



54-40 OR FIGHT BY EMERSON HOUGH AUTHOR OF THE MISSISSIPPI BUBBLE ILLUSTRATIONS BY MAGNUS G. KETNER COPYRIGHT 1909 BY BOBBS-MERRILL COMPANY



SYNOPSIS.
John Calhoun becomes secretary of state in Tyler's cabinet with the dual determination to acquire both Texas and Oregon. Nicholas Trist, his secretary, is sent with a message to the Baroness von Ritz, spy and reputed mistress of the British minister, Pakenham. Trist encounters the baroness and assists her in escaping from pursuers. She agrees to see Calhoun, and as a pledge that she will tell him what she wants to know regarding the intentions of England toward Mexico, she gives Trist a slipper, the mate of which has been lost. Trist is ordered to Montreal on state business, and arrangements to be married to Elizabeth Churchill before departing. The baroness says she will sign the signature of the Texas annexation, and she is assisted by a drunken congressman, who is assisting Trist in his wedding arrangements. Elizabeth sends the baroness a slipper to Elizabeth instead of the crown, and the marriage is declared off. Nicholas finds the baroness in Montreal, she having succeeded, where he failed, in discovering England's intentions regarding Oregon. She tells him the slipper he had, contained a note from the Texas attaché to Pakenham, saying that if the United States did not annex Texas within 20 days she would lose both Texas and Oregon. Calhoun orders Trist to head a party bound for Oregon. Calhoun excites the jealousy of Senora Yturrio, and thereby secures the signature of the Texas attaché to a treaty of annexation. Nicholas arrives in Oregon. Later the baroness arrives on a British warship. She tells Nicholas that a note she placed in her slipper caused the breaking off of his marriage, and that she intends to return to Washington to repair the wrong. Nicholas follows her. He learns on the way that Polk has been elected and Texas annexed, and that there is to be war with Mexico. The baroness tells Trist that in return for a compromise of the Oregon boundary on the forty-ninth degree, she has sold herself to Pakenham for his price, and the baroness refuses to pay. He insults her. She compels him to apologize, holds him up in his right hand, and he declares that she is pure as a lily. The treaty is signed by Pakenham. The baroness gives the treaty to Calhoun and tells him she will go with Nicholas. Calhoun invites the baroness to a diplomatic ball at the White House.

gon is prepared. Now I am done. Yes. Tell me good-by."
"I will not say it," said I. "I can not."
She smiled at me. Others might see her lips, her smile. I saw what was in her eyes. "We must not be selfish," said she. "Come, I must go."
"Do not go," I insisted. "Wait."
She caught my meaning. "Surely," she said, "I will stay a little longer for that one thing. Yes, I wish to see her again, Miss Elizabeth Churchill. I hated her. I wish that I might love her now, do you know? Would—would she let me—if she knew?"
"They say that love is not possible between women," said I. "For my own part, I wish with you."
She interrupted with a light tap of her fan upon my arm. "Look, is not that she?"
I turned. A little circle of people were bowing before Mr. Polk, who held a sort of levee at one side of the hall. I saw the tall young girl who at the moment swept a graceful courtesy to the president. My heart sprang to my mouth. Yes, it was Elizabeth! Ah, yes, there flamed up on the altar of my heart the one fire, lit long ago for her. So we came now to meet silently, with small show, in such way as to thrill none but our two selves. She, too, had served, and that largely. And my constant altar fire had done its part also, strangely, in all this long coil of large events. Love—ah, true love wins and rules. It makes our maps. It makes our world.
Among all these distinguished men, these beautiful women, she had her own tribute of admiration. I felt rather than saw that she was in some pale filmy green, some crepe of China, with

gent speech. I turned to see Helena von Ritz gazing with wistful eyes at Elizabeth, and I saw the eyes of Elizabeth make some answer. So they spoke some language which I suppose men never will understand—the language of one woman to another.
I have known few happier moments in my life than that. Perhaps, after all, I caught something of the speech between their eyes. Perhaps not all cheap and cynical maxims are true, at least when applied to noble women.
Elizabeth regained her wonted color and more.
"I was very wrong in many ways," I heard her whisper. For almost the first time I saw her perturbed. Helena von Ritz stepped close to her. Amid the crash of the reeds and brasses, amid all the broken conversation which swept around us, I knew what she said. Low down in the founesses of the wide embroidered silks, I saw their two hands meet silently, and cling. This made me happy.
Of course it was Jack Dandridge who broke in between us. "Ah!" said he, "you jealous beggar, could you not leave me to be happy for one minute? Have you come back, a mere heathen, and proceeded to monopolize all our ladies. I have been making the most of my time, you see. I have proposed half a dozen times more to Miss Elizabeth, have I not?"
"Has she given you any answer?" I asked him, smiling.
"The same answer!"
"Jack," said I. "I ought to call you out."
"Don't," said he. "I don't want to be called out. I am getting found out. That's worse. Well—Miss Elizabeth, may I be the first to congratulate?"
"I am glad," said I, with just a

