

SQUIRE JOHN

A TALE OF THE CUBAN WAR

BY ST. GEORGE RATHBORNE

CHAPTER VI.

The Room That Faced Edinburgh Castle.

Jack amuses himself the following day knocking about the city, taking a tram ride down to Leith, and watching the fishermen there and at Newhaven come in with their catch.

Then he spends some time up at the Castle—a most fascinating spot for all temporary sojourners in Edinburgh; observes the Highlanders go through their drill, and, like all Yankees, mentally compares them with the boys in blue at home.

Jack dines at the hotel and then promenades Princes street, observing the throng, until it is near the appointed hour, when he retires to his room, and prepares for the reception of his expected guest, having given orders that the Spaniard be shown up when he arrives.

He anticipates a lively scene when the disclosure is made, and feels that his future course must be in a great measure governed by circumstances.

Four by the clock, the bells are just ringing the hour, when he hears voices, and then comes a rap on the door.

"Come in!" sings out Jack in his genial way. So the door swings open to give admittance to the urbane don.

He is just as striking in his appearance as on the preceding night, and wears the same dark velvet jacket. People turn to gape after him in the street, especially when a large cream colored sombrero rests jauntily on his head and every one must have guessed he is some distinguished artist, which attention pleases the worthy senior exceedingly.

Holding his wonderful headgear in one hand, he advances quickly, his face wreathed in smiles, and Jack languidly rises to meet him.

So they cross palms for the last time; it is only a question of minutes now ere these two will be glaring at each other across the table, deadly enemies.

"And how does our happy bridegroom find himself to-day? Come, do



Advance quickly.

the fetters gall, or, after all, are you thinking only of the rich results to come from the enterprise?" asks Roblado, with a glance at the decanter Jack has had brought into the room.

"Help yourself, my dear sir—sherry, port, and genuine Scotch mountain dew. As for myself, I'm feeling fairly bright, and I reckon, as we Yankees say, equal to the occasion. Don't deprive yourself, senior; have another."

"Carramba! that is nectar fit for the

gods. We shall not want for it after this—eh, Senior Jack?"—smacking his lips, after having half emptied one of the decanters.

"You have come then, to-day for what specific purpose?"

"To arrange for the transfer according to our agreement. Of course your first move will be to go to London and prove your identity as Jack Travers to the legal gentlemen having the estate in charge. You will want the evidence of your marriage with the party named in the will. Here are the necessary proofs, including the regular certificate of marriage."

"Ah, thanks. They will come in handy, I am sure. You make one mistake, however, senior."

"Voya hombre, what may that be?" asks the artist, in the act of lighting a weed.

"About my visit to the solicitors—there is no need of my hastening to see them, since I have already been in Chancery lane."

The Spanish artist looks anxious.

"You were bolder than I thought possible. Tell me, how did you succeed?" he demands, puffing vigorously.

"The result was all that could be expected," answers the young American, coolly.

"Good—good! Then they recognized you as the genuine party in question?"

"Everything passed off in my favor."

"Oh, what great luck we are having, Senior Jack! Fortune brings everything in my way—I, who was only lately contemplating flitting to Cuba, where I have some interests that bring me in a scanty living. I hardly know how I shall invest my share of the spoils."

"Perhaps you may yet be saved the trouble, my dear Senior."

"What is that you say?"

"Well, only an old proverb to the effect that 'there's many a slip 'twixt cup and lip.'"

Senior Roblado laughs in his disagreeable way.

"I have no fear there will be anything of that kind here. Oh, no, my dear young friend. I have anticipated everything, and it is quite impossible that you receive the benefit of this great property without sharing the same with your wife and her stepfather. Make your mind easy on that score, for it does not worry me a little bit. You signed the papers, therefore I have you powerless."

"Pardon me, the only binding act that I have done was to promise my wife I would not force my presence upon her, and that I shall keep most religiously."

"But—the papers—"

"I have signed none."

Senior Roblado seems in doubt whether to laugh in derision or swear lustily in Spanish. He looks at his companion across the table and endeavors to read the cool sphinx who leans back in his chair apparently intent only on watching the rings of blue smoke that go curling up from his cigar. Finally the artist compromises; he realizes that it is necessary for him to remain calm in order to keep on a footing with this customer.

"Senior, are you joking?"

"Never more serious in my life. I assure you," comes the reply.

"Then you mean to play me false. Take care; I am in a position to hurl you down from your station, even if I have to keep you company, and men of my race will never forgive treachery. You swore to keep the faith with me."

Senior Roblado grows excited—he leans across the table and endeavors to throw a bit of emphasis in his voice; but Jack appears still at his ease, and as he turns his gaze upon

his companion, something between a sneer and a smile can be seen on his countenance.

"Pardon me again, but I swore nothing of the kind, either verbally or on paper."

"Carajo! beware, young man. You tempt me too far. I am no fool, neither am I blind."

"I had begun to think the latter, else you must have caught on to something before now."

