

THE WILD GEESSE

BY Stanley J. Weyman.

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Synopsis of Previous Chapters

Colonel John Sullivan, an Irish soldier, who has served abroad for many years, returns to his native Kerry on the sloop *Cormorant*, a French smuggling vessel, laden with Bordeaux wines. The cargo of the sloop is seized by the natives of Skull, against the protests of Captain Augustin, who realizes that he has no law on his side. Colonel Sullivan is cordily received by Flavia and her brother, The McMurrigh, because of his alien faith and his undesirable position as their legal guardian. When Captain Augustin returns with Luke Aggill, the nearest justice, and demands the return of the confiscated cargo, Flavia and her guardian are in favor of returning the cargo on the captain's payment of the dues. The McMurrigh objects to this, but finally agrees to it on Colonel Sullivan's offer to get back Flavia's favorite mare, which was seized by British soldiers. The Colonel and his servant, Bale, set out and find the mare at the barracks of Tralee. The Colonel is invited into the mess room by the English officers, and one of them, named Payton, who sized the mare, throws wine in his face. The Colonel refuses to fight, because his right arm is permanently disabled. He wins a left-handed fencing bout with the maitre d'armes, at the same time winning the mare on a wager. At dinner, upon his return to Morrisstown, he is amazed when Flavia drinks a toast "to the King across the water" and fears that a rising is contemplated. His fears are realized next morning when his kinsman, Ulick, warns him to leave the place and the people to their fate. The Colonel refuses, and next morning after breakfast he and his servant Bale are invited to join a family council of war. He refuses to join the proposed uprising, knowing its futility. Fearing that the Colonel may turn informer, The McMurrigh and his friends imprison him and his servant Bale in the morning the two are led out to their death by the agent of The McMurrigh, O'Sullivan Og. At the last moment this sentence is revoked and the Colonel and Bale are rowed out through the mist to imprisonment on a Spanish war ship in the harbor. The rowboat capsizes and the two prisoners, luckily escaping, take refuge on the French sloop, *Captain Augustin* and his sailors, under the Colonel's direction, enter the house at Morrisstown under cover of the fog, and seize and imprison the leaders of the uprising on the sloop. The Bishop and Admiral Cammock are to be carried to sea for a period, and The McMurrigh, on swearing that he will attempt nothing against Colonel John nor against the government, is released, and he returns to Morrisstown with the Colonel. Flavia, impressed at his restraint and the failure of the uprising, attacks the Colonel, who narrowly escapes death at her hands. She and her brother, the Colonel's presence irksome, and consider means of getting rid of him. When Aggill comes wooing Flavia, and because of earlier treachery is forbidden the house by the Colonel, The McMurrigh, on his sister's rebel at the Colonel's authority, Flavia induces the Colonel to send away his faithful servant, Bale, on the plea that he may be injured by the inimical peasantry. She then lures the Colonel to an aid tower at night and has him imprisoned there, without food or water, in the hope that he may thus be induced to sign over to the McMurrigh all that he holds under the will of Sir Michael McMurrigh.

CHAPTER XX. An Unwelcome Visitor

LITTLE before sunset on that same day two men stood beside the entrance at Morrisstown. They were staring at a third, who, seated nonchalantly upon the horsecock, slapped his boot with his riding switch and made a poor show of hiding his amusement as they of making the man, the man who slapped his leg and shaped his lips to a silent whistle was Major Payton, of the 11th. The men who looked at him and cursed the unlucky star which had brought him there were Luke Aggill and The McMurrigh. "Faith, and I should have thought," Aggill said, with a clouded face, "that my presence here, Major, and I a justice."

"True for you!" Payton said, with a grin.

"Should have been enough by itself, and the least taste more than enough, to prove the absurdity of the Castle's story."

"True for you again," Payton retorted, "And ain't I saying that but for your presence here, and a friend at court that I'll not name, it's not your humble servant this gentleman would be entertaining here. Turned to The McMurrigh—"but half a company and a sergeant's guard!"

"I'm allowing it."

"You've no cause to do other."

