

Dr. Jack's Wife.

(Continued from 1st page.)

CHAPTER XIII.

It is a wise word of the part of these two comrades to beat a retreat in the face of so many a body of foes, and the manner in which they conduct their retreat proves their ability to take care of themselves.

The Texan is engaged at the time the call comes, but he speedily breaks all attachments and sunders the ties that bind, though the parties with whom he has friendly endeavours are such a commination by every means.

When he catches up with Doctor Jack, he finds that worthy glancing over his shoulder as if to make sure that his comrade follows.

"We are pursued, of course?" says Jack.

"Yes, here they come," returns the other, and from the racket that arises it is plain to be seen that he speaks the truth.

They would much rather elude their pursuers than have a conflict, but it is some time to such a thing they are not the kind to shirk their duty.

"Leave it to me," Kirke has said, and his companion is only too ready to do so, for the Texan is the one who knows where the packet that seems so important to them is hidden, and perhaps he can lead them to it.

They dash along with the speed of sleuth-hounds on a fresh scent, and presently the gratifying news is flashed from one to the other, that they have their prey behind them. This can only be ascertained by the gradually diminishing sounds that follow them.

Then Kirke changes his course. In five minutes they are heading back toward the quarter from whence they came, though by a different route.

"Getting warm, now, soon be at the place," says the Texan, over his shoulder. Suddenly he stops, and puts out his hand to stay the progress of his companion.

Both have been advancing as a quick walk, and now come to a halt. Doctor Jack realizes that something ahead has caused the change, and he looks in this quarter to see what it may be.

There is a light on the road—a man swings a lantern to and fro as he walks—keep it close to the ground as though he would follow certain foot-prints he sees there.

"Watch him," whispers the Texan, who appears able to guess a good many things that develop.

Just at this moment the man who carries the lantern comes to a halt, turns round on his heel, and then bends down.

"Well," grunts Kirke, "this is the best of luck."

"What has he discovered?" whispers the other.

"That which we seek?"

"But where does the good luck come in?"

"You see, if we had come just ten minutes later we'd have been—"

"Tightlously left, of course you can't see his face. You don't know who it is!" continues Jack.

"Can guess. Colonel Garcia himself. While his minions kept their eyes on him, he has been on the lookout to discover where I might have secreted the packet. Well, he has found it, and much good may it do him!"

"Let's move closer."

"It is good advice, since the man may disappear with the packet. So they earnestly engaged in what occupies his attention, that he does not notice their approach. They have been in time to see him lift something out from under a stone."

He laughs as he holds it up, and stoops words in the Chilian tongue fall from his lips.

"Carajo! here we have it. The search has been long. It is ended at last. Now, Doctor Jack, we will see who laughs."

"Ha, ha!"

The Chilian officer starts as if shot, and, while still bending on one knee, twists his head round to see from whom this exclamation proceeds. His dark face, as seen by the light from the lantern, gives every evidence of sudden fear, for, as we have seen, the man is none in whom the blood of warriors runs.

To his amazement and consternation he looks upon the face of the one man he fears, the very Doctor Jack, whom he has been deriding, and whom he has believed bent in the race.

"Ah! Colonel Garcia, well met. You may not know my name, but I am your property. I inform you of the fact. I ask you to drop that packet."

He says this so calmly that the Chilian somehow conceals the idea that he has terrorized the American; he assumes a ferocious frown that would cause a hireling to get down on his knees and cover; now Jack it acts in an entirely different manner. He laughs.

"I refuse; unless you leave here suddenly you will be reprimanded, sir, deposition as a fire-eater."

"Drop that packet!"

"Ah! it is already done, senor."

The change in his deportment is as radical as it is sudden, and springs from the fact that he has a direct bearing on the subject. Something which Doctor Jack holds in his hand has been brought to bear upon him. It shines in the light of the lantern, and he looks at it with a certain indifference to it, but two things make such a choice impossible now. In the first place, I am a wife, and again, I have seen under the mask you used to treat I have seen your wife's death and would be preferable to mating with you so vile."

