

DOCTOR JACK

By St. George Rathborne.

(Continued.)

At Larry's words all stop and endeavour to discover what he means. It is not at all difficult, for the night air is still, and the sounds are very distinct, indeed.

A vehicle of some sort is whirling along the gravelled drive leading to the palace gates. The loud voice of the driver can be heard as he urges his animals on. Then he stops, the gates are reached, a voice roars out some ferocious order in the Turkish tongue. Our friends look at each other in the semi-gloom, consternation seizes Larry, while Jack shuts his teeth with a snap.

"The pasha has come!" he grinds out.

"Great Scott! that train made up the lost time!" hoarsely whispers Larry. This event seems to strike him in a more singular light than the actual presence of their enemy.

There is still time enough for them to fly. The shore line can be reached before their foes may overtake them, and the boat, manned by the arms of stalwart British tars, will quickly carry them to the yacht.

Jack makes the attempt, even while doubtful as regards the result.

"We must fly," he says, grasping one of Aleck's arms.

"Leave me, my friends," begs the other.

"Not much. We came here to save you, and, Aleck, old fellow, you must come with us."

"I cannot," groans the wretched lad—liberty seems so close, and yet he will not stretch out his hand to grasp it.

"Nonsense! Perhaps we may at some future time save the girl. Remember Avis, Aleck."

He takes a few steps, stops, and holds back.

"No, no, I have sworn. I cannot, must not, will not desert her. She has vowed to kill herself if I die or leave her—she loves me so. Go, I beg of you, leave me here to have one turn at that devil before they kill me."

His entreaties are useless.

"If there's any killing to be done I must take a hand in it myself," declares Doctor Jack, drawing out the revolver with which he can put six balls at twenty paces in a circle of two inches in diameter—the Bennetts being his only rivals in all America.

Here is a pretty kettle of fish. Aleck positively refuses to advance, and the pasha is raising Hail Columbia at the entrance. He must speedily get in, and then look out for squalls. What can be done? Jack has half a notion to pick Aleck up and carry him off like a rebellious

child. He is quite capable of it, but refrains simply because he does not care to save a man against his will, and Aleck would be back here at the first opportunity, determined to get Sady or die.

For once in his life Doctor Jack is puzzled—he does not know what to do, and precious seconds are flying all the while. Even now it is probably too late. From the sounds that reach their ears they are informed that the pasha has gained an entrance, and is raging about, asking a dozen questions at once of his astonished and alarmed retainers, who probably imagine their master has gone crazy.

Even while they hearken a new sound adds to the clamour. Doctor Jack gives a start as the truth breaks upon him.

"Great Heaven! they have let loose

the pack of Siberian wolf-hounds. The animals will clear the garden, and be upon us like a flash!" he cries.

"Pon 'onah! I hear them coming now," says Larry, without any apparent alarm. He, too, has drawn a revolver, which he places in readiness to fire with a movement of his thumb. Achmed, shrinking back for an instant as the awful clamor of the gaunt brutes breaks on his ears, again braces up the line of battle, holding in his clenched hands the heavy iron bar which was intended to raise the Jungoon's grating, but which can doubtless be made to do good service in the line of a peace persuader, if it ever comes in contact with the cranium of a hound.

There can be no mistaking the fact that the dogs are advancing directly upon them, for the rush of the animals through the shrubbery is plainly heard. In the darkness they may have trouble sighting their canine foes. Jack sees a light streaming from a narrow window, and guesses the friendly source from which it comes.

Quick to take advantage of an opportunity, he calls out in a low, strained tone:—

"Back a few paces. Get the lane of light in front, so we can see the brutes. Quick! for the love of Heaven, men."

They are none too soon. Like a tornado rushing through a Western forest the pasha's pack of fierce wolf-hounds dart toward the little group. They utter a few yelps, but their eager silence is terribly suggestive. The sound of their swift passage resembles the sweep of the wind.

A brief moment of suspense, and then the dread event is upon them. Jack sights the first brute. His weapon is aimed, and the hand that never yet failed its master presses the trigger. One—the brute drops like a weight of lead, but the others flash into view all at once—revolvers rattle, fierce howls arise, and for a brief time a tremendous melee ensues.

It is a slaughter-pen for the wolf-dogs, and yet by very numbers they make it hot work for the little party of brave men. Several manage to pass the line of light. One Achmed belabours with the iron bar, another endeavours to reach the throat of Doctor Jack. Poor fool, it meets that iron left arm on the way, the fingers close on its neck, he crunches the larynx as though it were made of paper, and tosses the quivering body of the wolf-dog from him in a moment.

The rush, the whirl, the disaster—all is over in an exceedingly brief space of time. Scarce forty seconds have elapsed since the first dog broke cover and attempted to cross that heaven-sent banner of light from the window, and now not a single member of that fierce pack is left. Achmed, aroused to fury, still hammers the shapeless head of his victim with the iron bludgeon, but the wretched hound never knew what ailed him after receiving the first blow.

Larry is flushed with victory, "Bring on your dogs!" he calls out aloud.

"Not so fast," cautions Doctor Jack, "the next impediment we run across will probably be a small army of janizaries, armed with more deadly weapons than dogs' teeth. If you have any tears to shed prepare to shed them now, and meanwhile it might be a good idea to slip in a few cartridges."

The suggestion is a good one, which Larry cannot afford to neglect. Jack casts a side glance at Aleck. What will that worthy do now? Is there any possibility that he has changed his mind and may accompany them? Useless—Aleck possesses the blood of his Scotch ancestors in his veins, and there never lived a more stubborn individual. If they want him to fly they must find Sady.

"Onto the harem!" grits Jack between his teeth. He is thoroughly aroused now, after the engagement with the wolf-hounds, and nothing daunts his spirit. Since Aleck will not go without Sady they must find the pasha's prize even if the whole palace, harem and sefaglio, have to be searched, with the janizaries howling at their heels. That is the kind of man Jack Evans is when once he makes up his mind—mountains cannot stay his progress, and ordinary obstacles are brushed from his path as a man might dash a fly from his forehead.

Larry is ready to fall in behind, and as for Aleck, the cry enthralls him. He seems to regain his lost strength, forgets he is wounded from the fall he received in the dungeon, and presses on at the side of Achmed, who will go wherever his beloved master wills, be it into the grasp of death even, so long as Jack leads.

As they move hurriedly away the wildest kind of clamour arises, dozens of hoarse-tongued men shout unintelligible words in a fierce Turkish fashion. Abdallah Pasha has ordered his janizaries into the gardens—they have orders to cut and slay right and left, sparing no stranger whom they may find.

The case looks dark, indeed, for our friends, as it will be utterly impossible for them to reach the boat now, even should they be so fortunate as to discover Sady, the flower of the harem. All that remains is to fight to the last and die as brave men should. Only for Aleck's mad infatuation they would ere this have been upon the water, and presently safe on board the yacht that lay there at anchor, her white wings spread ready to fly away at short notice. Blind love, indeed, that weaves such a net in which one's dearest friends are ensnared.

To be continued.

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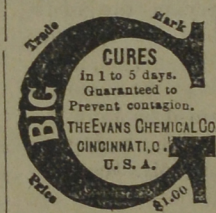
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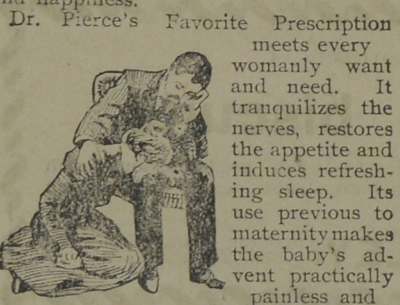


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