



SYNOPSIS.

Senator John Calhoun is invited to become secretary of state in Tyler's cabinet. He declines that if he accepts Texas and Oregon must be added to the Union. He sends his secretary, Nicholas Triet, to ask the Baroness von Ritz, spy of the British ambassador, Pakenham, to call at his apartments. While searching for the baroness' home, a carriage driven up and Nicholas is invited to enter. The occupant is the baroness, and she asks Nicholas to assist in evading pursuers. Nicholas notes that the baroness has lost a slipper. She gives him the remaining slipper as a pledge that she will tell Calhoun what he wants to know regarding England's intentions toward Mexico. As security Nicholas gives her a trinket he intended for his sweetheart, Elizabeth Churchill. Calhoun becomes secretary of state. He orders Nicholas to Montreal on state business, and the latter plans to be married that night. The baroness says she will try to prevent the marriage. A drunken congressman whom Nicholas assists in the wedding arrangements sends the baroness a slipper to Elizabeth, by mistake, and the wedding 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 that the slipper he had in his possession contained a note from the attaché of Texas to the British ambassador, saying that if the United States did not annex Texas within 30 days, she would lose both Texas and Oregon. Nicholas meets a naturalist, Von Rittenhofen, who gives him information about Oregon. The baroness and a British warship disappear from Montreal simultaneously. Calhoun orders Nicholas to head a party of settlers bound for Oregon. Calhoun exhibits the jealousy of Secretary Yturrio and thereby secures the signature of the Texas attaché to a treaty of annexation. Nicholas starts for Oregon. He wins the race over the British party. A British warship arrives with the baroness as a passenger. She tells Nicholas that she placed a note in the slipper which caused the breaking of his marriage, and that she intends to return to Washington to repair the damage she has done. Nicholas decides to follow her. The baroness beats him to Washington. He learns Polk is elected and Texas annexed, and that there is to be war with Mexico.

CHAPTER XXXI.—Continued.

"My daughter! Yes, my daughter. It is Helena! I had not seen her for many years, long, cruel years. I suppose her dead. But now there we were, standing, looking in each other's eyes! We see there—Ach, Gott! what do we not see? Yet in spite of all, it was Helena! But she shall tell you." He tottered from the room. I heard his footsteps pass down the hall. Then softly, almost silently, Helena von Ritz again stood before me. The light from a side window fell upon her face. Yes, it was she! Her face was thinner now, browner even than was its wont. Her hair was still faintly sunburned at its extremities by the western winds. Yet hers was still imperishable youth and beauty.

I held out my hands to her. "Ah," I cried, "you played me false! You ran away! By what miracle did you come through? I confess my defeat. You beat me by almost half a year." "But now you have come," said she simply.

"Yes, to remind you that you have friends. You have been here in secret all the winter. Mr. Calhoun did not know you had come. Why did you not go to him?"

"I was waiting for you to come. Do you not remember our bargain? Each day I expected you. In some way, I scarce knew how, the weeks wore on."

"And now I find you both here—you and your father—where I would expect to find neither. Continually you violate all law of likelihood. But now, you have seen Elizabeth?"

"Yes, I have seen her," she said, still simply.

I could think of no word suited to that moment. I stood only looking at her. She would have spoken, but on the instant raised a hand as though to demand my silence. I heard a loud knock at the door, peremptory, commanding, as though the owner came.

"You must go into another room," said Helena von Ritz to me hurriedly. "Who is it? Who is at the door?"

I asked. She looked at me calmly. "It is Sir Richard Pakenham," said she. "This is his usual hour. I will send him away. Go now—quick!"

I rapidly passed behind the screening curtains into the hall, even as I heard a heavy foot stumbling at the threshold and a somewhat husky voice offer some sort of salutation.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Pakenham's Price. The happiest women, like nations, have no history.—George Eliot.

The apartment into which I hurriedly stepped I found to be a long and narrow hall, heavily draped. A door or so made off on the right-hand side, and a closed door also appeared at the farther end; but none invited me to enter, and I did not care to intrude. This situation did not please me, because I must perforce hear all that went on in the rooms which I had just left. I heard the thick voice of a man, apparently none the better for wine.

"My dear," it began, "I—Some gesture must have warned him."

"God bless my soul!" he began again. "Who is here, then? What is wrong?"

"My father is here to-day," I heard her clear voice answer, "and, as you suggest, it might perhaps be better—"

54-40 OR FIGHT BY EMERSON HOUGH

AUTHOR OF THE MISSISSIPPI BUBBLE ILLUSTRATIONS BY MAGNUS G. KETNER COPYRIGHT 1909 BY BOBBY-MERRILL COMPANY

"No, Sir Richard, it would never do. Go, then!" spoke in a low and icy voice, hers, yet not hers. "Hasten!" I heard her half whisper. "I think perhaps my father—"

But it was my own footsteps they heard. This was something to which I could not be party. Yet, rapidly as I walked, her visitor was before me. I caught sight only of his portly back, as the street door closed behind him. She stood, her back against the door, her hand spread out against the wall, as though to keep me from passing.

