Patria

Louis Joseph Vance — The Great Romance of Preparedness

NOVELIZATION OF THE MOTION PICTURE PLAY OF THE SAME NAME, PRODUCED FOR THE INTERNATIONAL FILM SERVICE, INC., UNDER THE DIRECTION OF WHARTON, INC. COPYRIGHT, STAR COMPANY

THE CAST.

MRS. VERNON CASTLE as Patria Channing.
MILTON SILLS as Donald Parr.
WARNER OLAND as Baron Huroki.
DOROTHY GREEN as Fanny Adair.

SYNOPSIS.

Baron Huroki, chief of the Japanese secret service, conspiring to embroil the United States with Mexico, and desiring control of the great Channing munitions plants owned by Patria—last of the "Fighting Channings"—schemes to cause the death of the latter, and substitute in her place Elaine, a notorious dancer and Patria's physical counterpart. As it falls out, it is Elaine who dies, Patria surviving accepted as Elaine by Huroki and his confederates.

SEVENTH EPISODE.

Red Dawn.

COUNTERPLOT.

In a hand at once feminine and of decided character, the envelope was superscribed:

ORSON BERTRAM, Esq.,
General Manager,
Channing, Inc.,
87 Broadway, New York.

Capt. Donald Parr.

Introducing

The addressee accepted it from the hands of Capt. Donald Parr with a slightly bored air which was swiftly dissipated once he had scanned the dozen or so lines composing the body of the note.

With a somewhat startled expression Mr. Bertram peered over his desk at this Captain Parr—a brief scrutiny which Donald endured with composure until Mr. Bertram (with the manner of one challenging the testimony of his own senses), returned undivided attention to a second reading of the note. Then a twinkle of amusement showed in Donald's eyes, he communicated this emotion in a swift glance to his companion, and again masked it with a semblance of impassivity.

Having verified his first impression of the sense of the communication, Mr. Bertram clicked his tongue against his teeth meditatively—"Tch! Tch!"

"Miss Channing requests a—pardon me—surprising degree of confidence in you, Captain Parr," he commented.

"I hope to prove worthy of her trust," Donald declared with all due humility.

"I used the term surprising in view of the fact that it has been my misfortune never to have heard of you as a friend of Miss Channing's."

"Don't apologize," said Donald calmly—and let it go at that.

"Of course," Mr. Bertram amended hastily, "I am Miss Channing's servant. Her will is my law. Pray advise me in what way I may serve you."

"Permit me first," Donald suggested, "to introduce my friend, Mr. Edward W. Ryley, late of the United States Secret Service, now associated with me in the private bureau of information which I have organized for Miss Channing at her suggestion."

Mr. Bertram looked, if possible, more than ever startled.

"I know nothing of that," he said, mechanically shaking hands with Mr. Ryley.

"It is Miss Channing's desire that I inform you concerning it, in strict confidence—naturally."

"Naturally," echoed Mr. Bertram, and assumed a receptive attitude.

Rapidly Captain Parr sketched for the benefit of the general manager an outline of the existing situation between Patria Channing and himself, on the one hand, and on the other Baron Huroki and his associates.

As he drew to his conclusion Mr. Bertram betrayed boundless amazement.

"Extraordinary!" he commented, and rather needlessly mopped his brow. "May I ask—?"

"Anything, Mr. Bertram. It is not only my duty, I am only too happy to tell you everything."

"Why—since these Japanese and Mexican conspirators have so openly shown their hands—?"

"I won't indorse openly," Donald interrupted with a smile. "They have been very shrewd and cunning. It has thus far been our good fortune—with the assistance of Mr. Ryley here—to penetrate their intrigues and mate their every move."

"But surely you have ample excuse for swearing out warrants for their arrest!"

"If we do that," Donald explained patiently, "we merely exchange an enemy we know for one we do not know. Japanese conspiracy will not die out in this country if we expose and punish Baron Huroki; another will take his place; and warned by Huroki's fate, will work even more surreptitiously. But as long as Baron Huroki is suffered to remain head and forefront of the intrigue, we know whom to watch and, through our experience with his methods, how best to forestall his machinations."

