54-40 or FIGHT

BY EMERSON HOUGH

AUTHOR OF "THE MISSISSIPPI BUBBLE"

ILLUSTRATIONS by MAGNUS G. KETTNER

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SYNOPSIS.

The story is told by Nicholas Trist. His father, Elisha Trist, is a clerk in the office of the portfolio of state in Washington City'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 to become secretary of state his health will be added to that. Elisha is given over to the intentions of England with regard to the Oregon territory. Lord Ashburton, the ambassador, reputed mistress of the English ambassador, Pakenham. Nicholas is sent to bring the baroness to Calhoun's apartments. Nicholas meets Elisha Trist's son, Jack Stewart, Elizabeth Churchill. While searching for the baroness' house a carriage dashes up and Nicholas is invited to ride in it. The occupant is Elizabeth Bonny who she is being concealed. The prisoners are shaken off. Nicholas is invited into the Bonny-Bodisco house. Elizabeth tells him that the baroness has lost a slipper. Nicholas is given the remaining slipper as a guide, that she will tell him her name everything. He gives her an envelope. Nicholas delivers the baroness to Elizabeth. Elizabeth's father consents to Nicholas' proposal for her hand.

CHAPTER VII—Continued.

It was not new to me, of course, this pageant, although it never lacked of interest. There were in the throng representatives of all America in it. It was then, a strange, crude blending of refinement and vulgarity, of ease and poverty, of luxury and thrift.

A certain air of gloom at this time hung over official Washington. In the minds of all were still oppressed by the remembrance of that fatal accident—the explosion of the great cannon "Peacemaker" on board the war vessel Princeton—which had killed Mr. Upshur, our secretary of state, with others, and had at one time caused us near to departing this government of its head and his official family. Also a number of prominent lives thus ended, or endangered—formed a sombre contemplate. It was this accident which had called Mr. Calhoun forward as a national juncture of the most extreme delicacy and the utmost importance. In spite of the universal mourning, however, the informal receptions at the White House had not ceased, but continued, and the administration, unscathed as it was, and trusted by the gravest of diplomatic problems, made much show of dignity and even cheerfulness as it might.

I considered it my duty to pass in the long procession and to shake the hand of Mr. Tyler. That done, I gazed about the great room, carefully watching the different little groups which were recommended to form after the ceremonial part of the visit was over. I saw many whom I knew. I recognized them, for in a far corner, where a flood of light came through the trailing vines that shielded the outer sash now, my anxious eyes discovered the object of my quest—Elizabeth.

It seemed to me I had never known her so full or she was that morning in the great east room of the White House. Elizabeth was rather taller than the average woman, and of that splendid southern figure, slender but strong, which makes perhaps the best representative of our American beauty. She was very bravely arrayed on this day in her best pink-flowered lawn, made wide and full, as was the custom of the time, but not so clumsily gathered at the waist as some and not serving not wholly to conceal the natural contours of figure. Her bonnet she had removed. I could see the sunlight on the ripples of her brown hair, and the color in her cheeks above her eyes as she turned to face me, and the light in her eyes, as I met it.

Dignified always, and reserved, was Elizabeth Churchill. But now I hope it was not wholly unwarranted in me to feel that perhaps the warmth, the glow of the air caught while it rising under my eyes, was a sight of happily

The many budding roses of our city, the scent of which was wafted even then came through the lattice—the meeting eyes of us two, which then returned—something at least of this had caused me to feel a throb in my heart. Something, I say, I do not know what, gave her greeting to me more warmth than usual—at least with her. My own heart, eager enough to break loudly, was still in my mind. We stood—blushing like children as our hands touched together in the usual assignage of Washington's pomp and circumstance.

"How do you do?" was all I could find to say. And "How do you do?" was all I could find to say, after, although I say, in a fleeting way, a glimpse of a smile in her dark eyes. She bow above absorbed it save when pleased me with a little flash of Elizabeth's.

Absorbed, as I say, I was myself. And Betty Jennings—stout, radiant, snubnosed, arch-browed and curious, Elizabeth's chaperon, I think, I guess. I was glad Aunt Betty Jennings was there.

