hints on the improvement of home surroundings? Do you want delightful, entertaining, instructive, beautiful illustrated reading for the home circle? All these and more you will find in "OPPORTUNITY".  
**OUR OFFER**  
Fill in the coupon below, cut out this entire advertisement and send to us with 25 cents for one year's subscription. If after you have read the first number you can conscientiously say that "OPPORTUNITY" is not worth 45c a month to you, write us to stop it and we will return your money by first mail.  
**OPPORTUNITY PUBLISHERS** DATE.....  
279 Dearborn St., Chicago  
Enclosed find 25 cents for one year's subscription to "OPPORTUNITY" beginning with the current number.  
Name.....  
Post Office.....  
R. Route or Street.....  
For sale by All Newsdealers. State.....