

DOCTOR JACK

By St. George Rathborne.

(Continued.)

"Yes, yes—if I could only get one of my revolvers loaded, I would jump down among these wolves, frighten them off, and extinguish the blaze, but—" and his action completed the sentence, for he is compelled to clear the windows of the clinging wretches again.

"Give me the weapon and cartridges. I know how to load it, thank heaven. You should have done this before, Jack."

Manlike, he has not thought of such a possibility, but he sees the wisdom of her proposition, places the long revolvers and cartridges in her hands, and then springs at more ugly heads in the windows, which must be kept clear at whatever cost.

The flames crackle merrily below as the fire gains headway, and the Carlists seem to be abandoning the attack to some extent, certain that the heat will either roast their enemies in the car, or drive them out to fall victims to those who lie in wait.

In the midst of this intensely dramatic situation there suddenly rings out upon the night air a shrill cry—the voice is clear and resonant, piercing the atmosphere and striking terror to the heart of each Carlisle.

"Fly! fly for your lives, comrades! It is a trap! We are lost! The soldiers are surrounding us. Fly in the name of the Virgin!"

Wild excitement ensues—men utter oaths, and the wounded pray aloud to be taken off. Jack thrusts his head out of the carriage—he has recognized the voice that has uttered those thrilling words in Spanish. It is Mercedes—yes, as he glances along the side of the train he sees the supposed peasant boy running toward them, waving his cap, and still shouting the words of warning that have created such consternation in the breasts of the Carlists.

Reaching the car under which the fire is blazing the brave girl immediately dashes the burning brands aside—they are saved!

It is only a temporary respite, however—the Carlists are recalled by the commands of Don Carlos, who understands the situation, and come running or crawling back. Undoubtedly it is their intention to repeat the performance, having seen how near success they came before.

By this time, however, Avis has placed the loaded revolver in Jack's hand, and taken the other from him. He feels that all is not lost so long as this brave girl is beside him—her presence gives him a new courage, and he knows they must succeed.

Again he opens on the advancing foe—now he does not care where his bullets go so long as they cut home.

These inhuman monsters would burn innocent women to death in the car in order to get at him, so there is no reason he should spare them.

They are possessed of a certain desperate valour—perhaps the sight of blood has wrought them up to the highest pitch of excitement. At any rate, they continue to rush upon the car in a way that astonishes Jack, who has never believed them equal to it.

Some crawl underneath—it is their object to once more gather the scattered brands and make a new blaze, which this time they will guard zealously, and no false alarm shall send them scurrying toward the hills.

Again the situation becomes strained—Jack has emptied his revolver—he seizes that which Avis thrusts into his hand, and moves in the direction

of the window. She reads his intention, and knows it is a forlorn hope. "No, no, you shall not go," she cries, her hand claspings his arm tightly. "I must—it is our only chance. I shall scatter the jackals—or die trying."

"You must not—will you! It is unnecessary. See, do you not feel the car shake—we are moving, Jack—the train starts—yes, and we are saved," and she falls back on his arm almost in a swoon, while Jack, discovering the truth, cries:—

"Thank God! Larry is at the lever!"

CHAPTER XVII.

When Larry finds himself under the railway carriage he has already mapped out the course he means to pursue. The other side of the train is partly in darkness, and consequently this must be his line of advance in the direction of the locomotive.

He pursues it, at times hiding in order to screen himself from observation, but all the while drawing nearer the head of the train, that pulsating engine, panting there as if eager to continue its onward race.

Once a man confronts the duke—he seems to be desirous of halting him, perhaps recognizing Larry as one of the party against whom the animosity of the Carlists is aroused; but the tourist is in a hurry, and cannot stop to satisfy the curiosity of this fellow—the clamour that arises from the rear announces that the battle is on, and seconds are precious. When the man attempts to use force, Larry gives him the benefit of the weapon he carries, and presses on toward his goal, the puffing motor.

More than once he is delayed by being compelled to hide, so that minutes elapse before he finds himself in the vicinity of the engine.

The panic is now on, and Larry wonders what causes it, as he has not understood the cry raised by Mercedes in advancing. It ceases, and once more the melee begins, but, thank heaven, he is now beside the locomotive.

In appearance it differs from those he is in the habit of seeing in America, but they all work on the same principle, and, if necessary, Larry is ready to set the lever and open the throttle himself.

The engine-driver is in the cab, but has his head out, interested in what is going on. If the mob is about to burn the rear carriage, some one had better uncouple it from the rest, and let him pull them off to a point of safety.

He is just telling a train man this when he feels a clutch on his arm, turns around, and looks into Larry's revolver. The desperate duke never appeared so big to any one in all his life as he does in the eyes of the astonished engine-driver—the fact of his holding a loaded revolver may have something to do with it.

"Start the train ahead!" snaps Larry. His look and the tone of his voice cannot be mistaken even if the other does not understand the words used. The man makes a gesture, and in broken English stammers that he dares not start without orders.

"There is your order—start the train," roars the irate duke, thrusting the revolver into the other's face, and pointing to the throttle.

The man looks him over as if to size him up—there is something he does not like about the diminutive New Yorker, and perhaps he sees death in his eye—at any rate, he turns sullenly around, grasps lever and throttle, throws the one into place, and opens the other cautiously.

As the train moves, a shout arises without—men run frantically toward the engine, and Larry stands ready to shoot the first one who tries to come aboard.

"Faster—open the throttle, man!" and he gives the driver's arm a jerk—the throttle is thrown open, and with a jump the train begins to gather headway.

It is too late now to unfasten the last car—no one can do it, for most of the shouting Carlists are left behind, and a few who still cling to the cars are dropping off in great terror lest they be carried off, and fall into the hands of the government forces.

Larry beams with triumph, but he knows it is too early to crow—not for a moment does he relax his vigilance, since he has become assured that the engine-driver is a Carlisle and may play them a trick yet.

By this time the blazing fire is left far behind—they are plunging along through the darkness of the valley, with only the stars as guides, but the rails hold the iron horse on his way, and all is well.

Every mile passed over makes them so much farther away from their enemies—the driver has made up his mind to the inevitable, and watches ahead, as is customary, while he holds his hand on the throttle.

Looking back, Larry sees that the train is intact, and he breathes free. One thing alone gives him worry—this is the uncertainty as to whether his friend has come out of the scrimmage unscathed. He has known all along that a terrible battle must have been fought back there by the barricaded coach, and with the odds so tremendous, it is possible that Doctor Jack may have been downed.

To be continued.

Edmund Brady, aged 82 years, died at his home in Edsworth Sanday, from injuries received in a peculiar manner on last Friday afternoon. On that afternoon Mr. Brady started to drive a cow to water. In some way the cow became agitated and turned upon him, knocking him down and trampling upon his body, injuring him fearfully about the chest and inflicting internal injuries that caused death.

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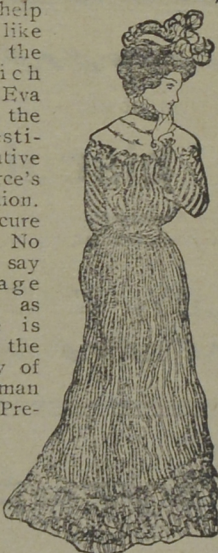
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