

54-40 OR FIGHT

BY EMERSON HOUGH.
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"She nodded. 'Certainly, Mr. Van Zandt had almost no other opportunity to meet me or get word to me.'"

"Van Zandt! Madam, are you, indeed, in the camp of all these different interests? So what Pakenham said was true? Van Zandt is the attaché of Texas. Van Zandt is pleading with Mr. Calhoun that he shall take up the secretaryship. Van Zandt promises us the friendship of Texas if we will stand out for the annexation of Texas. Van Zandt promises us every effort in his power against England. Van Zandt promises us the sternest of fronts against treacherous Mexico. Van Zandt is known to be interested in this fair Donna Lucrezia, just as Polk is. Now, then, comes Van Zandt with the hand of madam at the ambassador's ball—madam, the friend of England! The attaché of Mexico is curious—furious—to know what Texas is saying to England! And that message must be concealed! And madam conceals it!"

"She smiled at me brilliantly. 'You come on,' she said. 'Should your head be opened and analyzed, yes, I think a trace of brain might be discovered by good chemistry.'"

"I resumed impatiently. 'You put his message in your slipper!'"

"She nodded. 'Yes,' she said, 'in the toe of it. There was barely chance to do that. You see, our skirts are full and wide; there are curtains in the East room; there was wine by this time; there was music; so I effected that much. But when you took the slipper you took Van Zandt's note! You had it. It was true, what I told Pakenham before the president—I did not then have that note! You had it. At least, I thought you had it till I found it crumpled on the table the next day! It must have fallen there from the shoe when we made our little exchange that night. Ah, you hurried me. I scarce knew whether I was clad or shod, until the next afternoon—after I left you at the White House grounds. You so hastily departed—to your wedding?'"

"So small a shoe could not have held an extended epistle, madam," I said, ignoring her question.

"No, but the little roll of paper caused me anguish. I had intended I was on the point of fainting. I hastened to the cover of the nearest curtain, where I might not be noticed. Señor Yturrio of Mexico was somewhat vigilant. He wished to know what Texas planned with England. He has long made love to me—by threats, and jewels. As I stood behind the curtain I saw his face, I fled; but one shoe—the empty one—was not well fastened, and it fell. I could not walk. I reached down, removed the other shoe with its note, hid it in my handkerchief—thank Providence for the fashion of so much lace—and so, not to waste, Monsieur, as you may believe, and somewhat anxious, as you may also believe, expecting to hear at once of an encounter between Van Zandt and the Mexican minister, Señor Almonte, or his attaché Yturrio, or between one of them and some one else. I made my adieu—I will warrant the only woman for Mr. Tyler at the ball that night!"

"Yes, so far as I know, Madam, you are the only lady who ever left the East Room precisely so clad. Range—alone—after a while? And so, when you were there you put on the shoe which was left? And so Yturrio of Mexico got the other one—and found nothing in it! And so, he wanted this one!"

"You come on," she said. "You have something more than a trace of brain."

"And that other shoe, which I got that night?"

Without a word she smoothed out a bit of paper which she removed from a nearby desk, and handed it to me. "This was in yours. As I said, in my confusion I supposed you had it. You did! I suppose I lost my head, somewhere! But certainly I thought you had found the note and given it to Mr. Calhoun; else I should have driven harder terms with him! I would drive harder terms with you, now, were I not in such haste to learn the answer to my question! Tell me, were you married?"

"Is that answer worth more than Van Zandt?" I smiled.

"Yes," she answered, also smiling.

I spread the page upon the cloth before me; my eyes raced down the lines. I did not make further reply to her.

"Madam," went on the communication, "say to your august friend, Sir Richard, that we have reached the end of our endurance of these late delays. The promises of the United States mean nothing. We can trust neither Whig nor Democrat any longer. There is no one party in power, nor will there be. There are two sections in America and there is no nation, and Texas knows not where to go. We have offered to Mr. Tyler to join the Union if the Union will allow us to join. We intend to reserve our own lands and reserve the right to organize later into four or more states, if our people shall so desire. But as a great state we will join the Union if the union will accept us. That must be soon."

"England now beseeches us not to enter the Union, but to stand apart, either for independence or for alliance with Mexico and England. The proposition has been made to us to divide into two governments, one free and one slave. England has proposed to us to advance us money to pay all our debts if we will agree to this. Settled by bold men from our mother country, the republic, Texas has been averse to this. But now our own mother repudiates us, not once but many times. We get no decision. This then, dear madam, is from Texas to England by your hand, and we know you will carry it safe and secret. We shall accept this proposal of England, and avail ourselves of the richness of her generosity."

