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SYNOPSIS.

Senator John Calhoun is invited to become secretary of the Texas Syndicate. He declines that if he accepts Texas bonds must be added to the Union. He sends his secretary, Nicholas Tyler, to Texas. Calhoun's daughter, Ann, is at a seminary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, of its aristocracy. While searching for the Texas bonds, Ann, a carriage driver up on Nicholas is invited to enter. The occupant of the carriage is Nicholas Tyler, who is assist in evading pursuers. Nicholas tells 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. Nicholas is arrested for the murder of Edward Stanley. As accomplice Nicholas gives her a trinket he intended for his sweetheart, Elizabeth Clinchfield. Tyler tells Pakenham that joint occupancy of the Texas bonds. Ann is arrested for the murder of Stanley, Pakenham, at Tyler's four Forty, or Fight." Calhoun becomes secretary of state. He notifies Nicholas to Montreal on state business. Ann, Nicholas, Pakenham, and Tyler are in Montreal. Pakenham says he will try to prevent the marriage. A drunken compatriot of Nicholas tells him he is a spy in the wedding arrangements, sends the drunkard to Quebec. Nicholas, Ann, Pakenham, and Tyler are married. Nicholas finds the baroness in Montreal. Nicholas discovers that Ann is faithful. Ann Crewes, Texas, tells him that the slipper he had in his possession contained a note from the attache of Texas to the Texas Legation at Washington. Ann, Tyler, Nicholas and Pakenham leave for Texas. In 30 days, she would lose both Texas and Oregon. Nicholas meets a naturalized Hittanbofen, who gives him information concerning the Texas bonds. Nicholas marries Elizabeth from Montreal alone. Ann, Pakenham, Tyler, Nicholas, Elizabeth, Texas, Oregon, Calhoun orders Nicholas to head a party of soldiers for Oregon.

CHAPTER XXI.—Continued.

Her face was half hidden by her fan, and her eyes, covered by their long lashes, were cast down in thoughts. The same cold voice went on:

"You might, for instance, tell Mr. Polk, which is to say Mr. Van Zandt, that if the same offer made by the treaty for Texas, nothing will be said to Texas regarding his proposal to give Texas a port on the Pacific. I need not be safe for that little fact gentlemen. It is not, I fear, yet, to be known to me. We will keep it secret. You might ask Mr. Van Zandt if he would not like a seat in the senate in these United States, rather than a brothel. So much I offer you. I take your honorable acquaintance with Mr. Van Zandt. Mr. Van Zandt, my dear lady, that I do not go to Texas to demand his signature in the name of Texas. Nothing. I merely suggest to you that did you talk this little treaty for a day, and then, instead of a note to me with his signature attached, I should feel so deeply gratified that I should not ask you to tell what means you had attained this most desirable result! And I should hope that if you could not win back the affections of a certain gentleman, at least you might win your own evening of the scales with him."

Her face colored darkly. In a flash she saw the covert allusion to the faithless Pakenham. Here was the chance to turn the tables on him. She could cost England Texas! Revenge made its swift appeal to her savage heart. Revenge and jealousy, hand-in-hand, mercilessly as weapons—those cost England Texas!

She sat, her fan tight at her white teeth. "It would be cheap to me if it were known," she said. But still she sat musing, her eye alight with sombre fire, her dark cheek red with strange anger.

"That it never will be known, my dear lady. These things, however, must be conducted swiftly. We have not time to wait. Let us not argue over the unhappy business. Let me have the note of your sister republic and our friend!"

"Why, I know I shall not do this that you ask, sence?"

"That, my dear lady, I do not suppose!"

"You threaten, Senor Secretary?"

"On the contrary, I implore! Dear lady, may we not conspire together—for the ultimate good of three republics, making them two republics one, later to dwell in amity? Shall we not see all this country, from west ward free of monarchy, held free, for the peoples of the world?"

For an instant, no more, she sat and pondered. Suddenly she bestowed upon him a smile whose fascination might have turned the head of an old man. Rising, she swept him a curtsey whose grace I have not seen surpassed.

In return, Mr. Calhoun bowed to her with dignity and ease, and, lifting her hand, pressed it to his lips. Then, offering her an arm, he led her to his carriage. I could scarce believe my eyes and ears that so much, and of so much importance, had thus so easily been accomplished, and that what I had deemed so near to the impossible.

CHAPTER XXII.

But Yet a Woman.

Woman turns every man the wrong side out,
And never gives to truth and virtue that
Which belongs unto them not: part pretending,
part in truth.
—Shakespeare.

On the day following my last interview with Mr. Calhoun, I had agreed to take my old friend Dr. von Ritter-stamm to see Mr. Jonathan Young Hendricks the points of interest of our city, in order to acquaint him somewhat with our governmental machinery and to put him in touch with some of the sources of information to which he would need to refer in the work upon which he was now engaged. We had spent a couple of hours together, and were passing across the capitol, with the intent of looking in upon the deliberations of the houses of congress, when all at once, as we crossed the corridor, I felt him touch my arm.

"Did you see that young lady?" he asked me. "She looked at you, year?"

I was in the act of turning, even as he spoke. Certainly had I been alone I would have seen Elizabeth, would have known that she was there.

It was Elizabeth, alone, and hurrying away! Already she was approaching the front stair. In a moment she would be gone. I paused after her by instinct, without plan, clear in my mind only that she was going and with her all the light of the world; that she was present, and that she was beautiful, adorable; that she was going, and that she was Elizabeth!