"Nary a bit I'm denying it," Aggill replied more amiably; "and as far as he could, he cleared his face. 'It's not that you're not welcome. Not at all, Major! Sure, and I'll answer for it, my friend The McMurrigh is glad to welcome an English gentleman, much more one of your reputation.'

"Truth, and I am," the McMurrigh assented. But he had not Aggill's self-control, and his sulky tone belied his words.

"Still—I come at an awkward time, perhaps?" Payton answered, looking with a grin from one to the other.

Partly to tease Aggill, whom he did not love the more because he owed him money, and partly to see the rustic beauty whom rumor had it, Aggill was counting in the wilds, he volunteered to do with three or four troopers what otherwise a half company would have been sent to. That he could at the same time put his creditor under an obligation, and annoy him, had not been the least part of the temptation, while no one at Tralee believed the story sent down from Dublin.

"Eh! An awkward time, perhaps," he repeated, looking at The McMurrigh. "Sorry, I'm sure, but—"

"I'd have entertained you better, I'm thinking," James McMurrigh said,

the less we'll be doing for him the sooner he'll be going and the safer we'll be! I would not be so bold as to advise," he continued, diffidently, "but I'm thinking it would be no worse if you left him to be entertained by the men."

"I will!" she cried. "Why should I be wanting to see him?"

"Then I think he'll be ordering his horse tomorrow!"

"I wish he were gone now!" she cried.

"Ah, so do I," he replied, from his heart.

"I will go in through the garden," she said.

He assented. She turned aside, and for a moment he bent to the temptation to go with her. He was sure that she had begun, not only to suffer his company, but to suffer his company. And here, as she passed through the darkening garden, was an opportunity of making a further advance. She would have to grope her way, a reason for taking her hand might offer, and his head grew hot at the thought.

But he thrust the temptation from him. He knew that it was not only the stranger's presence that weighed her down, but her recollection of the man in the tower and his miserable plight.

"As he went on with Morty, he gave him a hint to say as little in Payton's presence as possible. 'I know the man,' he explained, 'and where he's weak. I'm for seeing the back of him, as soon as we can, but without noise.'

"There's always the bog," grumbled Morty.

"And the garrison at Tralee," Aggill rejoined dryly, "to ask where he is, and his troopers to answer the question."

Morty bade him manage it his own way.

"Only I'll trouble you not to blame me," he added, "if the English soldier finds the Colonel, and ruins us entirely."

"I'll not," Aggill answered pithily, "if so be you'll hold your tongue."

So at supper that night Payton looked in vain for the Kerry beauty whose charms the warmer visits of the mess had more than once pointed in hues rather florid than fit. Nevertheless he would have enjoyed himself tolerably—not the less because now and again he let his eyes wander to the company peep from under his complaisance—but for the untidiness of his friend, who, as if he had only one man and one idea in his head, fell with every moment some mention of Colonel John. Now it was the happy certainty of the Colonel's return next day that inspired his eloquence; now, the pleasure with which the Colonel would meet Payton again; now, the lucky chance that a pair of new boots from the window ledge.

"For he's ruined entirely and no one to play with him!" Aggill continued, a twinkle in his eye. "No one, I'm sure! Major, of his sort of fare at all. Begad, boys, you'll see some fine fencing for once! Ye'll think ye've never seen any before, I'm doubting."

"I'm not sure that I can remain tomorrow," Payton said in a surly tone. He began to suspect that Aggill was quizzing him. He noticed that every time the justice named Colonel Sullivan, men looked furtively at one another, or straight before him, as if they were afraid. If that were so, the design could only be to pit Colonel Sullivan against him, or to provoke a quarrel between them. He felt a qualm of apprehension, and he was confirmed in the plan he had already formed—to be gone next day. But in the meantime his temper moved him to carry the war into the enemy's country.

"I didn't know," he snarled, taking Aggill up in the middle of a eulogy of Colonel John's skill, "that he was so great a favorite of yours."

"He was not," Aggill replied dryly. "He is now, it seems," in the same sneering tone.

"I should like him better. Don't we, boys?" They murmured assent.

