

CONGRESSMAN'S WIFE

Continued from page 10

like all happy relics in the South to "be-
to de wa."
On the way home Captain Roderique
did most of the talking, and what he
said remains the only reality of the occa-
sion. And now, Etta, after all this ver-
batim report of trivialities, you are to
hear the momentous revelation I prom-
ised.

I have agreed to write a book on the
colonial development and policy of His
Majesty King of Etruria! Naturally
Captain Roderique does not wish to
appear as the author, because he would
be considered prejudiced; but he says
any publishing house would jump at it
signed by the wife of a Congressman,
and he is sure it will make me re-
garded as an authority on this burning
question. Think, Etta, I may make the
name of Beulah Rural famous even while
Amos is still in the political ranks. Cap-
tain Roderique is sure I can achieve it.
He has had this in mind ever since he
first saw me, he says.

"But until our minds have converted
the gross untruths into golden literature,
we must hide every trace of our labora-
tory," was his peroration.

"Just the same," I exclaimed involun-
tarily, "of course I must let Amos know."
Captain Roderique replied, however,
with a resentment that surprised me. "For
Heaven's sake, don't show me a prudishly
American side,—you with your Oriental
look of temperamental intuitions!" Then
he added, pouting like a disappointed
child, "If you tell your husband, he will
want to write the book for his own glori-
fication; and I will never reveal my Gov-
ernment's secrets to anyone but you. So
will a great work be lost!"

So I promised absolute secrecy, and
have been hiding the pangs of stolen pie
indigestion ever since.

WHEN we reached the Rainey, Cap-
tain Roderique stopped to pay the
cab driver, and I made a dash to get in-
side. My foot caught in the carpet
stretched over the steps on account of
the weather, and I stumbled forward—
only to find myself rescued uprightly by
Mr. Teale.

He regarded the night liner and Cap-
tain Roderique intently; then turned
with a compelling glance on me that I was
on the point of retreating the evening from
A to Z; but the Captain's smooth voice
interposed with:

"Good evening, Mr. Teale. Beastly
time trying to get Mrs. Rural's carriage
at the diplomatic. But very nice recep-
tion, in spite of the crowds. I must not
keep you standing here to get chilled."
And he was bowing himself away, when
Mr. Teale caught his arm.

"We'll walk home together, if you
please, Roderique," he said.

Then he turned to me. "Senator Todd
has pneumonia, and Amos is going to
spend the night there. Mrs. Todd sends
her love, and asks that you will come to
her in the morning."

THE way these words came made me
feel as if some one was holding my
head under a dripping ice water cooler,
with the drops falling with freezing insis-
tence on the same spot. But the next day
when I was sitting with Mrs. Todd in the
little den, right off the Senator's bed
room, we fell to talking about Mr. Teale;
I half critically, because it was a relief to
disapprove of some one outside of my-
self.

And then she told me things which
explain that hint of tragedy in his life,
and make me pray not to meet him for a
few days. If I do, I shall be torn between
a sense of shame and the desire to put my
arms round his neck and cry.

The "Alice" they referred to so ten-
derly that day is Mr. Teale's wife, and
she is hopelessly, at times violently, in-
sane under guard in a villa built for her
on the grounds of our State institution.
She had a voice of wonderful promise,
and was studying in Leipzig, when Mr.
Teale, then a poor student traveling on a
college scholarship, met her, and they
were married.

"There were great lumps of happiness
lying around," said Mrs. Todd, "when
we ran across them in little comfortless
quarters that summer. We wanted them
to come home with us. The Senator
needed a man like Mr. Teale for his secre-
tary; but they felt the world was at
their feet when his book on some abstract
philosophical subject should be com-
pleted and the babies were big enough to

leave for her escape to the conservatory.
Then suddenly the next winter Alice
was taken with a fever, and before she
was strong both children were snatched
away by a malignant form of child's
disease. She was not even allowed the
last comfort of putting little white dresses
on her babies. They were gone before
the impress of the little hot head left her
mother's arm."

"I know," I said, my heart throbbing
again over that little place in the Hope-
ville burying ground.

"I know too," said Mrs. Todd, putting
a trembling hand to the pearl encircled
miniature of a little boy she wears.

Well, it seems that Mr. Teale's wife,
already shattered physically, never was
able to lift her head from the shock. She
drifted from melancholia quite beyond
the border land of sanity.

Then, as the last touch of an ironical
fate, a huge fortune came through an
uncle to this man, in whom the desire
for material things of life was dead. But
the responsibility of managing a fortune
aroused him. He doesn't care a snap
for politics, except that it diverts and
prevents what he calls the "entire useless-
ness of a broken personality." And the
strangest part of the story came at the
end, when Mrs. Todd said:

"Mr. Teale's great interest in your
husband originated in a certain resem-
blance he finds that you have to the be-
loved Alice of those far away student
days. He came to see me the night after
I had met you, and it eased his poor heart
so to speak of it and find that I could see
it too."

I could not shake off the wonder and
the pathos of all this, and wanted to ask
all sorts of questions, particularly what
made me like his wife; but the nurse
came to tell Mrs. Todd that the Senator
would like to have her read, and—this
was the day of Amos's first speech!

WHEN I reached the Capitol the
House galleries were packed, and I
wondered whether an ovation would in-
spire or fluster Amos; but I soon saw
that Amos's speech was not in the calcu-
lation of the multitude.

A man with a clarion voice and a slight
brogue asked time for a few remarks on
"What German Tariff Agreement Means,"
and the people burst into applause be-
fore he began to speak. This was the
man they had come to hear. And I tell
you, Etta, the way he would throw back
his head and roar long patriotic periods
up at the galleries was soul stirring. And
how the galleries applauded. My heart
was full of pity for poor Amos. I looked
forward to patiently darning the great
holes in his socks; for I feared he must
be squirming his toes nervously to be
preceded by such a finished orator.

Then Amos began to speak, and Etta,
a wonderful thing happened. I don't
know how to explain anything so against
our traditions of impressive oratory, so I
just tell you the facts. It seemed so
tame to speak on Government control of
insurance companies after that fiery har-
rowing of patriotic spirit. Yet during
the twenty minutes that Amos stood at
his desk, his hands in his pockets, and
talking as if engaging every member be-
fore him in earnest conference, you could
have heard a pin drop. As an actual
fact, the snores of a fat Congressman
stretched on a divan in the cloak room
could be heard between Amos's words,
so still was the rest of the House. Then
several men asked questions, and Amos
seemed to give back chapter and verse
to the support of his bill most satisfac-
torily. When he finished there was a
really splendid burst of applause, and
even the gray heads or "cave dwellers"
of the House crowded about to shake his
hand. I saw Mr. Teale push aside every-
body between him and Amos like a boy
at a college rush, and soon a page brought
me his card with:

"The boy has got a big contract to
live up to to-day. That was a great
speech. You and I are proud, aren't
we?"

Now, how were those few plain state-
ments of Amos's great? And is Amos
getting famous so fast that nothing I can
do will be more than reflected glory?
How about Captain Roderique's book?
Tell me all. The limelight seems to be
coming this way so fast that I am just
your squinting-out-of-perspective.

LITTLE BEULAH.

To be continued next Sunday

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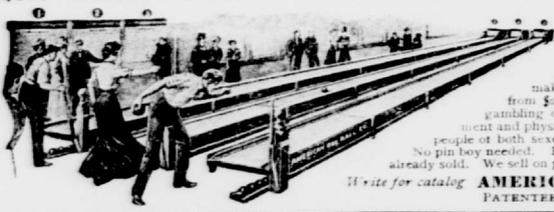
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