I paused and looked at her, held by the horror in her eyes. She made no concealment, offered no apologies, and showed no shame. I repeat that it was only horror and sadness mingled which I saw on her face.

"Madam," I began. And again, "madam!" and then I turned away. "You see," she said, sighing.

"Yes, I fear I see; but I wish I did not. Can I not—may I not be mistaken?"

"No, it is true. There is no mistake."

"What have you done? Why, why?"

"Did you not always credit me with being the good friend of Mr. Pakenham years ago—did not all the city? Well, then I was not; but I am, now! I was England's agent only—until last night. Monsieur, you have come too soon, too late, too late. Ah, my God! my God! Last night I gave at last that consent. He comes now to claim, to exact, to take—possession—of me."

"Ah, my God!"

"I cannot, of course, understand you madam. What is it? Tell me!"

"For three years England's minister besought me to be his, not England's"

"But did I not hear him say there was a key—his key—to-night?"

"Yes, England once owned that key. Now, he does. Yes, it is true. Since yesterday. Now, he comes . . ."

"But, madam—ah, how could you so disappoint my belief in you?"

"Because"—she smiled bitterly—"in all great causes there are sacrifices."

"But no cause could warrant this."

"I was judge of that," was her response. "I saw her—Elizabeth—that girl. Then I saw what the future years meant for me. I tell you, I vowed with her, that night when I thought you two were wedded. I did more. I vowed myself to a new and wider world that night. Now, I have lost it. After all, seeing I could not now be a woman and be happy, I—monsieur—I pass on to others, after this, not that torture of life, but that torturing principle of which we so often speak. Yes, I, even as I am; because of this—this act—this sacrifice—I can win you for her. And I can win that wider America which you have coveted; which I covet for you—which I covet with you!"

I could do no more than remain silent, and allow her to explain what was not in the least apparent to me. After a time she went on.

"Now—now, I say—Pakenham the minister is sunk in Pakenham the man. He does as I demand—because he is a man. He signs what I demand because I am a woman. I say, tonight—but, see!"

She hastened now to a little desk, and caught up a folded document which lay there. This she handed to me, unfolded, and I ran it over with a hasty glance. It was a matter of



"I Cannot, of Course, Understand You, Madam, What Is It? Tell Me!"

property. It was not true, what the town thought. It was not true in the case either of Yturrio. Intrigue—yes—I loved it. I intrigued with England and Mexico both, because it was in my nature; but no more than that. No matter what I once was in Europe, I was not here—not, as I said, until last night. Ah, monsieur! Ah, monsieur!" Now her hands were beating together.

"But why then? Why then? What do you mean?" I demanded.

"Because no other way sufficed. All this winter, here, alone, I have planned and thought about other means. Nothing would do. There was but the one way. Now you see why I did not go to Mr. Calhoun, why I kept my presence here a secret."

"But you saw Elizabeth?"

"Yes, long ago. My friend, you have won! You both have won, and I have lost. She loves you, and is worthy of you. You are worthy of each other, yes. I saw I had lost; and I told you I would give you her—and Oregon! Well, then, that was hard—"

She choked. "That was—hard to do." She almost sobbed. "But I have—paid! Heart and soul . . . and body . . . I have . . . paid! Now, he comes . . . for . . . the price!"

"But then—but then!" I expostulated. "What does this mean, that I see here? There was no need for this. Had you no friends among us? Why, though it means war, I myself tonight would choke that beast Pakenham with my own hands!"

"No, you will not."

tremendous importance which lay in those few closely written lines.

England's minister offered, over the signature of England, a compromise of the whole Oregon debate, provided this country would accept the line of the forty-ninth degree! That, then, was Pakenham's price for this key that lay here.

"This—is this all I have been able to do with him thus far," she faltered. "It is not enough. But I did it for you!"

"Madam, this is more than all America has been able to do before! This has not been made public?"

"No, no! It is not enough. But tonight I shall make him surrender all—all north, to the very ice, for America, for the democracy! See, now, I was born to be devoted, imolated, after all, as my mother was before me. That is fate! But I shall make fate pay! Ah, monsieur! Ah! monsieur!"

She flung herself to her feet. "I can get it all for you, you and yours!" she reiterated, holding out her hands, the little pink fingers upturned, as was often her gesture. "You shall go to your chief and tell him that Mr. Polk was right—that you yourself, who taught Helena von Ritz what life is, taught her that after all she was a woman—are able, because she was a woman, to bring in your own hands all that country, yes, to fifty-four forty, or even farther. I do not know what all can be done. I only know that a fool will part with everything for the sake of his body."