"But why—in the name of sanity—permit Miss Channing to expose herself to needless danger by continuing to masquerade to Baron Huroki as this creature, Elaine, whom he tried to put in Miss Channing's place?"

"It is not my wish, but Miss Channing's will. She herself conceived the notion of placing Elaine in Huroki, and she insists on going through with it."

"But why—"

"As long as Huroki believes her his tool masquerading as Elaine, he will have few secrets from her—and consequently—from us."

"But if he discovers his mistake—!"

"I am doing all I can to provide against any serious upshot."

"Miss Channing is a very brave young woman."

"I would be a poor American were I not heart and soul and hand with Miss Channing in this work!" he exclaimed. "Tell me how I may help!"

Donald consulted his watch.

"Her train is due at Grand Central now," he announced. "Unless Huroki has changed his plans, they will call on you at four or thereabouts. I wish to be present at the interview."

"Won't that be dangerous to your plans? How am I to excuse your presence?"

"By this." And with a few words of explanation Donald submitted to the consideration of Mr. Bertram a legal document whose nature completed the process of stupefaction inaugurated by the letter of introduction.

After a time he nodded. "I understand. What else?"

"I want you to go down to Powder Town tonight—as soon as you can leave after the interview with Huroki—and take the situation there in hand."

Mr. Bertram's tone was edged with alarm. "What situation there?"

"Are you ignorant of the fact that there is a certain amount of disaffection among your employees, in spite of munitions-contract wages, short hours, and general prosperity?"

"I give you my word, I know nothing of any such state of affairs!"

"It none the less exists."

"How do you know?"

"Through the activities of Mr. Ryley's assistants, who have been in Powder Town in one or another ostensible capacity—some even working in the Channing mills—ever since we learned, through Patria—Miss Channing, I mean—that Huroki was planning a demonstration there to compel Channing's acceptance of the Mexican munitions contracts."

"You astound me!"

"Will you go?"

"Without losing a moment's time!"

"Then," said Donald, rising, "there is nothing more for us to arrange until we have had our talk with Huroki. I will be back at half-after three."

* * * * * * *

Punctual to the minute of his appointment, he anticipated the appearance of Patria and her dupes by less than a quarter-hour.

As he dropped into a chair by the side of Bertram's desk that gentleman answered the muffled signal of his private telephone, and after giving it an instant of attention, handed the instrument to Donald, accompanying the action with a gesture of surprise.

"Channing, New Jersey," he said, giving "Powder Town" its proper title, according to the United States postal authorities, "is calling Capt. Donald Parr."

Putting receiver to ear, he called: "Yes. This is Captain Parr."

"Barnes, sir," came the response over the wires—"speaking from Powder Town."

"Something important, Barnes?"

"Things look pretty nasty, sir. The air's thick with suspicious circumstances. Strike and violence are being publicly preached, but no one seems to know just when anything definite will happen. And I notice a lot of Japs in the streets; they pretend to be engaged in petty business—running restaurants and that sort of thing—but it's a safe bet they're in close touch with Huroki and his outfit. I've been spotted already, I'm afraid."

"What makes you think so?" Parr asked as the other ceased abruptly to talk.

For all answer he heard a deadened bang at the other end of the wire—a sound closely resembling that made by slamming open the folding-door of an alleged "sound-proof" booth.

"Hello?" he called impatiently. "Hello? Barnes! What the deuce! Hello?"

No answer.

At this juncture the secretary to Mr. Bertram announced Miss Channing with Baron Huroki and Senor de Lima.

Once more Patria commanded Donald's unstinted wonder and admiration by her consummate histrionic ability; from the instant she entered the room the girl played to perfection the role for which she had cast herself.

"Oh, Mr. Bertram—how do you do?" Patria offered that gentleman a designedly awkward hand. "So glad to see you looking so well. Permit me to introduce my friends, Baron Huroki and Senor de Lima."

With his usual admirable address, Huroki recovered from his disgust on recognizing Parr, and acknowledging the latter's presence with a slight, cool nod, turned to exhibit marked cordiality toward the general manager of Channing, Inc.

Then, the secretary placing chairs for the party, they disposed themselves to the business of the hour.