"If within thirty days action is not taken in Washington for the annexation of Texas, Texas will never in the history of the world be one of the United States. Moreover, if the United States shall lose Texas, also they lose Oregon, and all of Oregon. Carry this news—"

of Europe. I say to you, it is a great epoch. There is a folk-movement such as we have not seen since the days of the Huns, the Goths, the Vandals, since the Cimri movement. It is an epoch, my friend! It is fate that is in it."

"So, then, it is a great country?" I asked.

"It is so great, these traders do not wish to know. They wish only that it may be savage; also that their posts and their harems may be undisturbed. That is what they wish. These Scots go wild again, in the wilderness. They trade and they travel, but it is not honest they build. Sir George Simpson wants steel traps and not ploughs west of the Rockies. That is all!"

"They do not speak so of Doctor McLaughlin," I began tentatively.

"My friend, a great man, McLaughlin, believe me! But he is not McKay; he is not Simpson; he is not Douglas. And I say to you, as I learned last night—you see, they asked me also to tell what I knew of Oregon—I say to you that last night McLaughlin was deposed. He is in charge no more—so soon as they can get word to him, he loses his place at Vancouver."

"After a lifetime in the service!" I commented.

"Yes, after a lifetime; and McLaughlin had brain and heart, too. If England would listen to him, she would learn something. He plants, he plows, he has gardens and mills and houses and herds. Yes, if they let McLaughlin alone, they would

see the world a little bit. You seem to have been engaged in some scientific pursuit in that country."

"Yes," he said. "Mein own government and mein own university, they send me to this country to do what has not been done. I am an insectologist. Shall I show you my bugs of Oregon? You shall see them, yes? Come with me to my hotel. You shall see many bugs, such as science has not yet known."

"I was willing enough to go with him; and true to his word he did show me such quantities of carefully prepared and classified insects as I had not dreamed our own country offered."

"Twelve new species!" he said, with pride. "Mein own country will give me honor for this. Five years I spend. Now I go back home."

"I shall not tell you what nickname they give me in Oregon," he added, smiling; "but my real name is Wolfram von Rittenhofen. Berlin, it was last my home. Tell me, you go soon to Oregon?"

"That is very possible," I answered; and this time at least I spoke the truth. "We are bound in opposite directions, but if you are sailing for Europe this spring, you would save time and gain comfort by starting from New York. It would give us great pleasure if we could welcome so distinguished a scientist in Washington."

"No, I am not yet distinguished. Only shall I be distinguished when I have shown my twelve new species to mein own university."

"But it would give me pleasure also to show you Washington. You should see also the government of those backwoodsmen who are crowding out to Oregon. Would you not like to travel with me in America so far as that?"

He shook his head doubtfully. "Perhaps I make mistake to come by the St. Lawrence? It would be shorter to go by New York? Well, I have no hurry. I think it over, yes."

"But tell me, where did you get that beetle thing?" he asked me again presently, taking up in his hand the Indian class.

"I traded for it among the Crow Indians."

"You know what it is, eh?"

"No, except that it is Indian made."

He scanned the round disks carefully. "Wait!" he exclaimed. "I show you something."

He reached for my pencil, drew toward him a piece of paper, taking from his pocket meantime a bit of string. Using the latter for a radius, he drew a circle on the piece of paper.

"Now look what I do!" he said, as I bent over curiously. "See, I draw a straight line through the circle. I divide it in half, so. I divide it in half once more, and make a point. Now I shorten my string, one-half. On each side of my long line I make a half circle—only half way round on the opposite sides. So, now, what I got, eh? You understand him?"

I shook my head. He pointed in turn to the rude ornamentation in the shell class. I declared that then I could see a resemblance between the two designs!

"It is curious," I said.

"Mein Gott! It is more, than curious! It is wonderful! I have two Amazonias collected by my own hands, and twelve species of my own discovery, yes, in butterflies alone. That is much? Listen. It is notings! Here is the discovery!"

He took a pace or two excitedly, and came back to thump with his forefinger on the little desk.

"What you see before you is the sign of the Great Monad! It is known in China, in Burma, in all Asia, in all Japan. It is the sign of the great One, of the great Two. In your hand is the Tah Gook—the Oriental symbol for life, for sex. Myself, I had seen that in Sikka on Chinese brasses; I had seen it on Japanese signs, in one land and in another land. But here you show it to me made by the hand of some ignorant aborigine of this continent! On this continent, where it did not originate and does not belong! It is a discovery! Science shall hear of it. It is the link of Asia to America. It brings me fame!"

