



54-40 OR FIGHT BY EMERSON HOUGH



SYNOPSIS.

The story is told by Nicholas Trist. His chief Senator John Calhoun, offered the portfolio of secretary of state in Tyler's cabinet, is told by Dr. Ward that his time is short. Calhoun declares that he is not ready to die, and if he accepts Tyler's offer it means that Texas and Oregon must be added to the Union. He plans to learn the intentions of England with regard to Mexico through Baroness Von Ritz, secret spy and reputed mistress of the English ambassador, Pakenham. Nicholas is sent to bring the baroness to Calhoun's apartments and misuses a meeting with his sweetheart, Elizabeth Churchill. While searching for the baroness' house a carriage dashes up and Nicholas is invited to enter. The occupant is the baroness, who says she is being pursued. The pursuers are shaken off. Nicholas is invited into the house and delivers Calhoun's message. He notes that the baroness has lost a slipper. Nicholas is given the remaining slipper as a pledge that she will tell Calhoun everything. He gives her as security an Indian trinket he intended for Elizabeth.

CHAPTER VII.—Continued.

"After that, on guard!"
 "Very well, on guard! Suppose I do not like this other woman?"
 "Madam, you could not help it. All the world loves her."
 "Do you?"
 "With my life."
 "How devoted! Very well, on guard, then!"

She took up the Indian bauble, turning to examine it at the nearest candle sconce, even as I thrust the dainty little slipper of white satin again into the pocket of my coat. I was uncomfortable. I wished this talk of Elizabeth had not come up. I liked very little to leave Elizabeth's property in another's hands. Dissatisfied, I turned from the table, not noticing for more than an instant a little crumpled roll of paper which, as I was vaguely conscious, now appeared on its smooth marquetry top.

"But see," she said; "you are just like a man, after all, and an unmarried man at that! I cannot go through the streets in this costume. Excuse me for a moment."

She was off on the instant into the alcove where the great amber-covered bed stood. She drew the curtains. I heard her humming to herself as she passed to and fro, saw the flare of a light as it rose beyond. Once or twice she thrust a laughing face between the curtains, held tight together with her hands, as she asked me some question, mocking me, still amused—yet still, as I thought, more enigmatically than before.

"Madam," I said at last, "I would I might dwell here forever, but—you are slow! The night passes. Come, my master will be waiting. He is ill; I fear he cannot sleep. I know how intent he is on meeting you. I beg you to oblige an old, dying man!"

"And you, monsieur," she mocked at me from beyond the curtain, "are intent only on getting rid of me. Are you not adventurous enough to forget that other woman for one night?"

At last she came out from between the curtains, garbed more suitably for the errand which was now before us. A long, dark cloak covered her shoulders. On her head there rested a dainty upland bonnet, whose jetted edges shone in the candle light as she moved toward me. She was exquisite in every detail, beautiful as mind of man could wish; that much was sure, must be admitted by any man. I dared not look at her.

She paused for an instant, drawing on a pair of the short gloves of the mode then correct. "Do you know why I am to go on this heathen errand?" she demanded. I shook my head.

"Mr. Calhoun wishes to know whether he shall go to the cabinet of your man Tyler over there in that barn you call your White House. I suppose Mr. Calhoun wishes to know how he can serve Mr. Tyler?"

I laughed at this. "Serve him!" I exclaimed. "Rather say lead him, tell him, command him!"

"Yes," she nodded. I began to see another and graver side of her nature. "Yes, it is of course Texas."

I did not see fit to make answer to this.

"If your master, as you call him, takes the portfolio with Tyler, it is to annex Texas," she repeated sharply. "Is not that true?"

"Still I would not answer. 'Come!' I said.

"And he asks me to come to him so that he may decide—"

This awoke me. "No man decides for John Calhoun, madam," I said. "You may advance facts, but he will decide." Still she went on.

"And Texas not annexed is a menace. Without her, you heathen people would not present a solid front, would you?"

"Madam has had much to do with affairs of state," I said.

She went on as though I had not spoken.

"And if you were divided in your southern section, England would have all the greater chance. England, you know, says she wishes slavery abolished. She says that—"

"England says many things!" I ventured.

"The hypocrite of the nations!" flashed out this singular woman at me suddenly. "As though diplomacy need

be hypocrisy! Thus, to-night Sir Richard of England forgets his place, his protestations. He does not even know that Mexico has forgotten its duty also. Sir, you were not at our little ball, so you could not see that very fat Sir Richard paying his bored devoirs to Dona Lucrezia! So I am left alone, and would be bored, but for you. In return—a slight jest on Sir Richard to-night—I will teach him that no fat gentleman should pay even bored attention to a lady who soon will be fat, when his obvious duty should call him otherwise! Bah! 'tis as though I myself were fat; which is not true."

