THE PURCHASE PRICE;

OR,

THE CAUSE OF COMPROMISE

By EMERSON HOUGH

Copyright, 1910, by Emerson Hough

Thus, then, on the day of departure, Josephine St Auban found herself standing before her mirror. It was not an unlovely image which she saw there. In some woman's fashion, as practiced by dames in fearful services and the clumsy art of Lily, she had managed a garbing different from that of her first arrival at this place. The lines of her excellent figure now were wholly shown in this costume of gold on brown which she had reserved to the last. She made a picture at wholly to fill the eyes of the master of Tall Woods when he came to tell her the Honor was ready for the journey to St. Genevieve. But he made no comment, nor daring.

He was calm now. She saw he had himself well in hand. His face was pale and grave.

"Well," said she finally, as the great coach drove around to the door, "I suppose I am to say goodby."

"I'll just walk with you down the road," he answered. "We walked up it once together."

They followed on after the coach had passed down the driveway. Dunwody now moody and silent, his head dropped, his hands behind him until the carriage pulled up and waited at the end of the short-cut at the lower end of the valley. Josephine herself remained as well, but as the turn of the road approached which would cut off the view of Tallwoods she turned impulsively and waved a hand in farewell.

He caught the gesture and looked at her quickly. "That's nice of you," said he, "mighty nice."

In some new sort of half abashment she found no immediate reply. He left her then and walked steadily back up the driveway, saying nothing to farewell and not once looking back. For a time she followed him with her gaze, a strange sinking at her heart, of which she was ashamed, which gave her alike surprise and sudden fear. Something was different now. Was it the loss of Jeanne?

It was a much abashed and still tearful though not a repentant Jeanne who embraced her mistress after the simple little wedding of Jeanne and Hector when they had repaired to the wedding feast.

"But come, madame," said Jeanne. "Behold my new home. Is it not delightful? This is the mother of Hector, madame, and this—ah, this is the home of Hector and myself. Tonight also it is yours. I am rejoiced, Madame," she added in an aside, while Lily, stiffened and awkward, was for the-time out of the way. "I cannot bear to think of your coming away with but that impossible migratire there to care for you. Almost were it not for Hector and for this home—could you take Hector also—I should forget all and go with you

She Waved a Hand in Farewell.

even yet. Tomorrow I shall go with you to the boat."

But, alas, in the morning Jeanne had again forgotten.

Meantime the storm dreaded as so immediate by the administration at Washington—the organization of a new political party born of the unrest over the slavery question—had spent its fury, temporarily, long since miles to the south. In the distance, leaving behind it on the political prairie a new party came as a result of the Kansas-Nebraska bill, while migratire there to care for you. Almost were it not for Hector and for this home—could you take Hector also—I should forget all and go with you

Self that years had come. If men were slaves, women then be slaves.

In this era of arrested activities the energies of a restless people turned everywhere for interest. To relieve the monotony of political stagnation, popular attention was now turned toward the affairs of Hungary. Instant interest attached to the news that a Hungarian committee of inquiry had landed upon our shores, with the purpose of investigating a possible invitation from our republic to the Hungarian patriot, Kossuth, then in exile in Turkey.

The leader of this mission was General Zewlinski, an officer of the patriot army of Hungary, who brought with him a suit of some dozen persons. These, late in the winter of 1853-54, arrived at Washington and found quarters of a somewhat magnificent sort in one of the more prominent hotels of the national capital.

The first formal action of the Hungarian committee took the shape of a return reception, to be held in the hotel parlors. The invitations, liberal as they were, were sought for quite in excess of the supply. The administration, for which Mr Webster, our secretary of state, had not hesitated to write in most determined fashion to the attache Huhsemann regarding the presumptuous Austrian demands upon our government, none the less was much in a funk regarding "European obligations." Not wishing to offend the popular fancy and not daring to take decisive stand, the usual compromise was made. A long suffering officer of the navy, with his wife and one or two other ladies, was dispatched quasi officially to lend color to the occasion.

Such splendor as could be arranged had been provided for the setting of this event. A Hungarian orchestra, brought with these commissioners, discoursed its peculiar music beyond a screen of palms and flowers. One of the great parlors had been prepared for those of the young who could not resist the temptation to dance. At the head of the little line of these visitors, now themselves in effect hosts, stood the old Hungarian general, Zewlinski, an officer over six feet in height, with white hair and wide white mustaches, a distinguished figure in the brilliant Hungarian uniform. Those of his staff near by added additional vividness to the picture. The ladies of the party, half of whom spoke English, were costumed quite in keeping, and endeavored by the graciousness of their manner to add to the good impression already formed upon their more brilliant companions. The doors had not been opened for a half hour before the rooms were packed with a struggling mass of humanity, all eager to grasp the hand of the representative of liberty and of the members of his company. Patriotism, liberty, brotherly love were in the speech of all.

It was at about this time that there entered at the door near the head of the receiving line a young woman, for the time apparently quite unattended. She was brilliantly robed, with jewels flashing at neck and wrists, clad like a queen and looking one.

There were many in Washington social circles who knew by sight or by reputation Josephine, Countess St. Auban, no longer than six months approximated by one journal of the capital to be the most beautiful and the most dangerous woman in Washington. Yet even the most hostile of these suddenly suspended judgment as they saw her advance met now by that of the old Hungarian general himself.

"Countess—my dear—child at last you are here!" he exclaimed. Taking her by the hand he led her back to the line of his official company, volleying rapid exclamations in his native tongue.

"You left us!" at length exclaimed the old general, politely speaking in his best English, since others were bound to hear. "Where you had gone we did not know. It was as though the heavens had opened. See then, sir"—he addressed the naval officer who stood near at hand—"the Countess St. Auban was one of the most important members of our little company—she was to come in advance of us, who also are in advance of a greater number. For a time we feared from her, then all was silent! She had disappeared! But now, at last, my dear countess, you are here!"

Political, social and journalistic Washington then and there begged a sudden though silent pardon of the Countess St. Auban. A few journalists left the room quickly. An attache of the Austrian legation also hurriedly took his leave.

"I have been visiting some of the more remote parts of this country," replied she in eyes tones.

"So, then, you have not forgotten our mission from Hungary. Well, now we shall surely have the invitation for our Kossuth to come! It is not true?"

"Assuredly, my dear general. You will find this country eager to meet him. But, alas, I fear that Kossuth himself will find problems also in this country."

"Our own problem—our cause, dear countess?"

"Pardon, general. Really it is also the cause of this country. We think that in Hungary democracy is in peril, it is not less so here. Here also evil cries aloud. Soon war must come, here also—bloody war. We ask funds for Hungary. America soon will need funds for herself."

"Ah, you mean this problem of the south and south—of slavery." The face of the old general became grave. "I have talked with many," said he. "It seems incapable of solution. But have not your brilliant faculties, my dear countess, suggested any solution? We learned to value your counsel over yonder."

"What could a mere woman do in a matter vast as that? My general, not all the wisdom of this century has sought to a solution. We have talked—we have talked—we have talked—we