"Aunt Betty," said I, as I took her hand; "Aunt Betty, have we told you, Elizabeth and I?"

I saw Elizabeth straighten in perplexity, doubt or horror, but I went on.

"Yes, Elizabeth and I——"

"You dear children!" gurgled Aunt Betty.

"Congratulate us both!" I demanded, and I put Elizabeth's hand, covered with my own, into the elder's and chilly her fingers of that estimable lady.

"Nicholas," She Said, "Come To-Night."

Whenever Elizabeth attempted to open her lips I signaled them before and I so overwhelmed dear Aunt Betty Jennings with protestations of my regard for her, my interest in her family, her every grace, her goodness, her kindness, her home I so quieted all her questions by assertions and demands and condemnations, and declarations that Mr. Daniel Churchill had given his consent, that I swear for the moment even Elizabeth believed that what I had said was indeed true. At least, I can testify she made no formal denial, although the dimple was now frightened out of sight.

Admirable Aunt Betty Jennings! She—credulous every assertion I made, herself bobbing and blushing in sheer delight. Nor did she lack in charity. Tapping me with her fan lightly, she exclaimed: "You rogue! I know that you two want to be alone, that is what you want. Now I am going away just down the room. You will ride home with us after a time, I am sure."

Admirable Aunt Betty Jennings! Elizabeth and I looked at her comfortable back for some moments before I turned, laughing, to Elizabeth to both in the eyes.

You had a right to begin she, her face growing pink.

Every right said I, and managed to find a place for my hand on the border cover of the wide flounces of her figured lawn as we stood, both blushing. I have every right. I have right just now your father I have just come from him.

She looked at me intently, glowing deeply.

I could not wait any longer. I went on. Within a week, I am sure, I have an office of my own. Let us wait. Let us wait. I have waited long enough. Now——

I hastened on and she listened. It was strange phase enough for a be trothal, but there at least I said the words which meant—and she let me look Elizabeth gave me I saw her answer. Her eyes were wide and straight and solemn She did not smile.

As we stood, with small opportunity and perhaps less inclination for more conversation, the baroness came to turn toward the main entrance door of the east room. I was, what no one else would have seen—that little flash of recognition which was of Helena von Bitz' She heard a whisper pass. Moreover with a woman's unerring facility in detail, she took in every item of the other's costume. Her opinion I could see nothing of that costume now save one object—a barbaric slipper of gold and pearl and beaded fastenings, which clasped the light foot at her throat.

The baroness had perhaps slept as little as I the night before. If I showed the ravages of loss of sleep no more than she I was fortunate She also was radiant, as she passed forward with her escort for place in the line which had not yet developed away.

"You seem to know that lady," said Elizabeth to me gently.

"Did I so seem?" I answered. "It is my professional of all to study in the face room at a reception," said I.

Of reason or explanations it gave me none.

I turned to Elizabeth and held out the message from my chief. She looked at it Her eyes widened, "Nicholas!" she exclaimed.

"Elizabeth" said I, turning to her swiftly, "I will agree to nothing which will send me away from you. Listen, listen—" I raised a hand as she would have spoken. "Go home with your Aunt Betty as soon as you can. Tell your father that to-night at 8 I shall be there. Be ready!"

"What do you mean" she panted I saw her throat flutter

"I mean that we must be married to-night before I go. Before night o'clock I must be on the train When will you be back" she whispered.

"How can I tell" When I go, my wife shall wait there at Elmhurst, in the end of the summer!

She turned away from me, confemplative She lost, was young Ardor appealed to her. She looked before her beckoning as to me What could be the gift to or say?

I placed her hand on my arm We moved slowly toward the window to pick up Aunt Jennings on our way. As we came to her she turned to me broke apart I stood aside to make room for her companion. I did not recognize On his arm there leaned a woman, a beautiful woman, clad in the richest of costume, a woman in a set of coral blue which made her the most striking figure in the great room Here was a personality not easily to be overlooked in any company, but rare one not readily to be recalled It was but baroness Bodisco, I said.