"You go too deep for me, madam," I said. "I am but a simple messenger." At the same time, I saw how admirably things were shaping for us all. A woman's jealousy was with us, and so a woman's whim!

"Madam," said I, my hand at the fastening of the door, "we have exchanged pledges. Now we exchange places. It is you who are the messenger, not myself. There is a message in your hands. I know not whether you ever served a monarchy. Come, you shall see that our republic has neither secrets nor hypocrisies."

On the instant she was not shrewd and tactful woman of the world, not student, but once more coquette and woman of impulse. She looked at me

with mockery and invitation alike in her great dark eyes, even as I threw down the chain at the door and opened it wide for her to pass.

"Is that my only reward?" she asked, smiling as she fumbled at a glove.

In reply, I bent and kissed the fingers of her ungloved hand. They were so warm and tender that I had been different than I was had I not felt the blood tingle in all my body in the impulse of the moment to do more than kiss her fingers.

Had I done so—had I not thought of Elizabeth—then, as in my heart I still believe, the flag of England to-day would rule Oregon and the Pacific; and it would float to-day along the Rio Grande; and it would menace a divided north and south, instead of respecting a strong and indivisible Union which owns one flag and dreads none in the world.

As to Elizabeth Churchill, it might have been in line with a Maryland custom had she generally been known as Betty; but Betty she never was called, although that diminutive was applied to her aunt, Jennings, twice as large as she, after whom she had been named. Betty implies a snub nose; Elizabeth's was clean cut and straight. Betty runs for a saucer mouth and, a short one; Elizabeth's was red and curved, but firm and wide enough for strength and charity as well. Betty spells round eyes, with brows arched above them as though in query and curiosity; the eyes of Elizabeth were long, her brows long and straight and delicately fine. A Betty might even have red hair; Elizabeth's was brown in most lights, and so liquid smooth that almost I was disposed to call it dense rather than thick. Betty would seem to indicate a nature impulsive, gay, and free from care; on the other hand, it was to be said of Elizabeth that she was logical beyond her kind—a trait which she got from her mother, a daughter of old Judge Henry Gooch of our superior court. Yet, disposed as she always was to be logical in her conclusions, the great characteristic of Elizabeth was serenity, consideration and charity.

With all this, there appeared sometimes at the surface of Elizabeth's nature that fire and lightness and impulsiveness which she got from her father, Mr. Daniel Churchill. Whether she was wholly reserved and reason-



"Is That My Only Reward?" She Asked.

able, or wholly warm and impulsive, I, long as I had known and loved her, never was quite sure. Something held me away, something called me forward; so that I was always baffled, and yet always eager, God wot, I suppose this is the way of women.

At times I have been impatient with it, knowing my own mind well enough. At least now, in my tight-strapped trousers and my long blue coat and my high stock, my shining boots and my tall beaver, I made my way on my well-groomed horse up to the gates of old Elmhurst; and as I rode I pondered and I dreamed.

But Miss Elizabeth was not at home, it seemed. Her father, Mr. Daniel Churchill, rather portly, and now just a trifle red of face, met me instead. It was not an encounter for which I devoutly wished, but one which I knew it was the right of both of us to expect ere long. Seeing the occasion propitious I plunged at once in medias res. Part of the time explanatory, again apologetic, and yet again, I trust, assertive, although always blundering and red and awkward, I told the father of my intended, of my own wishes, my prospects and my plans.

He listened to me gravely and, it seemed to me, with none of that enthusiasm which I would have welcomed. As to my family, he knew enough. As to my prospects, he questioned me. My record was not unfamiliar to him. So, gaining confidence at last under the insistence of what I knew were worthy motives, and which certainly were irresistible of themselves, so far as I was concerned, I asked him if he might not soon make an end of this, and taking chances as they were, allow my wedding with Elizabeth to take place at no very distant date.

"Why as to that, of course I do not know what my girl will say," went on Mr. Daniel Churchill, pursing up his lips.

"Oh, of course—that," I answered; "Miss Elizabeth and I—"

"The skeeticks!" he exclaimed. "I thought she told me everything."

"I think Miss Elizabeth tells me one quite everything," I ventured. "I confess she has kept me almost as much in the dark as yourself, sir. But I only wanted to ask if, after I have seen her to-day, and if I should gain her consent to an early day, you would not waive any objections on your own part and allow the matter to go forward as soon as possible?"

In answer to this he arose from his chair and stood looking out of the window, his back turned to me. I could not call his reception of my suggestion enthusiastic; but at last he turned.

"I presume that our two families might send you young people a sack of meal or a side of bacon now and then, as far as that is concerned," he said.