"And the lady whose horse I sheltered for you," the Major continued, spitefully watching for an opening—"confound you, little you thanked me for it!—she must be still more in his interest than you? And how does that suit your book?"

Aggill had great self-control, and the Major was not a close observer. But the thrust was so unexpected that on the instant Payton read the other's secret in his eyes—knew that he loved, and knew that he was jealous. Jealous of Sullivan! Jealous of the man he was for some reason praising. Then why not jealous of a younger, a more fashionable rival? Aggill's cunningly veiled plans began to sink, and even while he answered he knew it.

"She likes him," he said, "as we all do."

"Some more, some less," Payton answered with a grin.

"Just so," the Irishman returned, controlling himself. "Some more, some less. And why not, I'm asking?"

"I think I must stay over tomorrow," Payton remarked, smiling at the ceiling. "There must be a good deal to be seen here."

"Ah, there is," Aggill answered in apparent good humor.

"Worth seeing, too, I'll be sworn!" the Englishman replied, smiling more broadly.

"And that's true, too," the other rejoined.

He had himself in hand, and it was not from him that the proposal to break up the party came. The Major it was who at last pleaded fatigue. Englishmen's heads, he said, were stronger than their stomachs; they were a match for port, but not for claret.

"You should correct it, Major, with a little cognac," The McMurrigh suggested politely.

"Not tonight, and by your leave, I'll have my man called and go to bed."

"It's early," James McMurrigh said, playing the host.

"It is, it is," he'll have my man and go to bed," Payton answered, with true British sobriety. "No offence to any gentleman."

"There's none will take it here," Aggill answered. "An Irishman's house is his guest's castle." But, know-

ing that Payton liked his glass, he wondered, until it occurred to him that the other wished to have his hand steady for the sword play next day.

The McMurrigh, who had risen, took a light and attended his guest to his room. Aggill and the O'Beirnes remained seated at the table, the young men scoffing at the Englishman's conceit of himself, Aggill silent and downcast. His scheme of ridding himself of Payton had failed; but it remained to face the situation. He did not distrust Flavia, but he distrusted Payton—his insolence, his violence, and the privileged position which his duelist's skill gave him. And then there was Colonel John. If Payton learned what was afoot at the tower, and saw his way to make use of it, the worst might happen to all concerned.

He looked up at a touch from Morty, and to his astonishment he saw Flavia standing at the end of the table. There was a hasty scrambling to the feet, for the men had not drunk deep, and by all in the house—except her brother—the girl was treated with respect.

"I was thinking," Aggill said, foreseeing trouble, "that you were in bed and asleep." Her hair was tied back negligently and her dress half fastened at the throat.

"I cannot sleep," she answered. And then she stood a moment drumming with her slender fingers on the table, and the men noticed that she was unusually pale. "I cannot sleep," she repeated, a tremor in her voice. "I keep thinking of him. I want someone—to go to him."

"Now?"

"Now?"

"But," Aggill said slowly, "I'm thinking that to do that were to give him hopes. It were to spoil all. Once in twenty-four hours—that was agreed. And it is not four hours since you were there. If there is one thing needful, not the least doubt of it!—it is to leave him thinking that we're meaning it."

He spoke doubtfully. But the girl labored under a weight of agitation that did not suffer to reason. "But if he dies?" she cried in a woeful tone. "If he dies of hunger? Oh, my God, of hunger! What have we done then? I tell you," she continued, "I cannot bear it! I cannot bear it!" She looked from one to the other as appealing to each in turn to share her horror, and to act. "It is wicked, it is wicked!" she continued, in a shriller tone and with a note of defiance in her voice, "and who will answer for it if he dies? I—not you! I, who tricked him, who lied to him, who lured him there!"

For a moment there was a stricken silence in the room. Then, "And what had he done to you?" Aggill retorted with spirit—for he saw that if he did not meet her on her own pace she was capable of any act, however ruinous.

