

DR. JACK'S WIFE

By ST. GEORGE RATHBORNE

Author of "Dr. Jack," "Captain Tom," "Miss Caprice," Etc., Etc.

(Continued.)

Doctor Jack embraces his wife and then leaves the apartment, taking the poor feline with him. His feelings are of a more intense form than when he entered, for this last terrible blow of an unscrupulous foe has unsettled his iron nerves.

It is evident that unseen enemies are around him, ready to strike in the dark. He groans to think that Avis is here with him, exposed to these dangers. If she were only safe, he could better afford to laugh at the plottings of his enemies.

Below he finds Larry, to whom he confides the new and alarming turn which the case has taken. As might be expected, this worthy is astounded, and shows it on his face. Like a brave man he feels able to meet open foes, but this cowardly way of seeking revenge, adopted by the secret cabal against whom Doctor Jack has pitted himself, is of such a terrifying, vindictive, diabolical nature that it almost freezes the blood.

Leaving the little man on guard, Jack passes outside to find a vehicle which will carry him to the Intendencia. One happens to be near. It looks like a lucky chance, which he is only too willing to embrace. If he did but know that this same driver has twice refused a fare within the last half hour, perhaps his suspicions might be the sooner aroused. The night ride begins.

It is an ordinary hack in which Doctor Jack finds himself. He pays little attention to the vehicle itself, since its erratic movement presently engage his regards. The driver must be drunk, he at first concludes. Then it flashes through his mind that when he held his brief conversation with this worthy the man gave no evidence of being under the influence of liquor. Indeed, Jack was inclined to believe him unusually bright and smart for a Valparaiso Jehu.

This, then, brings the case down to one of design. If the man is out of his mind, there is a method in his madness. His eccentric movements, passing up one street and down another, might do for a man trying to throw another off the track, but they are certainly entirely out of place for a driver who has been hired at a round figure to take a fare to police headquarters as soon as possible. "Confound the fellow, what can he mean?" mutters the American, as for the third time his vehicle leaves the main avenue and plunges down into a darker calle.

It has gone beyond a joke. Doctor Jack hesitates a moment ere deciding what ought to be done, and then pokes his head out of the window, half-expecting to see some footpads with whom the driver is in collusion.

The rattle of wheels drowns his voice when he speaks, and he seriously contemplates firing a shot past the fellow's ear that must bring him to terms. A shout, however, accomplishes the same thing. The Jehu turns, beholds his fare making a threatening movement, and pulls hastily up.

Doctor Jack fiercely demands the reason for his erratic movements, whereupon the man abjectly apologizes. The only excuse he makes is that the pavement is bad on certain sections of the main street, which it is policy on his part to avoid.

"I hope others will do as I did."

"I suffered for six years with ovarian trouble," writes Mrs. E. Waite, of Chicago, Ill. (Lake View Postoffice.) "Sometimes I could hardly walk, and when I had to cough it felt as though a knife was cutting me. My hands and feet were cold all the time. I had such a tired feeling and such a poor appetite, and when I went to bed I slept only about two hours at a time. I got a bottle of 'Favorite Prescription' and by the time I had used two bottles I felt so much better that I continued until I had taken eight bottles of 'Favorite Prescription' and one of 'Golden Medical Discovery,' and now I am so well that my friends remark how well I am looking. I go to bed now and sleep till morning. My appetite is splendid and that tired feeling has left me. I hope others will do as I did—give Dr. Pierce's medicines a fair trial."



"Well, get to the office of the Intendente as speedily as possible. It's all I ask."

Perhaps his excuse is valid, but Jack has seen enough of life to doubt it. He believes the man has another motive, and is in league with outside parties, though what his purpose may be is a mystery.

The night air is chilly, but Jack keeps a window open, though he has to fasten it, as some secret spring pushes it shut. His mind is wrought up by the recent events that have occurred, and he finds plenty to think about, which will form the basis of his conversation with the Intendente.

Presently it strikes Jack that there is a peculiar, though pleasant odor in the vehicle. He did not notice it when he entered, hence it must be exhaled from some receptacle as they jolt along over the road.

He is at once suspicious. The very fact that the odor has a soothing effect, and makes him drowsy, causes alarm. Such things he has read of as happening in London and Paris, where wonderful games of fraud are inaugurated, but who would dream of such a thing in old Valparaiso?

Doctor Jack can circumvent a game that is even better played than this. He puts his head out of the window, and breathes the fresh air of the night, which invigorates him so that he can decide upon his next move. On a former occasion he remembers pulling himself out of the window of a hack, and reaching the roof. He tries it again, and succeeds as before, nor does the driver suspect his presence near until Jack gives him a dig in the ribs that causes the fellow to roar aloud in sudden fright.

Turning, he beholds his fare coolly seated on the roof of the vehicle, and hears spoken in Spanish the words:—

"I'll finish the ride on top, man; the odor of your vehicle doesn't please me. Now, make a bee-line for our destination, or I'll tumble you overboard in a jiffy."

Baffled in all he has undertaken the Jehu heads once more for the main street. His look amuses the American, who would fain draw from him the secret he guards, but the fellow at least has the merit of being taciturn when ugly. When at length he alights before the flaming red lantern that marks the Intendente's office, Jack believes he can well afford to spare the driver who has played him false, so he pays the fellow off and enters the office.

CHAPTER VIII.

The office of the Valparaiso chief of police is not a model of comfort by any means, and a strong odor of tobacco smoke impregnates the air at all hours.

Doctor Jack finds the Intendente an agreeable man, however, more than ordinarily shrewd for a Chilean officer, though not to be compared with the Frenchman who occupies such a position in Paris.

So Jack tells his story, or at least as much of it as he deems necessary. From the manner of the other he concludes that the main facts are already known to the officer. Perhaps he has means of collecting information. Perhaps he is in some way connected with the secret cabal against which Jack Evans struggles. If the latter proves to be the truth, there is small chance of help from this quarter. At last the American completes his narrative and demands protection. He has not broken the laws of Chili, and it is the wrath of individuals in the mad race for wealth that has been kindled against him.

"I will do what I am able. Frankly, Doctor Jack, I must tell you my office at present is poorly equipped to engage with such a powerful secret society as your enemies. The recent events in this region have torn our relations asunder. We are almost in chaos as yet. Crime runs rampant. I hardly know which men to trust. But I shall do my best," he says, gravely.

"It is all I can ask. I do not know whether it is customary to have a permit in your city for the carrying of arms, but I would like you to write me out one. Then I shall defend myself."

"And we will hear a good account of you. Por Dios! I was in Madrid at the time you played your part in the plaza los toros, and I was forced to admire your grit."

Doctor Jack smiles. It pleases him to remember those old scenes once in a while, when the panorama of the past sweeps before him. Meanwhile the Intendente writes.

"That covers the case, Doctor Jack. It is hardly necessary, since every one carries arms in these disturbed times. However, in case you bowl over half a dozen of these fellows you will be held guiltless."

"They take their lives in their hands when they run across my path. I am a peaceable man, sir, but must be let alone to attend to my business. As for this impudent English bull-dog who wants to wed Doctor Jack's widow—"

The officer laughs aloud. "Pardon, but it is too comical. I have seen much of these Englishmen. They are brave, too, but so full of boast—carumba! the world belongs to them—we all breathe only because they are magnanimous. Doctor Jack, I tell you I myself would give ten pesos to be present when you again come in contact with this Plimpton."

(To be Continued.)

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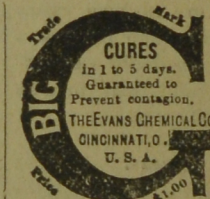
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