I stood now looking at her, silent, trying to fathom the vastness of what she said, trying to understand at all their worth the motives which impelled her. The largeness of her plan, yes, that could be seen. The largeness of her heart and brain, yes, that also. Then slowly, I saw yet more. At last I understood. What I saw was a horror to my soul.

"Madam," said I to her, at last, "did you indeed think me so cheap as that? Come here!" I led her to the central apartment, and motioned her to a seat.

"Now, then, madam, much has been done here, as you say. It is all that ever can be done. You shall not see Pakenham to-night, nor ever again!"

"But think what that will cost you!" she broke out. "This is only part. It should all be yours."

I flung the document from me. "This has already cost too much," I said. "We do not buy states thus."

"But it will cost you your future! Polk is your enemy, now, as he is Calhoun's. He will not strike you now, but so soon as he dares, he will. Now, if you could do this—if you could take me to Mr. Calhoun, to America, it would mean for you personally all that America could give you in honors."

"Honors without honor, madam, I do not covet," I replied. Then I would have bit my tongue through when I saw the great pallor cross her face at the cruelty of my speech.

"And myself!" she said, spreading out her hands again. "But no! I know you would not taunt me. I know, in spite of what you say, there must be a sacrifice. Well, then I have made it. I have made my atonement. I say I can give you now, even thus, at least a part of Oregon. I can perhaps give you all of Oregon—to-morrow! The Pakenhams have always dared much to gain their ends. This one will dare even treachery to his country. To-morrow—if I do not kill him—if I do not die—I can perhaps give you all of Oregon—bought—bought and all paid!" Her voice trailed on into a whisper which seemed loud as a bugle call to me.

"No, you cannot give us Oregon," I answered. "We are men, not panders. We fight; we do not traffic thus. But you have given me Elizabeth!"

"My rival!" She smiled at me in spite of all. "But no, not my rival. Yes, I have already given you her and given you to her. To do that—to atone, as I said, for my attempt to part you—well, I will give Mr. Pakenham the key that Sir Richard Pakenham of England lately held. I told you a woman pays, body and soul! In what coin fate gave me, I will pay it. You think my morals mixed. No, I tell you I am clean! I have only bought my own peace with my own conscience! Now, at last, Helena von Ritz knows why she was born, to what end! I have a work to do, and, yes, I see it now—my journey to America after all was part of the plan of fate. I have learned much—through you, monsieur."

Hurriedly she turned and left me, passing through the heavy draperies which cut off the room where stood the great satin couch. I saw her cast herself there, her arms outflung. Slow, deep and silent sobs shook all her body.

"Madam! Madam!" I cried to her. "Do not! Do not! What you have done here is worth a hundred millions of dollars, a hundred thousand lives, perhaps. Yes, that is true. It means most of Oregon, with honor, and without war. That is true, and it is much. But the price paid—it is more than all this continent is worth, if it cost so much as that. Nor shall it!"

Black, with a million pin-points of red, the world swam around me. Millions of dead souls or souls unborn seemed to gaze at me and my unhesitating rage. I caught up the scroll which bore England's signature, and with one clutch cast it in two pieces on the floor. As it lay, we gazed at it in silence. Slowly, I saw a great, soft radiance come upon her face. The red pin-points cleared away from my own vision.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The Violin Maker. He chisels top and bottom of the violin's body from solid blocks of spruce and maple, coaxing the subtle and delicate conformations through a month of patient labor, putting soul and yearning in the wood, as perhaps no other hand-craftsman may, in his search for exquisite tone. He is building a slender and sensitive box with a wonderful power to emit vibrations marshaled into order, and delivered as a voice. No visible beauty of carved form and no original departure from set design avail him in reaching his goal. He seeks intangible essence of sound and means for its loftiest beauty. For him there is no established law for alluring the tone to some dimple in the wood, to delight it to rapturous perfection. He pursues an ignis fatuus of quivering air-waves that leads onward endlessly. He may only strive toward achievement of his object as strove his forebears of the craft, and frequently with far less reward.—Harper's Magazine.

NATIONAL CAPITAL AFFAIRS

Cummins Seeks Rigid Merit System



WASHINGTON.—Senator Cummins of Iowa, as chairman of the committee on civil service and retrenchment, proposes to push the consideration of a comprehensive civil service measure—one that will provide for the designation by law of all places under civil service classification, instead of leaving them to executive order, and which will regulate promotions and retirements.

As a member of the committee on Interstate commerce he already has done some work on a bill to reorganize the interstate commission, increasing its membership and dividing it into five parts, these parts to have jurisdiction respectively over sections of the country corresponding to the traffic divisions as designated by the railroads.

It is not certain that the scheme for reorganization of the interstate commerce commission will be advanced beyond the preliminary stage at this extra session.