"Caught on—I—you say my eyesight is not good. Come, what have I failed to see beyond that you were a double rogue posing as a gentleman? Tell me, sir!"

Senior Roblado is waking up to the seriousness of his cause, and as he speaks he raps his knuckles imperiously on the table, while his face no longer appears tranquil, but inflamed, his eyes blazing with gathering wrath.

"First of all, that I am not the person you took me for. I declared to



"Malediction! Then you are—"

you that I had signed no papers save those connected with my marriage. That is absolutely true. You have letters, but they were not written by my hand, nor did I ever see them. No wonder you look mystified, Senior Roblado. I shall have a little mercy upon you. Settle yourself comfortably, then, and listen, while I spin a little yarn that will make the whole thing as clear as noonday.

"I had an appointment last night in the Canongate. While I waited for my friend to appear, a hansom, driven recklessly, lost a wheel and was wrecked. The inmate, a gentleman, was badly hurt, and while we waited for an ambulance to take him to Trinity hospital, he uttered various things in a half delirium, that attracted my attention. As I had once known the unfortunate gentleman, I thought it might be an act of charity to seek the house of seven gables, and let the good people know what had become of him.

"Well, I did so. You came to the door, and gave me no chance to explain. I was quick to perceive that you mistook me for Howard Spencer, and having already an inkling of the game, determined to allow myself to be drawn on, with the intention of finding out why that man had assumed the name of Jack Travers.

"You know the rest. I need not tell you I entered into the spirit of the game, and that I consider myself very fortunate in being the legal husband of so charming a girl."

The Spanish senior has some difficulty in finding his voice, and it is in a hoarse whisper he cries:

"But—my letters! You had them. You are surely playing a Yankee joke on me."

"A pretty serious one I am afraid, then. As to the letters, my Chinese servant picked them up when Spencer had been trotted off to the hospital. When you asked for letters I remembered them, and they seemed to fill the bill admirably."

"Then—it is all—true?"

"Absolutely, senior."

"You are not Howard Spencer?"

"Most certainly not. That gentleman does not bear a very enviable reputation around the Cripple Creek mining country, and I should seriously object to being compelled to stand for him."

"You are not my correspondent, yet you know about the game! Carramba! you even tell me there is no necessity of hurrying to Chancery lane, because you have already seen the law-years and it is all right. What is all right? And you have even had the sublime assurance to marry my stepdaughter and ward, while admitting that you are not the party named in the special license! That is the height of impudence, sir—it is damnable!"

"Ah, Roblado, that is where I have you! The special license was perfectly framed, even better than you thought, as I was not reduced to sailing under false colors in order to fulfill its conditions."

The senior sees light all at once.

"Malediction!" he shouts, in the most intense excitement; "then you are—"

"The genuine Squire John—known in the wild and woolly west as Jack Travers," replies the other, complacently.

CHAPTER VII.

Diamond Cut Diamond.

The picture when Travers proclaims his identity is certainly one well worth seeing, especially the consternation stamped upon the features of that remarkable man with whom Jack holds his interview.

Senior Roblado is apparently stricken dumb for the time being; the hand that holds the smoking cigar trembles as might an aspen leaf, and his fierce black eyes under the shaggy grey brows are fastened on the Yankee with the look of a hungry wolf.

"You are the genuine Jack Travers! You who sit there dare to tell me that as coolly as you might speak of your cigarro! Por Dios! man, I admire your nerve, though you have come near shattering mine with your devilish intelligence. I feared treachery; I prepared against it, but hola! you overwhelm me. Still, a Roblado never surrenders; we sometimes die in the last ditch."

"Ah, senior," laughs the tantalizing Jack, "you remember I warned you it was full thirty feet from my window and a hard pavement that of Princes street. Don't do anything to tempt me, I beg."

The senior, who has risen halfway from his chair, drops back again; one glance at the muscular figure of the American has convinced the Spaniard that he cannot hope at his age to cope with such an athlete.

"All the Fates must be against me to bring you here at such a time. I believed you dead, Jack Travers," he growls, hardly knowing what else to say.

"So did my dear friend Howard, and he had good reason to believe himself haunted by my ghost, since it was by his orders I was waylaid, robbed and thrown into Dead Horse Canon. But I am a favorite of fortune, and I escaped, as you see, to baffle your schemes."

"Then we have lost everything. You have swept the board, Senior Jack; but there is one thing still left to me."

(To be continued.)

State Must Pay Bounty.

As the result of a decision of the supreme court the state of California will be compelled to pay \$287,615 to the holders of coyote scalp claims. In 1891 a law was passed placing a bounty of \$5 each upon every coyote killed in the state, so great were the ravages of the coyotes among the sheep and chickens. The scalps, when delivered at county seats, were to be destroyed. But the state asserted that the scalps were sometimes used more than once, and scalps were imported from Nevada and Arizona. So when it had paid out \$190,000 it stopped. But it could not prove its case.