"Perhaps at one time I might not have been entirely indifferent to it, but two things make such a choice impossible now. In the first place, I am a wife, and again, I have seen under the mask you used to treat I have seen your wife's death and would be preferable to mating with you so vile."

"You cannot deceive me. My husband is alive, and will soon avenge his wrongs," for her wifely confidence in the ability of Jack to take care of himself and those who need his protection is unlimited.

"It's all the same. You will soon be his widow. Then, by the aid of a friendly padre whom I know, I will make you Lady Plympton"—she gives a gesture of disgust which causes him to emit one of his heavy English laughs—"by Jove! would turn up her nose at the honor, I assure you."

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"No, no; I could not do that. He would know who was to blame. I fear the Englishman. What good would a thousand reals do Juan Barreto, if his life pays the penalty?"

"What do you propose, then?" in agony asked the Englishman return to soon.

"You have paper—penicil?"

"Write a line to this wonderful Doctor Jack. Say 'trust the bearer fully.' Then tell me where I may find him. I shall be sent on a message by my employer when he leaves in the boat. I will bring your friend here."

"Heaven be praised!" mutters the little man.

With feverish haste, he takes out an envelope—a pencil. On the back of the paper, he writes as well as the lack of light allows:

"Trust the bearer. We are in mirlo's hands on edge of harbor, waiting for boat."

Then he signs his name.

There is no need to say "come quickly," for Doctor Jack will fly as though he had wings when he receives this message.

"Conceal that—to the place where we were captured—do not give the New Yorker says, hastily pushing the note in his hand.

"And my reward, senor. Remember, I take my life into my hands. One thousand reals, you say?"

"Surely it is worth it."

"Yes, and more. Put your hand into this pocket and remove the purse. One-third of what you ask is in it—some one else would get it presently, anyhow—better the man who is my friend."

"They come, senor."

"Juan, you will do what you promise?"

"Si, senor; I owe him one for a past offence. Some day Juan may pay in full, besides, it is a chance of a life-time to make a fortune. Yes, I will bring your Doctor Jack here."

The arrival of the others prevents further conversation, but Larry feels better. Given some time and he believes all must be well.

From the growls of the Englishman it is evident that they have not found the boat which they seek; but as luck will have it, even at this moment it heaves in sight.

This mollifies mirlo, who hails the two men to the craft, directing them where to pull up on the little beach.

Then he directs several of his followers to send the prisoners. With Juan Barreto in consultation a short time, after which the Chilian hurries away.

Larry has a thought or two in connection with the matter. They show the greatest respect for the nobleman, and just at present he is engaged with other matters.

The boat holds them all comfortably, and fortunately the harbor is stirred by no violent nor wester such as kicks up such a sea in this rather dangerous place.

Avila has said nothing, she controls her feelings in a wonderful way, though of necessity alarmed at the situation. Her association with Jack Evans has given her even more qualities of bravery than nature bestowed.

The two men who row the boat are sailors. Larry pays attention and discovers that they are British tars. They show the greatest respect for the nobleman, and this, with their neat uniform, gives Larry the impression of a cold shudder through his frame.

He conceives a horrible fancy that gives promise of being a truth. This rich Englishman probably has a yacht anchored in the harbor. When they are at anchor will be heaved, and everything at Valparaiso left behind. At their leisure they can proceed to steal material, or toss him overboard.

The duke feels desperate. Already he can see the outlines of a vessel ahead. It is while he is in this strain that fortune suddenly throws a chance in his way to at least create a disturbance. He finds a large cork in the bottom of the boat under a thwart, and calmly pulls it out. The water at once rushes into the boat which being overloaded, almost immediately begins to sink. Shots ring out on the night air, and in another moment the log goes down, leaving them all struggling in the salty waters of Valparaiso harbor.

(To be continued.)

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