Ignoring Donald completely—turning toward him a cold shoulder which served its master ill since it provided Donald with an opportunity to place Patria's chair near his own—the Japanese buttered his selected victim with his very best grade of urbanity.

"It is a pleasure to make the acquaintance of one with whom I am to transact so much business," he averred—"to our great mutual profit, I trust."

"I'm sure I hope so," Bertram agreed pleasantly. "But may I inquire the nature of the business?"

"Miss Channing has not yet advised you—?"

Bertram responded to Huroki's artful look of surprise with one of blank non-comprehension.

"Then—permit me—perhaps these papers will best explain."

Bertram accepted a bundle of legal-cap documents and leaned back in his chair to examine them.

"Agreement between Channing, Inc., and Senor Juan de Lima," he read aloud the indorsement on the uppermost—**"re machine guns and munitions for the de facto government of Mexico."**

He managed a moment of embarrassment. "I am sorry, gentlemen, but the strictly defined policy of Channing, Inc., does not permit us to accept these contracts."

"I am sorry to seem rude," Baron Huroki said suavely; "but if you will be good enough to examine the signatures you will find that the president of Channing, Inc., has seen fit to reverse your policy."

Hastily unfolding the document in hand, Bertram scrutinized the foot of its last page.

"Channing, Inc., by Patria Channing, President," he read, and hesitated, and looked dubiously at Patria. "This is your signature, Miss Channing?"

The girl, avoiding his gaze, murmured an affirmative.

"You can hardly question its genuineness," Huroki commented, with a superciliously lifted eyebrow. "You surely do not mean to imply that the signature could be a forgery!"

"No," Bertram admitted mildly—"no. But I am surprised—yes, much surprised."

"But why?"

"Because—you know, of course, this contract is dated yesterday; whereas I hold here"—Bertram exposed the paper Donald had given him at their earlier interview—"an absolute power of attorney given Capt. Donald Parr by Miss Patria Channing ten days ago, by which it appears that any and all contracts signed by her and lacking his counter-signature become automatically invalid."

Even the racial serenity of Baron Huroki was hardly proof against this blow. He took a rather long moment to recover.

"None the less," he said at length, turning toward Donald, "Captain Parr will hardly withhold his signature when Miss Channing requests him to affix it."

"I am sorry," Donald said quietly. "Even should Miss Channing command, I must refuse."

"Captain Parr!" This was Patria's contribution, an excellently simulated cry of indignation.

"I am sorry," Donald repeated firmly. "But so long as this power of attorney rests with me, and so long as Japan conspires to embroil the United States with Mexico, by way of preparing for the allied Japanese-Mexican invasion of the Pacific Coast states—so long, indeed, as Japan maintains a naval base at Magdalena bay—just so long will Channings refuse to sell arms and ammunition to any Mexican faction whatsoever!"

"The power of attorney is, of course, revocable," Bertram suggested maliciously.

"If Miss Channing wishes to revoke it, that can doubtless be attended to without delay," Donald agreed. "Do you wish Mr. Bertram to call in a stenographer and a notary, Miss Channing?"

Now, as Elaine, Patria could not make a creditable forgery of the signature of Patria Channing; the extraordinarily skillful forgeries appended to the contracts in Bertram's hands were the work of Huroki's able compatriots. As Elaine, she dared not attempt to sign the name of Patria in the presence of witnesses.

"No, no," she said hastily rising—"not now, not today. I shall, of course, revoke the power—tomorrow. This afternoon I haven't time. I'm already late for an appointment with my dressmaker."

"Then I shall expect a call from you tomorrow?" Bertram inquired amiably. "At about what hour—?"

"I'll telephone," Patria evaded. "If you please—Baron Huroki—Senor de Lima—"

When he had courteously shut the door upon the backs of the discomfitted conspirators, Bertram turned to Parr with a grin of unaffected delight.

"Good work!" he chuckled.

But Donald did not respond. He was studying with a look of exasperation a small slip of paper which he had just unfolded.

"What now?" Bertram asked.

"Read that!" Donald told him wrathfully. "You didn't notice—none of the others did—but Patria dropped her handkerchief and I picked it up. This message was in its folds. I palmed it and— Oh, read the d—d thing!"