I never knew when these two left us in the crowd. I never said good-by to Helena von Ritz. I did not catch that last look of her eye. I remember her as she stood there that night, grave, sweet and sad.
I turned to Elizabeth. There in the crash of the reeds and brasses, the rise and fall of the sweet and bitter conversation all around us, was the comedy and the tragedy of life.
"Elizabeth," I said to her, "are you not ashamed?"
She looked me full in the eye. "No!" she said, and smiled.
I have never seen a smile like Elizabeth's.
EPILOGUE.
The Star Spangled Banner; O, long may it wave,
Over the land of the free, and the home of the brave!
—Francis Scott Key.
On the night that Miss Elizabeth Churchill gave me her hand and her heart forever—for which I have not yet ceased to thank God—there began the guns of Palo Alto. Later, there came the fields of Monterey, Buena Vista, Cerro Gordo, Contreras, Churubusco, Molino del Rey—at last the guns sounded at the gate of the old City of Mexico itself. Some of that fighting I myself saw; but much of the time I was employed in that manner of special work which had engaged me for the last few years. It was through Mr. Calhoun's agency that I reached a certain importance in these matters; and so I was chosen as the commissioner to negotiate a peace with Mexico.
This honor later proved to be a dangerous and questionable one. Gen. Scott wanted no interference of this kind, especially since he knew Mr. Calhoun's influence in my choice. He thwarted all my attempts to reach the headquarters of the enemy, and did everything he could to secure a peace of his own, at the mouth of the cannon. I could offer no terms better than Mr. Buchanan, then our secretary of state, had prepared for me, and these were rejected by the Mexican government at last. I was ordered by Mr. Polk to state that we had no better terms to offer; and as for myself, I was told to return to Washington. At that time I could not make my way out through the lines, nor, in truth, did I much care to do so.
A certain event not written in history influenced me to remain for a time at the little village of Gaudalupe Hidalgo. Here, in short, I received word from a lady whom I had formerly known, none less than Senora Yturrio, once a member of the Mexican legation at Washington. True to her record, she had again reached influential position in her country, using methods of her own. She told me now to pay no attention to what had been reported by Mexico. In fact, I was approached again by the Mexican commissioners, introduced by her! What was done then is history. We signed then and there the peace of Gaudalupe Hidalgo, in accordance with the terms originally given me by our secretary of state. So, after all, Calhoun's kindness to a woman in distress was not lost; and so, after all, he unwittingly helped in the ending of the war he never wished begun.
Meantime, I had been recalled to Washington, but did not know the nature of that recall. When at last I arrived there I found myself disgraced and discredited. My actions were repudiated by the administration. I myself was dismissed from the service without pay—sad enough blow for a young man who had been married less than a year.
Mr. Polk's jealousy of John Calhoun was not the only cause of this. Calhoun's prophecy was right. Yet, none the less, after his usual fashion, he was not averse to receiving such credit as he could. He put the responsibility of the treaty upon the senate! It was debated hotly there for some weeks, and at last, much to his surprise and my gratification, it was ratified!
The north, which had opposed this Mexican war—that same war which later led inevitably to the Civil War now found itself unable to say much against the great additions to our domain which the treaty had secured. We paid fifteen millions, in addition to our territorial indemnity claim, and we got a realm whose wealth could not be computed. So much, it must be owned, did fortune do for that singular favorite, Mr. Polk. And, curiously enough, the smoke had hardly cleared from Palo Alto field before Abraham Lincoln, a young member in the house of congress, was introducing a resolution which asked the marking of "the spot where that outrage was committed." Perhaps it was an outrage. Many still hold it so. But let us reflect what would have been Lincoln's life had matters not gone just as they did.
(TO BE CONTINUED.)
The handle of a new electric torch is magnetized so that it will adhere to metal surfaces, leaving its user's hands free for work.

CHAPTER XXXVI.—Continued.

Beautiful she surely was. Her hair gown was of light golden stuff, and there was a coral wreath upon her hair, and her dancing slippers were of coral hue. There was no more striking figure upon the floor than she. Jewels blazed at her throat and caught here and there the filmy folds of her gown. She was radiant, beautiful, apparently happy. She came mysteriously enough; but I knew that Mr. Calhoun's carriage had been sent for her. I learned also that he had waited for her arrival.
As I first saw Helena von Ritz, there stood by her side Dr. Samuel Ward, his square and stocky figure not undignified in his dancing dress, the stiff gray mane of his hair wagging after its custom as he spoke emphatically over something with her. A gruff man, Dr. Ward, but under his gray mane there was a clear brain, and in his broad breast there beat a large and kindly heart.
Even as I began to edge my way toward these two, I saw Mr. Calhoun himself approach, tall, gray and thin. He was very pale that night; and I knew well enough what effort it cost him to attend any of these functions. Yet he bowed with the grace of a younger man and offered the baroness an arm. Then, methinks, all Washington gasped a bit. Not all Washington knew what had gone forward between these two. Not all Washington knew what that couple meant as they marched in the grand procession that night—what they meant for America. Of all those who saw, I alone understood.