I could not call this speech joyous. "There are said to be risks in any union, sir," I ventured to say. "I admit I do not follow you in contemplating any risk whatever. If either you or your daughter doubts my loyalty or affection, then I should say certainly it were wise to end all this; but—and I fancied I straightened perceptibly—"I think that might perhaps be left to Miss Elizabeth herself."

After all, Mr. Dan Churchill was obliged to yield, as fathers have been obliged from the beginning of the world. At last he told me I might take my fate in my own hands and go my way.

Trust the instinct of lovers to bring them together! I was quite confident that at that hour I should find Elizabeth and her aunt in the big east room at the president's reception, the former looking on with her uncompromising eyes at the little pageant which on reception days regularly went forward there.

My conclusion was correct. I found a boy to hold my horse in front of Gaultier's cafe. Then I hastened off across the intervening blocks and through the grounds of the White House, in which presently, having edged through the throng in the ante-chambers, I found myself in that nameless procession of individuals who passed by in order, each to receive the limp handshake, the mechanical bow and the perfunctory smile of President Tyler—rather a tall, slender-limbed, active man and of very decent presence, although his thin, shrunken cheeks and his cold blue-gray eyes left little quality of magnetism in his personality.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Over-Zealous in Care.

Some years ago the captain of one of his majesty's ships, while in quarantine at Auckland, New Zealand, owing to one slight case of fever, received some valuable carrier pigeons. He gave his colored servant strict orders to take great care of them. A few days afterward the captain, wishing to make use of the birds, inquired of his servant if he had taken care of them. "Oh, yes," replied he; "me had taken berry great care of dem. Dey no fly away, 'cause I had clipped dere wings!"

PERFUME FAVORED BY QUEENS

Royal Family of England Remains Faithful to "Ess Bouquet"—Czarina Is Fond of White Violet.

Queen Mary is not a lover of perfume. She uses eau de cologne occasionally, but avoids scents as much as possible. A west end chemist told the writer recently that neither is Queen Alexandra very fond of perfumes, although she remains faithful to the "Ess Bouquet," which has been in use by the royal family of England since 1822. This perfume is composed of amber mixed with the essences of roses, violets, jasmine, orange flowers and lavender.

On the other hand the Czarina is passionately fond of perfume. Her apartments in the royal palace are daily sprayed with essences of lilac, jasmine, and white violet. Her Majesty's favorite essence is violet, and for several weeks in the early spring hundreds of women and girls may be seen at Grasse gathering the blossoms from which the Czarina's perfume is made. The finished product is tested, bottle by bottle, at the St. Petersburg Academy of Chemistry before being sent to the imperial store.

The Queen Mother of Spain uses as perfume eau d'espagne, manufactured in Madrid, and also obtains a perfume for her toilet from Paris. Its composition is a secret which the perfume eau d'espagne, manufactured here, he says, "of rosewater, cocanutt oil, and—the rest is a mystery."

The young Queen of Holland is a great believer in the virtues of eau de cologne; while "Carmen Sylvia," Queen of Roumania, uses a special perfume made from the finest herbs, which she says "is the best tonic for the skin she has yet discovered."

SAVED OLD LADY'S HAIR

"My mother used to have a very bad humor on her head which the doctors called an eczema, and for it I had two different doctors. Her head was very sore and her hair nearly all fell out in spite of what they both did. One day her niece came in and they were speaking of how her hair was falling out and the doctors did it no good. She says, 'Aunt, why don't you try Cuticura Soap and Cuticura Ointment?' Mother did and they helped her. In six months' time the itching, burning and scalding of her head was over and her hair began growing. Today she feels much in debt to Cuticura Soap and Ointment for the fine head of hair she has for an old lady of seventy-four."

"My own case was an eczema in my feet. As soon as the cold weather came my feet would itch and burn and then they would crack open and bleed. Then I thought I would see to my mother's friends, Cuticura Soap and Cuticura Ointment. I did for four or five winters, and now my feet are as smooth as any one's. Ellsworth Dunham, Hiram, Me., Sept. 30, 1909."

Tribute to Painter's Skill.

One of the still life paintings by Jan van Huysen in the museum at The Hague was recently injured, but it is believed the perpetrator was neither vandal nor thief.

The picture represents a basket of fruit on which a number of insects have gathered. On a pale yellow apple, which is the centerpiece in the cluster of fruit, is a large fly, painted so true to nature, so say the officials of the gallery, that the canvas was injured by some one who endeavored to "shoo" it and brought his cane or hand too close to the canvas. "A tribute to the painter's genius," says the letter recording the fact, "for which the work had to suffer."

Fulfillment.

"Two great desires of my life have been gratified. One was to go up in an airship."

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is the recent Spokane fair was awarded to the Alberta Government for its exhibit of grain, fruits and vegetables. Reports of excellent yields for 1910 come also from Saskatchewan and Manitoba in Western Canada.

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