He paced furiously to and fro while Bertram, deciphered the message. Written in pencil, hastily, it ran without date or salutation or signature:

"Huroki insists I must marry De Lima tonight at eight at the Little Church Around the Corner. I dare not refuse. What am I to do?

POWDER TOWN.

As that long summer twilight ebbed into dark of night, the softly glowing windows of the Church of the Transfiguration signified to a largely indifferent metropolis that a private wedding was being very quietly celebrated.

Within, in the radiance that bathed the altar, Patria Channing stood on the left of Juan de Lima. On either side waited the best man and matron of honor, respectively Baron Huroki and Mrs. Fanny Adair.

Patria waited in a state of nervous tension in no way perceptible.

She did not doubt her Donald; she knew that he would find some way to prevent the consummation of this impossible affair; she was not afraid.

The organ fell silent. Its sonorous cadences were replaced by the accents of the clergyman intoning the marriage service.

If any man can show just cause why they may not lawfully be joined together . . . let him now speak, or else hereafter forever hold his peace!

There was a little pause, abruptly broken by a scurry and scuffle of feet confused with a frou-frou of skirts.

Out of the shadows that cloaked the remoter portions of the church darted—with surprising agility, considering her bulk—a woman of substantial maturity, a plump, dark creature of distinctly Spanish type.

Half a dozen feet from the altar she uttered one piercing cry:

"Juan, my husband! At last, I have found you! Monster of ingratitude and infidelity, why did you desert me?"

She thrust him from her at arm's-length, shook him mercilessly, then overcome by a tidal wave of quenchless affection, clasped him, struggling vainly, once more to her bosom.

Half-suffocated with exasperation, Huroki went to his confederate's assistance. But even while disentangling the unfortunate, he bethought him of the bride-elect, and looked around for her.

She was no more there. Nor—hurried search developed—was she anywhere within the church. Investigation at the doors elicited the information, from innocent and disinterested bystanders, that a young woman clothed beautifully in white had run madly from the church, met a young man at the gate, and with him had vanished in a taxicab, whose chauffeur unquestionably placed little value in his license. . . .

At twenty minutes past eight that taxicab, having eluded all attempts at pursuit (if any such there were) drew up before the apartment house in which Captain Parr maintained his New York home.

A moment later the door of his quarters closed upon Patria Channing and the lover of her choice. "I thought you would never come!" she stammered.

"I had to work very quickly," he explained. "It was obvious from the first that this arrangement couldn't continue—you couldn't go on hoodwinking Huroki and at the same time keep out of marrying de Lima. And when Huroki found out that you had made a fool of him, you would have to be mighty safely hidden to escape reprisal. So I fixed things up for you here—I've moved over to the Vanderbilt—got hold of Anne, sent her to the Ritz with an order for your belongings—she was there within ten minutes of the time you left for the church—brought everything of yours here and . . . Well, here we are!"

"But how did you ever find out de Lima had a wife?"

"I didn't," Donald explained gravely. "She wasn't his wife." . . .

There came a knock at the door.

"That's Ryley. Let him in, please, Anne. I left him to protect the woman in case either Huroki or de Lima became violent."

The grin of the detective as he entered was evidence of the fact that he had experienced no great trouble. There had been a bit of a rumpus, he reported—nothing to speak of.

His account was interrupted by the shrill, imperative clamour of the telephone. Donald answered, and sobered to sudden gravity as he curried on a brief conversation with Bertram in Powder Town.

"Trouble at Channing," he announced as he hung up. "Betram says our man Barnes was shot in a street fight this afternoon by some loafer who interrupted him when he was phoning me. In addition the town seems strike-mad all of a sudden—agitators, even now, are preaching strike and destruction of property. Bertram thinks we'd better run down and look the situation over for ourselves. It may prove necessary to call on the governor for militia to protect the mills."

"Donald—please! I am so afraid for you!"

"I must go, dear—I must. You need not worry on my account—we've a dozen men down there who will help Ryley take care of me. Not that I anticipate any serious trouble. The rabble have no excuse for rioting till the company refuses the strikers' demands—and it can't do that till tomorrow."

He found a time-table, scanned it rapidly, snatched up his hat.

"With luck and a fast taxi-man we can just make the next train, the last tonight."