So they danced; he with the dignity of his years, she with the grace which was the perfection of dancing, the perfection of courtesy and of dignity also, as though she knew and valued to the full what was offered to her now by John Calhoun. Grave, sweet and sad Helena von Ritz seemed to me that night. She was wholly unconscious of those who looked and whispered. Her face was pale and rapt as that of some devotee.
Mr. Polk himself stood apart, and plainly enough saw this little matter go forward. When Mr. Calhoun approached with the Baroness von Ritz upon his arm, Mr. Polk was too much politician to hesitate or to inquire. He knew that it was safe to follow where John Calhoun led! These two conversed for a few moments. Thus, I fancy, Helena von Ritz had her first and last acquaintance with one of our politicians to whom fate gave far more than his deserts. It was the fortune of Mr. Polk to gain for this country Texas, California and Oregon—not one of them by desert of his own! My heart has often been bitter when I have recalled that little scene. Politics so unscrupulous can not always have a John Calhoun, a Helena von Ritz, to correct, guard and guide.

After this the card of Helena von Ritz might well enough indeed be full had she cared further to dance. She excused herself gracefully, saying that after the honor which had been done her she could not ask more. Still, Washington buzzed; somewhat of Europe as well. That might have been called the triumph of Helena von Ritz. She felt it not. But I could see that she gloried in some other thing. I approached her as soon as possible. "I am about to go," she said. "Say good-by to me now, here. We shall not meet again. Say good-by to me now, quickly! My father and I are going to leave. The treaty for Ore-



"She is Beautiful!" I Heard the Lady At My Arm Whisper.

skirts and sleeves looped up with pearls. In her hair were green leaves, simple and sweet and cool. To me she seemed graver, sweeter, than when I last had seen her. I say, my heart came up into my throat. All I could think was that I wanted to take her into my arms. All I did was to stand and stare.
My companion was more expert in social maneuvers. She waited until the crowd had somewhat thinned about the young lady and her escort. I saw now with certain qualms that this latter was none other than my willom friend Jack Dandridge. For a wonder, he was most unduly sober, and he made, as I have said, no bad figure in his finery. He was very merry and just a trifle loud of speech, but, being very intimate in Mr. Polk's household, he was warmly welcomed by that gentleman and by all around him.
"She is beautiful!" I heard the lady at my arm whisper.
"Is she beautiful to you?" I asked.
"Very beautiful!" I heard her catch her breath. "She is good. I wish I could love her. I wish, I wish—"
I saw her hands beat together as they did when she was agitated. I turned then to look at her, and what I saw left me silent. "Come," said I at last, "let us go to her." We edged across the floor.
When Elizabeth saw me she straightened, a pallor came across her face. It was not her way to betray much of her emotions. If her head was a trifle more erect, if indeed she paled, she too lacked not in quiet self-possession. She waited, with wide straight eyes fixed upon me. I found myself unable to make much intelli-

slight trace of severity, "that you have managed again to get into the good graces of Elmhurst. When I last saw you, I was not sure that either of us would ever be invited there again."
"Been there every Sunday regularly since you went away," said Jack. "I am not one of the family in one way, and in another way I am. Honestly, I have tried my best to cut you out. Not that you have not played your game well enough, but there never was a game played so well that some other fellow could not win by copping it. So I copped everything you did—played it for just the reverse. No go—lost even that way. And I thought you were the most perennial fool of your age and generation."
I checked as gently as I could a joviality which I thought unsuited to the time. "Mr. Dandridge," said I to him, "you know the Baroness von Ritz?"
"Certainly! The particeps criminis of our bungled wedding—of course I know her!"
"I only want to say," I remarked, "that the Baroness von Ritz has that little shell clasp now for her own, and that I have her slipper again, all for my own. So now, we three—no, four—at last understand one another, do we not? Jack, will you do two things for me?"
"All of them but two."
"When the Baroness von Ritz fulfills on her intention of leaving us—just at the height of all our happiness—I want you to hand her to her carriage. In the second place, I may need you again."
"Well, what would any one think of that!" said Jack Dandridge.

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Ethel—Is that why you were so anxious to get her for a partner last night?
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"When my baby was two months old, she had eczema and rash very badly. I noticed that her face and body broke out very suddenly, thick, and red as a coal of fire. I did not know what to do. The doctor ordered castile soap and powders, but they did no good. She would scratch, as it itched, and she cried, and did not sleep for more than a week. One day I saw in the paper the advertisement of the Cuticura Soap and Cuticura Ointment, so I got them and tried them at once. My baby's face was as a cake of sores.
"When I first used the Cuticura Soap and Cuticura Ointment, I could see a difference. In color it was redder. I continued with them. My baby was in a terrible condition. I used the Cuticura Remedies (Soap and Ointment) four times a day, and in two weeks she was quite well. The Cuticura Remedies healed her skin perfectly, and her skin is now pretty and fine through using them. I also use the Cuticura Soap today, and will continue to, for it makes a lovely skin. Every mother should use the Cuticura Remedies. They are good for all sores, and the Cuticura Soap is also good for shampooing the hair, for I have tried it. I tell all my friends how the Cuticura Soap and Ointment cured my baby of eczema and rash." (Signed) Mrs. Drew, 210 W. 18th St., New York city, Aug. 26, 1910.
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