As I took a few rapid steps toward her, I had full opportunity to see that no girl had passed upon her loveliness, nor had concealment fed upon her damask cheek. Almost with some resentment I saw that she had never seemed more beautiful than on this morning. The costume of those days was trying to any but a beautiful woman; yet Elizabeth had a way of avoiding extremes which did not appeal to her individual taste. Her frock now was all in pink, as became the gentle spring, and the bunch of silvery ribbons which fluttered at her belt had quite the agreeable shade to finish in perfection the cool, sweet picture that she made.

"Elizabeth!"

Feeling that there was no escape, she paused now and turned toward me. I have never seen a glance like hers.

"How do you do?" she remarked. Her voice was all cool white enamel.

She was there somewhere, but I could not see her clearly now. It was not her voice. I knew her well, yes; but it had now none of answering claim.

"Elizabeth," I began; "I am just back. I have not had time—I have no leave from you to come to see you—to ask you—to explain—"

"Explain?" she asked me.

"But surely you cannot believe that I—"

"I only believe what seems credible, Mr. Trist."

I pulled from my pocket the little ring which I had had with me that night when I drove out to Elimhurst to my marriage, the one with the single gem which I had obtained hurriedly. The diamond had been removed the day that had the right to do so. In another pocket I found the plain gold one which should have gone with the gem ring that same evening. My hand trembled as I held these out to her.

"I prove to you what I mean. Here! I had no time! Why, Elizabeth, I was hurrying—I was mad—I had a right to—for you knew I loved you—I had the right to ask you why you did not take them! Will you not take them now?"

She put my hand away from her gently. "Keep them," she said, "for the owner of that other wedding ring—the one which I received."

Now I broke out. "Good God! How can I be held to blame for the act of a drunken friend? You know Jack Dandridge as well as I do and I have cautioned him—I was not responsible for his condition."

"It was not that decided me."

"You could not believe it was I who sent you that accursed note which he longed to another woman."

"He said it came from you. Where did you get it, then?"

Now, as nearly as may be seen, I was obliged again to hesitate. There were good reasons to keep my lips sealed. I flushed. The red of confusion which came to my cheek was matched by that of indignation in her own. I could not tell her, and she could not understand, that my work for Mr. Calhoun with that other woman was work for America, and so as sacred and as secret as my own love for her. Innocent, I still seemed guilty.

"Oh, then, you do not say! I do not ask you."

"I do not deny it."

"You do not deny to tell me where you got it."

"No," said I; "I will not tell you where I got it."

"Why?"

"Because that would involve another woman."

"Involve another woman? Do you think, then, that on this one day of her life, a girl likes to think of herself as one of many? Sir, I am not other woman! Ah, you made me begin to think. I could not help but think that came on my heart. Marry you?—I could not! I never could, now."

"But you loved me once," I said basally.

"I do not consider it fair to mention that now."

"Yet I never loved that other woman. I had never seen her more than once. You do not know her."

"Ah, is that?" Perhaps I could tell you something of one Helena von Blitz."

"Yes, that was the property of Helena von Blitz." I told her, looking her fairly in the eye.

"Kind of you, indeed, to involve me, as you say, with a lady of her prominence!"

"Surely think any one is quite just to that lady," said I slowly.

"Except Mr. Nicholas Trist! A beautiful compliment to Mr. Trist, I doubt not, in his mind."

"Mr. Trist sent no stubbornly: "But may I not see your father and have my chance again? I cannot let it go this way. It is the ruin of my life."

"But now she was advancing, dropping down a step at a time, and her face was turned straight ahead. The pink of her face was matched by the pink of her cheeks. I saw the little working of the white throat wherein some sobs seemed stifling. And so she went away and left me.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Success in Silk.

As this are, I think women are especially better adapted than men to business.
—Franklin.

It was a part of my duties, when in Washington, to assist my chief in his personal and official correspondence, which necessarily was very heavy. This work continually kept us about nine of the morning. On the following day I was on hand earlier than usual. I was down with Washington now, to done with everything, eager only to be off on the first train once more. But I almost forgot my own grief when I saw my chief. Over him hung an air of utter weariness; yet, shade to my own despair, energy showed in all his actions. He greeted me with a smile which strangely lighted his grim face.

"We have good news of some kind this morning, sir?" I inquired.

In answer, he handed me to a document which lay open upon his table. It was familiar enough to me, I glanced at the bottom. There were two signatures!

"Texas agrees!" I exclaimed. "The Dona Lucrezia has won Van Zandt's signature!"

I looked at him. His own eyes were swimming wet! "This, then, was that man of whom it is only remembered that he was a proslavery champion.

"We are certain to carry our proposition. The senate may not ratify," said he. "I am perfectly well advised of how the vote will be when this treaty comes under it for ratification. We will be beaten, two to one!"

"Then, does that not end it?"

"End it? No! There are always other ways. We have made a treaty with Texas to belong to our flag, as will so belong. It is good as done to-day. Never mind! I can forgive a look at the gold! It was this intrigue of Van Zandt's which stood in our way. By playing one intrigue against another, we have won thus far. We must go on winning!"

He paced up and down the room, one hand stuck behind his back. "Have I land whatsle now?" he exclaimed excitedly. "Have I Oregon? Yes, in full view, indeed, of all possible consequence. There can be no consequence. The English will not excuse left for war over Texas. I only wish the situation, I could see the look at the gold! It was this intrigue of Van Zandt's which stood in our way. By playing one intrigue against another, we have