The door banged; incredibly, Patria was alone—alone, that is, except for Anne.

She threw herself into a chair, when she had suffered Anne to change her bridal garments for a negligee.

Womanlike, she was stubbornly bent on spending a sleepless, wretched night. In spite of herself, toward eleven o'clock, she nodded in her chair, then slept.

It was two when the telephone aroused her.

One of her force of private secret service agents was calling from Powder Town for Captain Parr, in ignorance of the fact that, according to the time-table, and providing he had caught his train, Donald should have been there with Ryley for a matter of three hours.

In response to her catechism the agent reported that the situation at Channings was one of imminent emergency. A strike had been called at midnight; the employees of the powder mills who had come off shift at that hour had not been replaced; rioting was already in process; the general store maintained by the company had been burned and looted; the mob was threatening to march upon the mills.

Instructing the man to seek Captain Parr at the mills, Patria left the telephone and stealthily entered the bedroom which had been Donald's, which now was hers.

From the adjoining chamber sounded an unmistakable shore: Anne unquestionably slept.

With every precaution to avoid waking her, the girl found a sportswoman and hurriedly dressed, interrupting that process but once, and then to telephone her garage to send her favorite motor car, a high-powered racing machine, round to the door.

It was waiting for her when at length she crept quietly out of the apartment house.

Dismissing the mechanic, she took the wheel alone.

Constrained within the limits of New York to go warily, once across the Hudson she gave the motor its head.

Patria knew that country well; she made no miscalculation as to her way; for all that, she could not hope to reach the neighborhood of Channings before the dawn.

With madly throbbing heart, Patria began to recognize landmarks of the countryside that told her she was close upon Powder Town.

The sun was rising in crimson splendor when Patria, arriving on the crest of a hill overlooking Powder Town, brought the car to a full pause, that she might spy out the situation before running on into possible peril.

She had brought with her, for just such use, a pair of binoculars belonging to Donald. Now she unstung and focused these.

Off to the right, at the bottom of the cup, stood the unlovely huddle of mill buildings. Her glasses showed the yard gates closed and guarded by armed sentries.

On her left the single-track railroad spur issued from between hills and sloped down across-country to the mills. On this she discovered a train consisting of half a dozen cars and a locomotive, all strangely motionless—strangely, since the cars were outward bound, the locomotive had steam up, and no reasonable excuse was apparent, for the stop in that particular place.

The circumstances made Patria wonder dully if, possibly, the railroad people had joined hands with her employees and declared a sympathetic strike.

Dismissing this thought for the nonce, she turned attention to the town.

This last lay in the middle distance, half concealed by an intervening rise of wooded land. But the smoke of its burning buildings was billowing up in the still morning air.

A stentorian puffing called her interest back to the train of freight cars.

Slipped Out of the Church.

The locomotive was getting under way with vast complaints because of the strain of the up-grade pull.

With a start Patria discovered that the rear car had been uncoupled and its brakes thrown off. As the train moved uphill, it was moving downhill, at first slowly under unassisted momentum, but momentarily gathering way through the attraction of gravity.

It was at most a mile from the mills. By the time the car had covered half that distance on that steep grade it would be careering downhill at express speed. When it struck the mill-yard gates it would cave them in like eggshells.

Horror's frigid hand clutched at Patria's heart as she realized that this thing had come to pass through no accident but through deliberate and fiendish design.

That freight car was loaded to its eaves with high-explosive. When the crash came, the Channing mills would be wiped off the face of the earth.

Without conscious thought the girl released the brakes and swiftly coaxed the motor to its utmost.

There was a bare chance that she might save the mills and the many loyal men who guarded it—including, doubtless, her Donald.

About an eighth of a mile from the yard gates the road crossed the railroad tracks; if she could but forestall the freight car at that junction. . . .

She had half a mile to go; the freight car was moving at good speed before her racer was even started. It was gambling with death, but Patria could not refuse the game because the stakes were high.

Miraculously, as it seemed to her when she was permitted time for retrospect, she made it.

The freight car was a hundred yards distant and bearing down like a juggernaut gone mad, when she stalled the motor-car on the rails, jumped, and ran for dear life.

