

DOCTOR JACK.

By ST. GEORGE RATHBORNE,

Author of "Doctor Jack's Wife," "Captain Tom," "Baron Sam," "Miss Pauline of New York," "Miss Caprice," Etc.

(Continued.)

Doctor Jack, remembering his first opinion that the dude resembled a monkey, inwardly chuckles to think how near the mark these words may be construed—children and fools always speak the truth, they say.

"I presume this note does refer to you, my good fellow, but I am afraid it was never intended for my eyes."

"Oh! yes, no doubt of that. Just read it out and then I'll explain."

So Jack once more bends over and reads, in a voice that the other can easily hear above the jargon of sounds on the street, the contents of the note given to him:—

"Four doors below Monsieur Blanc's conservatory of music—will meet you between two and four this day, my charming Larry. I have not forgotten your vows in the garden of the Tuilleries, and I swear to you that I love no other man as I do you. Beware lest you meet my guardian, for—"

Doctor Jack stops.

A hand is laid on his arm, and looking up he sees the face of the dude close to his own.

"You were right, doctor; I did make a beastly mistake. That is a billet doux from a charming little creature in Paris. Turned out she had another lover—we met at the house—he punctured me with a sword in the arm, and I gave him a bullet that kept him in the hospital de la charite for two weeks. I was arrested, but proved to be the assaulted party, so they let me off," gabbles the little man.

"But my note—come, man, let me have it," cries Jack, on needles and pins. He feels as though it would do him good to seize hold of this fellow and shake some animation into his slow moving body, but fears the man might fall to pieces on his hands, he is so wonderfully made up.

"I'm getting at it. Patience, good doctor. Your class of men have to exercise a deal of it, I know. Ah! here's another document—let's see if it is what we are after."

Larry is not so reckless with his papers now—perhaps he has other private affairs he does not wish the public to see. So he glances cautiously at this document ere handing it over to the tender mercies of the scoffer.

This seems more like it—Jack reads: "There is trouble for you, Doctor Jack, here—now—in Madrid. You have enemies. By accident Cousin Larry learned something of their plotting. You can trust him through anything. To get at the pith of the matter ask him questions. He admires you, and stands ready to do anything he can." Her name is at the bottom—Avis Morton.

"Come," says Jack, decisively, taking the arm of the New York dude in his own, "we will go to some place where we can talk unheard, and there you shall tell me what this means."

"I'm quite agreeable, doctor," lisps Larry.

So they leave the juggler and his admirers behind, turning their backs on the smoky flambeaux, and push a passage through the crowd toward the fonda.

CHAPTER XI.

Jack's first thought is of the hotel, where in the quiet of his room, they may engage in a conversation uninterrupted. He has already passed over half the distance, and the fonda seems near at hand, when he becomes aware of the fact that his companion desires to stop, so a halt is called.

"Beg pardon, doctor, but are you heading for that caravansary yon-dah?" asks Cousin Larry.

"Certainly. I have a room there. Over a bottle of wine we can—"

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this matter" reaches the athlete, wondering what is in the wind.

The dude makes a half way French shrug that at another time would have amused Jack more than words could tell, but just now he has his mind occupied with other things.

"The temptation is strong but the risk is too great, my boy."

"Risk! What the deuce do you mean, Larry? They know me here—"

the best the house affords is at my service," cries Jack.

"Yes, they know you—that's it. For me to be seen in your company is dangerous."

"Eh? I don't comprehend," gasps the doctor.

Larry bends his head over, for there is a noisy band bearing down upon them, filling the air with some national melody, and the crowd of masked students accompany it shouting a college song at the top of their lungs, so that the dude is compelled to give his shrill voice full play in order to be heard.

"Because you are a marked man, Doctor Jack," is the astonishing declaration he makes. "There is a big conspiracy against you, right here in the city of Madrid."

"What has that to do with not entering the hotel, may I ask?"

To be continued.

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