With respect to the subject first mentioned, however, it is the intention to introduce a bill within a short

time and to do as much work on it as possible in committee during the summer.

Hearings may be held and as an indication of Senator Cummins' intention to keep his committee busy, the first thing he did after reaching Washington the other day was to move his quarters in the senate office building from the northwest corner to the southeast corner, immediately adjoining the room allotted to the committee on civil service and retrenchment.

For years, until Mr. Cummins became chairman, this committee had been one of the "do-nothing" committees of the senate. In the last congress it held hearings on the proposition to provide for the retirement and pensioning of superannuated employees of the various government departments.

It now is proposed to embrace the civil service classification and the promotion and retirement features in one comprehensive measure.

There is no intention, it is understood, of assailing the executive branch of the government through the proposition to designate by law the positions that shall be filled under the civil service rules. It is designed, however, to make the rules more rigid and to prevent in the future the excepting of certain places from the application of the rules by executive order.

Sherman Hard to Keep in Line

VICE-PRESIDENT SHERMAN'S fondness for mixing with the crowd, talking politics with his old cronies in the house and a general dislike for formality, especially when the formality is a prolonged affair, almost disarranged the White House plans for the New Year reception.

Mr. Sherman was the first man received by the president. The vice-president then became a member of the president's receiving party. The presiding officer of the senate continued to bow sweetly as long as possible, and then quietly stepped into the line of guests which had already passed the president and walked out to the east room, where there were hundreds of politicians of various brands. The vice-president was having a fine time when he was interrupted by Capt. Archibald Butt, the president's military aid.

"Mr. Vice-President," said Captain Butt, "you have been missed from the receiving line. Permit me to escort you back in time to receive the diplomats."

"So long, boys," said the vice-president, waving his hand to his old cronies in the hotse. "See you later."

Diplomat after diplomat passed the president, and behind them the vice-president saw an endless line of gold braid adorning the breasts of countless officers of the army and navy stationed in Washington.

"Those fellows don't want to see me for anything," said the vice-president, as he slipped back into the east room.

Half an hour later, while the vice-president was exchanging the compliments of the season and telling and hearing stories, he was again accosted by Captain Butt.

"I have been looking all over the White House for you," said the military aid.

"Well, here I am," remarked "Sunny Jim," slapping Butt on the back. "What do you want this time?"

"President Taft's party is ready to go to luncheon," said the captain, "and we are waiting for you to escort Mrs. Taft."

Jap War Talk Is Called Criminal



"YOU can take two friendly boys and bump their heads together until one of them will lose his temper and then you will have a fight," said a high-up official of the United States. "The same rule applies to nations. This talk about a prospective war between the United States and Japan if kept up for a few years will inevitably produce war between the two countries. It ought to be stopped, and stopped now."

"There ought to be some way of inflicting punishment on persons who indulge in this war talk when there is not the slightest foundation for it. The newspapers are not primarily responsible for this talk. I do think, however, that they ought to quit giving it publicity."

Some persons have recently made

the suggestion that it might not be improper for congress to start an investigation with a view to ascertaining why this talk of hostilities between the United States and Japan continues. It is pointed out that such an investigation ought to reveal whether as a matter of cold fact there is any basis for the stories that are constantly put in circulation. For nearly four years this talk has gone on here at the capital, and naturally has spread to other sections of the country.

President Taft has recently found it necessary to invite the ambassador of the Japanese empire to the White House and assure him personally that the administration is in no way responsible for the war talk that has recently been indulged in, and to reiterate to him that the United States has only the kindest feelings for Japan.

During the last month many stories, circumstantial in character, have been passed around here tending to show that Japan is preparing to fight this country. Every one of them on investigation has been found to be baseless.

Naturalists Busy on Canal Zone

ENCOURAGING reports are being received by the Smithsonian institution from the naturalists who are taking part in the biological survey of the Panama canal zone, which was organized by the institution last winter. The principal branches of natural history are represented in the party, which includes seven experienced field naturalists, nearly all of them from the scientific bureaus of the government.

Naturalists throughout the world are greatly interested in this biological survey, because when the canal is opened sweeping changes probably will take place in the distribution of the animals and plants. A part of the fresh water streams of the isthmus now empty into the Atlantic ocean and others into the Pacific.

It is known that a certain number of animals and plants in the streams on the Atlantic side differ from those of the Pacific side, but as no biological survey has ever been undertaken the extent and magnitude of these differences have yet to be learned.



It also is of great importance to science to determine the geographical distribution of the various organisms inhabiting these waters, as the isthmus is one of the routes by which the animals and plants of South America have entered North America and vice versa.

When the canal is completed the natural distinctions now existing will be obliterated, while by the construction of the Gatun dam a vast fresh water lake will be formed, which will drive away or drown the majority of the animals and plants now inhabiting the locality and might exterminate some of the species before the scientific experts had a chance to study them.