The ensuing explosion was like the trumpet of Doom. Patria, lifted bodily from her feet, was flung to earth again with stunning force.

When she came to her senses again there was neither freight nor motor-car to be seen—nothing but a great gap in the tracks, a craterlike hole in the ground.

But that was nothing: Donald Parr was bending over her, lifting her in his arms; and he was whole and unharmed if pale with fright on her behalf.

And she was quite unhurt. With a broken little laugh of happiness Patria swung an arm around his neck.

(END OF SEVENTH EPISODE.)

"But why—in the name of sanity—permit Miss Channing to expose herself to needless danger by continuing to masquerade to Baron Huroki as this creature, Elaine, whom he tried to put in Miss Channing's place?"

"It is not my wish, but Miss Channing's will. She herself conceived the notion of placing Elaine in Huroki, and she insists on going through with it."

"But why—"

"As long as Huroki believes her his tool masquerading as Elaine, he will have few secrets from her—and consequently—from us."

"But if he discovers his mistake—!"

"I am doing all I can to provide against any serious upshot."

"Miss Channing is a very brave young woman."

"I would be a poor American were I not heart and soul and hand with Miss Channing in this work!" he exclaimed. "Tell me how I may help!"

Donald consulted his watch.

"Her train is due at Grand Central now," he announced. "Unless Huroki has changed his plans, they will call on you at four or thereabouts. I wish to be present at the interview."

"Won't that be dangerous to your plans? How am I to excuse your presence?"

"By this." And with a few words of explanation Donald submitted to the consideration of Mr. Bertram a legal document whose nature completed the process of stupefaction inaugurated by the letter of introduction.

After a time he nodded. "I understand. What else?"

"I want you to go down to Powder Town tonight—as soon as you can leave after the interview with Huroki—and take the situation there in hand."

Mr. Bertram's tone was edged with alarm. "What situation there?"

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"You astound me!"

"Will you go?"

"Without losing a moment's time!"

"Then," said Donald, rising, "there is nothing more for us to arrange until we have had our talk with Huroki. I will be back at half-after three."

* * * * * * *

Punctual to the minute of his appointment, he anticipated the appearance of Patria and her dupes by less than a quarter-hour.

As he dropped into a chair by the side of Bertram's desk that gentleman answered the muffled signal of his private telephone, and after giving it an instant of attention, handed the instrument to Donald, accompanying the action with a gesture of surprise.

"Channing, New Jersey," he said, giving "Powder Town" its proper title, according to the United States postal authorities, "is calling Capt. Donald Parr."

Putting receiver to ear, he called: "Yes. This is Captain Parr."

"Barnes, sir," came the response over the wires—"speaking from Powder Town."

"Something important, Barnes?"

"Things look pretty nasty, sir. The air's thick with suspicious circumstances. Strike and violence are being publicly preached, but no one seems to know just when anything definite will happen. And I notice a lot of Japs in the streets; they pretend to be engaged in petty business—running restaurants and that sort of thing—but it's a safe bet they're in close touch with Huroki and his outfit. I've been spotted already, I'm afraid."

"What makes you think so?" Parr asked as the other ceased abruptly to talk.

For all answer he heard a deadened bang at the other end of the wire—a sound closely resembling that made by slamming open the folding-door of an alleged "sound-proof" booth.

"Hello?" he called impatiently. "Hello? Barnes! What the deuce! Hello?"

No answer.

At this juncture the secretary to Mr. Bertram announced Miss Channing with Baron Huroki and Senor de Lima.

Once more Patria commanded Donald's unstinted wonder and admiration by her consummate histrionic ability; from the instant she entered the room the girl played to perfection the role for which she had cast herself.

"Oh, Mr. Bertram—how do you do?" Patria offered that gentleman a designedly awkward hand. "So glad to see you looking so well. Permit me to introduce my friends, Baron Huroki and Senor de Lima."

With his usual admirable address, Huroki recovered from his disgust on recognizing Parr, and acknowledging the latter's presence with a slight, cool nod, turned to exhibit marked cordiality toward the general manager of Channing, Inc.

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"I'm sure I hope so," Bertram agreed pleasantly. "But may I inquire the nature of the business?"