"Or, if not to you, to Ireland, to your King, to your country, to your hopes!" He flung into his voice all the indignation of which he was master. "Trick, you say?—No, not by a trick, but by ruined all? The fairest prospect, the brightest day that ever dawned for Ireland! The day of freedom, of liberty, of—"

She twisted her fingers nervously together.

"Yes," she said, "yes! Yes, but I can't bear it, it is no talking. You are here—look!" she pointed to the table strewn with the remains of the meal. "But he is—starving! Starving!" she repeated, as if the physical pain maddened herself.

"You shall go to him tomorrow. Go yourself," he replied, in a soothing tone.

"I?" she cried. "Never!"

"Oh, but—" Aggill began, perplexed but not surprised by her attitude. But there's your brother," he continued, relieved. "He will tell you, I'm sure, that nothing can be so harmful as to change now. Your sister," he went on, addressing The McMurrigh, who had just descended the stairs, "she's wishing someone will go to the Colonel and see if he's down a peg. But I'm telling her—"

"It's folly entirely, you should be telling her," James McMurrigh replied curtly and roughly. "Tomorrow at sunset, and not an hour earlier, he'll be visited. And then it'll be you, Flavia, that'll speak to him. What more is it you're wanting?" she cried.

"I couldn't!"

"But it'll be you'll have to," he replied roughly. "Wasn't it so arranged?"

"I couldn't!" she replied, in the same tone of trouble. "Some one else—if you like."

"But it's not some one else will do," James retorted.

"But why should I be the one—to go?" she asked.

"She's your brother," he said, looking at her. "She had Colonel John's face before her, haggard, sunken, famished, as, peering into the gloomy, firelit room, she had seen it that afternoon.


"For a very good reason," her brother retorted with a sneer. He looked at Aggill and laughed.

"That look startled her as a flash of light startled a traveller groping through darkness. 'Why?' she repeated, in a different tone.

But neither her tone nor Aggill's glance put James McMurrigh on his guard; he was in one of his brutal humors. "Why?" he replied. Because he's a silly fool as I'm thinking some others are, and has a fancy for you, Flavia. Faith, you're not blind," he continued, "and know it, I'll be sworn, as well as I do. Anyway, I've a notion that if you let him see that there is no one in the house wishes him worse than you, or would see him starve with a lighter heart—I'm thinking it will be for bringing him down, if anything will."

(To be continued)

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Seventeenth Annual Report of The Great-West Life Assurance Company

HEAD OFFICE: WINNIPEG

Large Increase in Surplus to Policyholders—Largest Paid-for Canadian Business ever secured in a year by any Company. Over \$6,000,000 Increase of Business in 1909.

The Seventeenth Annual General Meeting of the Shareholders of The Great-West Life Assurance Company was held at the Head Office at Winnipeg on January 31st, and was largely attended.

The meeting was of a most enthusiastic nature, the reports presented and the comments made thereon being such as to give the greatest satisfaction.

A Synopsis of the Directors' Report is given below

Applications received in 1909	\$11,389,740.00
Insurances effected (including renewals)	275,622.81
Total insurances in force Dec. 31, 1909	10,978,611.00
Increase over last year	45,990,686.00
Paid for business for 1909 in Canada	1,234,900.00
Reserve according to the Company's standard (under the Government)	\$9,563,500.00
Paid for business for 1909 in North Dakota	372,500.00
Total paid for business for 1909	\$9,936,000.00
(This figure represents the largest paid-for Canadian business ever secured in a year by any Company.)	
Premium receipts for 1909	1,611,362.72
Receipts for interest	392,970.78
Total income	\$2,004,333.70
Paid to policyholders for claims, matured endowments, surrender values, annuities and profits	365,677.53
Placed to credit of policyholders to cover addition to reserve	829,089.00
Increase in divisible surplus	271,058.30
Interest due and accrued	159,671.50
Requirement	5,341,832.00
Surplus to policyholders (exclusive of capital stock)	1,046,389.76