He put his hand into a pocket, and drew it out half filled with gold pieces and with raw gold in the form of nuggets, as though he would offer exchange. I waved him back. "No," said I, "you are welcome to one of those disks, if you please. If you wish, I will take

(To Be Continued.)

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CHAPTER XVII.
A HUNTER OF BUTTERFLIES.

I love men, not because they are men, but because they are not women.—Queen Christina.

There was at that time in Montreal a sort of news room and public exchange, which made a place of general meeting. It was supplied with newspapers and the like, and kept up by subscriptions of the town merchants—a spacious room made out of the old Methodist chapel on St. Joseph street. I knew this for a place of town gossip, and hoped I might hit upon something to aid me in my errand, which was no more than begun, it seemed. Entering the place shortly before noon, I made pretense of reading, all the while with an eye cast out for anything that might happen.

As I stared in pretense at the page before me, I fumbled idly in a pocket, with unthinking hand, and brought out to place before me on the table, an object of which at first I was unconscious—the little Indian blanket class. As it lay before me I felt seized of a sudden hatred for it, and let fall on it a heavy hand. As I did so, I heard a voice at my ear.

"Mein Gott, man, do not! You break it surely!"

I started at this. I had not heard any one approach. I discovered now that the speaker had taken a seat near me at the table, and could not fail to see this object which lay before me.

"I beg pardon," he said, in a broken speech which showed his foreign birth; "but it is so beautiful; to break it is wrong."

Something in his appearance and speech fixed my attention. He was a tall, bent man, perhaps sixty years of age, of gray hair and beard, with the glasses and the unmistakable air of the student. His stooped shoulders, his weakened eye, his thin, blue-veined hand, the iron-gray hair standing like a ruff above his forehead, marked him not as one acquainted with a wild life, but better fitted for other days and scenes. I pushed the trinket along the table toward him.

"'Tis of this class," I said, "and is always in the way when I would find anything in my pocket."

"But once some one has made it; once it has had value. Tell me where you got it?"

"North of the Platte, in our western territories," I said. "I once traded in that country."

"You are American?"

"Yes."

"So," he said thoughtfully. "So. A great country, a very great country. Me, I also live in it."

"Indeed?" I said. "In what part?"

"It is five years since I cross the Rockies."

"You have crossed the Rockies? I envy you."

"You misunderstand me. I live west of them for five years. I am now come east."

"You have been at Fort Vancouver?"

He nodded. "Also to Fort Colville, far north; also to what they call California, far south; and again to what they may yet call Fort Victoria. I had seen many posts of the Hudson Bay Company."

"I was afraid my eyes showed my interest; but he was more."

"I had been in the Columbia country, and in the Willamette country, where most of your Americans are settled. I know somewhat of California. Mr. Howard, of the Hudson Bay Company, knows also of this country of California. He said to those English gentlemen at our meeting last night that England should have something to offset California on the west coast; because, though Mexico claims California, the Yankees really rule there, and will rule there yet more. He is right; but they laughed at him."

"Oh, I think little will come of all this talk," I said carelessly. "It is very far, out to Oregon."

"You know not what you say. A thousand men came into Oregon last year. It is like one of the great migrations of the people of Asia,

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The best styles brought out this season up to \$22.50, including attractive mixtures and colors. Three special lots for quick clearance tomorrow, as follows:

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Misses' \$2.50 Sweater Coats at	\$1.75
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50c

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29c

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25c

Regular 25c Shell Hair Pins at 10c

Less than half price for these attractive Hair Ornaments, Grecian Puff effects; come one, two and three on a card; an extraordinary Saturday special at 10c card. They should go in a hurry at this price.

10c

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In ecru; comfortable and perfect fitting; regular \$2.00 garments in every particular. Special tomorrow at \$1.50.

\$1.50

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65c

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Elastic Belts, Up to \$1.50, at 89c

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89c

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Clearance of Children's Stockinet Caps, now so popular, in various of the wanted colorings. Not a great quantity, but while they last, tomorrow choose at 19c each.

19c

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The popular white Daisy Outing Flannels, 27 inches wide. Most every woman knows their regular worth and many will undoubtedly turn this special opportunity to their favor tomorrow.

10c

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19c

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