We met face to face. I presume it would have been too much to ask of her to suppress the sudden flash of recognition which she showed. At first she did not seem to see me as I passed. She bent to me, as though about to bow, and, without a change in the expression of her face, spoke to me in an undertone no one else could hear

"Wait" she murmured There is to be a meeting—" She had time for no more in our swept by

Alas, that new moments should spell ruin as well as happiness! This brief encounter, as I say, was soon to turn toward the main entrance door of the east room. I was, what no one else would have seen—that little flash of recognition which was of Helena von Bitz' She heard a whisper pass. Moreover with a woman's unerring facility in detail, she took in every item of the other's costume. Her opinion I could see nothing of that costume now save one object—a barbaric slipper of gold and pearl and beaded fastenings, which clasped the light foot at her throat.

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"Did I so seem?" I answered. "It is my professional of all to study in the face room at a reception," said I.

"Then you do not know the lady?" "Indeed, I do. Why should I, my dear girl?" Ah, how but my face was!

"I do not know," said Elizabeth. "Only in a way she resembles a certain lady of whom Indian thing you said it should be my—my wedding present? Have you remembered it? Now, I was thinking—"

I stood blushing and as though detected in the utmost villainy. And the girl at my side saw that written on my face which now, within the very moment, I had become her right to question! I turned to her suddenly.

"Elizabeth," said I, "you shall have your little thought to-night, if you will promise me now to be ready and waiting for me at six. I will have the license—"

It seemed to me that this new self of Elizabeth's—warmer, yielding, adoration—was about to going away from me again, and that her old self, none the less a wont, none the less alluring, but more hesitant, more questioning, had taken its old place again. She put both her hands on my arm once and looked me fairly in the face, where the color still persisted in some wave of guilt on my part, although my heart was clean and pure as my love.

"Nicholas," she said, "come to-night. Bring me my little jewel—gift bring—"

"The minister! If I do that, Elizabeth, you will promise me—"

"Yes!" she whispered softly

Amid all the babble of chat that mother throng I heard the word, low as it was, which I most desired to hear. Like Elizabeth's.

Elizabeth later, I knew not quite how, her hand was away from my arm, in that of Aunt Betty, and they moved away from me into the throng, leaving me standing with joy and doubt shaking in my heart.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

HELPED SENATOR TO VICTORY

Political Opponents Made Mistake When They Printed Story They Thought Would Hurt.

Senator Chamberlain ... Washington, who recently made his first extended speech in the senate, is a man of parts, as has reminded an old friend o. Chamberlain's own eloquence in conservation.

When Chamberlain was running ... the senate," said this friend, "the opposition got hold over the record which the youth child in first ... Chamberlain infamous to him. One day one of the opposition came to Chamberlain and said he had a.

"Chamberlain was president" a bank when he was a young man; it was discovered that he had ... funds.

Chamberlain ... and admitted the charge.

The story was looked up and was true The bank had failed, and Chamberlain was ... to settle.

They were just ready to put out the story when the editor of Chamberlain's ... came along and advised against it. "Let me tell you about it," he said. "Take my word for it."

They ... consented, and ... had to do something, and so the story of the bank failure ... was printed, and ... due publicity in all the anti-Chamberlain papers Next day the Chamberlain newspapers ... with the story published by all the directors and a lot of deposits ... of their ... to ...

"It is true that Mr. Chamberlain was president of a bank," ... "and it failed. At that time ... was a man of large means, and ... his own money actively connected with the bank and ... depositors. But ... the failure ... that it was closed and hopelessly insolvent he turned over his entire property, practically paid all ... depositors."

Thereupon the anti-Chamberlain people started hunting for a new ... and they have been looking ever since. The man whose bank had failed inglorious ly was triumphantly elected senator.

Our Lack in Humor.

Artemus Ward said that a comic paper was no worse for having a little wit in it now and then, and we have ever since been quoted as one who had said that we had no humor. The great forte of American mirth is the joke. ... Punch has long since ... in a sentence. Misplaced capitals, awkward spelling, impossible grammar, ... humorous ... of situation, ... and ... are ... to ... action and character, heightened by pictures equally funny, these are the ... which ... and ... Punch ... quick to catch the point of a cartoon, but enjoy the ... humor of a written picture. But to smile at the mock-serious ... of ... ... is ... to ... the ... finement as yet beyond us.

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