Business Statement for the Year 1909 BALANCE SHEET

ASSETS	
Mortgages on real estate	\$5,094,400.96
Debentures and stocks (market value)	275,622.81
Home office building	194,609.43
Dividends to Shareholders, payable 30th January	797,911.41
Reversions	114.70
Outstanding and deferred premiums	272,332.45
Interest due and accrued	159,671.50
Cash on hand and in banks	158,054.94
	\$6,865,725.20
LIABILITIES	
Reserve on Policies and Annuities in force	\$5,341,832.00
Surrender value claimable on Policies cancelled whose reserves are not included in above	1,398.00
Death claims outstanding	24,963.70
Installment claims not due	32,658.00
Dividends to Shareholders, payable 30th January, 1910	797,911.41
Premiums and interest paid in advance	20,217.03
Dividends to Shareholders	21,911.34
Investment Reserve Fund	10,000.00
Surplus Account (Auditor's fee and Directors' fees)	2,000.00
Surplus to Policyholders	1,046,389.76
	\$6,865,725.20

Cash Statement RECEIPTS

Premium income	\$1,611,362.72
Consideration for Annuities	4,689.00
Total	\$1,616,051.72
Less Re-Insurances	16,828.36
Interest Income	1,594,534.36
Calls on Capital	392,970.78
	\$2,009,755.84
DISBURSEMENTS	
To Policyholders for Claims, Annuities, Surrender Values and Profits	365,677.53
Expenses, Commissions, etc.	440,364.00
Expenses and Licenses	14,163.04
Dividends to Shareholders	32,658.00
Written Off Office Furniture	1,148.67
Transferred to Investment Reserve Fund	10,000.00
Agents' balances and Office Furniture deducted from assets	21,911.34
Balance	1,210,767.21
	\$2,096,751.84

ACTUARY'S REPORT

To the President and Directors of The Great-West Life Assurance Company: Gentlemen,—I have the honor to report the results of the valuation for December 31st, 1909, as follows:

Amount	Reserves	Basis of Valuation	
Insurances issued prior to 1900	\$ 2,322,241	\$1,843,348	Actuaries 4 p.c.
Insurances issued at 3 p.c. rate	13,954,245	900,021	American 3 p.c.
All other insurances (including Bonus Additions)	25,814,160	2,536,047	Hum, 3 1/2 p.c.
Total	\$45,990,686	\$5,279,416	
Reserves on Life Annuities and Premium reductions	75,314		
Total reserves	\$5,347,730		
Deduct reserves on re-insurances	15,898		
NET RESERVES	\$5,341,832		

It will be seen from the above statement that insurances amounting to nearly \$14,000,000, for which the valuation rate of interest was formerly 3 1/2 p.c., have this year been valued on a 3 p.c. basis. Only 13 1/2 p.c. of the business is now valued at 4 p.c., and this business will be gradually changed to the 3 1/2 p.c. basis in compliance with the insurance Act. At present it would require the transfer of less than \$100,000 from surplus to reserve to effect the change.

During the year the investigation of the policyholders' surplus has been completed. The method followed is that known as the "Contribution" plan, and consists of assigning to each individual policy its net earnings. Every participating policy on the books has thus been assigned its due share of surplus. The profits payable on policies completing their dividend periods in 1910 are thus representative of what would be paid on all policies if all were entitled to distribution in 1910.

It is gratifying to note that in all cases the profits for 1910 compare most favorably with those of other Companies.

Respectfully submitted,

C. C. FERGUSON, A.I.A., F.A.S., Actuary.

Winnipeg, Jan. 28th, 1910.

MISS JANE ADAMS, the head of Hull House, at a luncheon of the Chicago Civic Club, remarked: "We women still have much to fight for. Our battle will be long and difficult. Well, let us frankly admit it. There is nothing to be gained by such rose-colored phrases as William White employed. William White's brother had killed a man in cold blood. 'Well, William, how about your brother's visitor to the town asked him one day after the trial. 'Well,' said William, 'they've put him in jail for a month. That's rather light sentence for a cold-blooded murder,' said the gentleman. 'Yes, sir,' William admitted, 'but at the month's end they're going to hang him.'"

RECENTLY an automobilist ran down and killed a hen in suburban Philadelphia. He was a conscientious automobilist. Instead of rac-