"Miss Channing has not yet advised you—?"

Bertram responded to Huroki's artful look of surprise with one of blank non-comprehension.

"Then—permit me—perhaps these papers will best explain."

Bertram accepted a bundle of legal-cap documents and leaned back in his chair to examine them.

"Agreement between Channing, Inc., and Senor Juan de Lima," he read aloud the indorsement on the uppermost—**"re machine guns and munitions for the de facto government of Mexico."**

He managed a moment of embarrassment. "I am sorry, gentlemen, but the strictly defined policy of Channing, Inc., does not permit us to accept these contracts."

"I am sorry to seem rude," Baron Huroki said suavely; "but if you will be good enough to examine the signatures you will find that the president of Channing, Inc., has seen fit to reverse your policy."

Hastily unfolding the document in hand, Bertram scrutinized the foot of its last page.

"Channing, Inc., by Patria Channing, President," he read, and hesitated, and looked dubiously at Patria. "This is your signature, Miss Channing?"

The girl, avoiding his gaze, murmured an affirmative.

"You can hardly question its genuineness," Huroki commented, with a superciliously lifted eyebrow. "You surely do not mean to imply that the signature could be a forgery!"

"No," Bertram admitted mildly—"no. But I am surprised—yes, much surprised."

"But why?"

"Because—you know, of course, this contract is dated yesterday; whereas I hold here"—Bertram exposed the paper Donald had given him at their earlier interview—"an absolute power of attorney given Capt. Donald Parr by Miss Patria Channing ten days ago, by which it appears that any and all contracts signed by her and lacking his counter-signature become automatically invalid."

Even the racial serenity of Baron Huroki was hardly proof against this blow. He took a rather long moment to recover.

"None the less," he said at length, turning toward Donald, "Captain Parr will hardly withhold his signature when Miss Channing requests him to affix it."

"I am sorry," Donald said quietly. "Even should Miss Channing command, I must refuse."

"Captain Parr!" This was Patria's contribution, an excellently simulated cry of indignation.

"I am sorry," Donald repeated firmly. "But so long as this power of attorney rests with me, and so long as Japan conspires to embroil the United States with Mexico, by way of preparing for the allied Japanese-Mexican invasion of the Pacific Coast states—so long, indeed, as Japan maintains a naval base at Magdalena bay—just so long will Channings refuse to sell arms and ammunition to any Mexican faction whatsoever!"

A Message Was in Its Folds.

RULER GIVEN SMALL SALARY

Swiss President Contented With Yearly Wage That Would Not Satisfy American Business Man.

The most modest and unassuming ruler in Europe is undoubtedly the president of the Swiss confederation. It is an astounding fact, but even in his own country his name is not widely known, and if a Swiss who resided outside his native land were asked the name of Helvetia's official head he would invariably express complete ignorance on that point.

The president, who is elected by the federal assembly, holds the office for only one year, from January 1st to December 31st, and usually the vice president succeeds him. His chief duty is to direct his country's foreign policy, for most of the internal administration is in the hands of the cantons or districts. There are 35 cantons, each of which is represented at the two houses of parliament.

The president this year is M. Edmund Schulthess, and his official salary is £540, with an additional £600 for expenses. He has a federal council of seven, which forms a sort of cabinet, and each member receives £480 per annum.—London Tit-Bits.

Lifting the Blame.

Crawford—"He's quite a good artist. I don't see how he can devote himself to illustrating best-sellers."

Penfield—"He doesn't realize what he's doing. You see, he never reads them."—Life.

JAP'S IDEA ON RELIGION

Viscount Kaneko Tells of the Growth of Christianity in His Country.

Viscount Kaneko had kept in mind the various points he had made, and before turning to a discussion of politics, he summed them up to give me a chance to get them clearly in mind.

"Friendship recognizes faults, but triumphs over them. Christian leaders must be well trained to do effective work in Japan. On account of the high character of the graduates of Christian schools in Japan our men are very friendly toward Christian schools. Christianity is a practical religion, and is now spreading among our best men in all walks of life like wildfire, while Buddhism is on the decline. But the higher a place Christianity wins, the better and broader should be its leaders. Japan will never ask Christians to compromise on their faith if they have as their representatives men whose training is broad, and whose manners are those of gentlemen dealing with equals," he concluded.—The Christian Herald.

A Little Different.

Marcella—"Did I understand you to say Gerty Giddigad won't take you seriously?" Waverly—"Not exactly. I said seriously, she won't take me at all."

The whale yields on an average 2,000 gallons of oil.

KIDNEY REMEDY HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

There is no medicine which we handle that gives such good results as your Swamp-Root. Many of our customers have informed us at different times that they have derived great benefit from its use.

There was one case in particular which attracted a great deal of attention in this neighborhood early last Spring, as the gentleman had been bedridden and two doctors treating him for liver and kidney trouble were unable to give him any relief. Finally a specialist from St. Louis was called in but failed to do him any good. I at last induced him to try your Swamp-Root and after taking it for three months, he was attending to his business as usual and is now entirely well. This case has been the means of creating an increased demand for your Swamp-Root with us.

Very truly yours,
L. A. RICHARDSON, Druggist.
May 27, 1916. Marine, Illinois.

Prove What Swamp-Root Will Do For You

Send ten cents to Dr. Kilmer & Co., Binghamton, N. Y., for a sample size bottle. It will convince anyone. You will also receive a booklet of valuable information, telling about the kidneys and bladder. When writing, be sure and mention this paper. Regular fifty-cent and one-dollar size bottles for sale at all drug stores.—Adv.

His Threat.

A month or two after the war started a collier entered a large hotel on Tyneside and ordered refreshments, saying: "Big prices noo; Aa might as weel be a big man."

On discovering that the waiter was a German, the irate pitman, choking with anger, leaped to his feet, ran the affrighted Teuton to the door, and assisted him into the roadway with his foot, and then, wheeling round upon the trembling, expostulating proprietor, he spluttered:

"Man, if ivvor ye dare te set a thunderin' Jarman te wait on me agyen, Aa'll twist ye an' him roond yor aan necks, an' ram th' pair o' ye haafway doon yor aan throats until thar's nowt te be seen ov ya but th' seven ov yor dirty shirt-collars stickin' oot ov yor bloomin' red eyes. Noo ye knaa whaat te expect if ye de!"—London Tit-Bits.

HEAL ITCHING SKINS

With Cuticura Soap and Ointment—They Heal When Others Fail.

Nothing better, quicker, safer, sweeter for skin troubles of young and old that itch, burn, crust, scale, torture or disfigure. Once used always used because these super-creamy emollients tend to prevent little skin troubles becoming serious, if used daily.

Free sample each by mail with Book. Address postcard, Cuticura, Dept. L, Boston. Sold everywhere.—Adv.

Canal Zone Pioneers Volunteer.

Of the hundreds of Americans who went to Panama in 1904, when the Americans took possession of the Canal Zone, less than fifty remain on the isthmus. The 1904 men, with whom are included several women, who came as nurses and have remained, have formed an organization, known as the Society of the Incas. Every year on May 4, the anniversary of the American occupation of the zone, they hold a banquet. This year, on the thirteen anniversary, they passed a resolution to offer themselves, as an organization or as individuals for whatever service the government should desire them, in the zone, in the United States, in France or elsewhere.

He Was Far-Sighted.

An ambitious colored man had quit his job and was being granted a new one with another concern, when his employer asked him if he could be ready to commence work in two weeks. He replied: "I fear dat would be difficult for me to be ready in two weeks, but I could be ready in one week shore."

"How's that?" asked his employer.

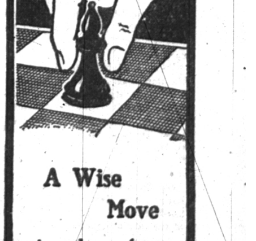
"Well, in one week I can finish de garden work," was his answer, "but if I is home the one week more de missus would be rushin' me into de middle of house-cleanin'."—The Christian Herald.

A Real Patriot.

"You ought to be proud of your boy."

"We are. He volunteered to serve his country without insisting on being enlisted as an officer."

You can't always keep your neighbors from saying foolish things, but you can close your ears.



A Wise Move is to change from coffee to POSTUM before the harm is done.

"There's a Reason"