

SQUIRE JOHN

A TALE OF THE CUBAN WAR

BY ST. GEORGE BATHURNE

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CHAPTER XIX.

Surrounded by Fire.

Truer words were never spoken than when Travers declares they had not work before them.

As the others comprising the little party of defenders come tumbling out of the compartments which they have defended so bravely, they, too, discover the advance of the guerrillas, marked as it is by a dozen waving flambeaux hastily snatched from the fires.

Jack is by instinct a leader of men. His quick mind grasps a problem and almost on the instant solves it. He seems to know by intuition, as it appears, just what sort of action suits an emergency.

Speedily he places his men where they can do the most execution, and in the darkness they crouch alongside the carriage, awaiting the coming of the enemy.

There is hardly a breathing spell before those who come running along the railway track will be close enough to invite an opening of the engagement.

The guerrillas of course cannot see the carriage, since all lights have been extinguished; but knowing the nature of the ground, they are able to guess its present position with some degree of certainty.

Jack is there in the van ready to give a good account of himself. He has regulated matters so there may be no great waste of ammunition. Smithers and himself are to open the ball, and if it becomes necessary, the others will chime in.

The two comrades are close together, and have time for the exchange of a few sentences ere the nearest torchbearers come within the range where they have marked an imaginary dead line.

Then the ball opens. Doubtless the advancing guerrillas understand the situation as soon as the double flash cleaves the darkness up the rise, for their savage shouts seem to increase in volume.

Those in the lead are naturally the ones to suffer when meeting with such an obstacle.

Two torches are seen to plunge downward, and those who carried them will hardly give further trouble.

Still, behind presses a throng; the catastrophe has not dulled their enthusiasm, but rather whetted their appetite for revenge.

Again Jack and Smithers let loose. They are as cool and collected as though practicing at wooden targets. Each second is the signal for a double discharge, and the regularity of this death dealing report stamps itself upon the mind with awful distinctness.

Unseen by Travers, two heads have appeared at the carriage window. An overpowering curiosity to see the nature of the danger that hangs over them has influenced Jessie and the Spanish girl to thus endeavor to survey the scene.

They discover the advancing torches, and hear the shouts of the assailants; then come the reports of firearms and the terrible confusion that ensues down the track. Secretly one of these gentle hearts is praying for the safety of the man who has offered his body as a bulwark between those desperate devils and herself; for Jessie Cameron has indeed made a startling discovery, though she does not as yet breathe its nature even to her stepister.

Meanwhile, the fusillade has borne fruit. Even brave men might recoil before such systematic firing. The shots continue to ring out as if by machine work—each discharge



Then the ball opens.

might be the pulsation of a mighty heart capable of sending leaden hail whistling through space.

From incarnate rage the shouts blend into cries of alarm—yes, even of terror.

The advance is not given up, but a new system of tactics brought into play.

One man gives his torch a toss into the surrounding jungle. Another sees the point and follows suit. For a brief interval the air seems filled with flambeaux, each describing a parabola and landing in the thicket.

Jack understands what it means, and has no liking for the advance that must follow, since it means the possible arrival of the guerrillas at

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the car, and a possible hand-to-hand conflict that will work against them on account of inferior numbers.

He sees many dark forms stumbling forward over the bodies of those who have fallen; the torches have not gone out, but kindle incipient conflagrations among the dead leaves.

"Fire! Give it to them hot," is what Squire John exclaims.

With a crash the others open. Even Ah Sin can do his share, since Jack has no use for a reloader unable to handle a gun, and in the early days of their intimacy taught the Celestial how to aim and fire, though the Chinaman cannot be broken of gun-shyness, and persists in shutting his eyes each time he pulls trigger.

Such a wholesale discharge is enough to quite finish the business.

The advance has been feeble before, but now it ceases entirely. When the seeds of a panic are sown they germinate with lightning rapidity. From lip to lip the cries of alarm pass. Perhaps never before in all their experience have these barbarians met with such a desperate resistance as this.

They melt away, these fierce guerrillas.

In the dim light their fleeing figures can be seen in various quarters in desperate flight. The shots continue so long as any are in sight, and while probably lacking in execution, certainly add to the temporary terror of the mob.

Some have sought safety in the forest, and Jack's attention being called to this fact, he awakens to a new danger that confronts them.

The dead leaves and brush catch fire easily at this time of the year, since the opening of the rainy season has been delayed.

Already in half a dozen places, where the descending torches alighted, can be seen a rapidly-spreading blaze. The breeze seems to be increasing with the passage of each minute of time, and fanning the flames into vigorous life.

Jack knows better than any of the others the full measure of the new danger menacing them.

Still, what can be done?

There is a fire for every man, some of them already burning so fiercely that it would tax the ingenuity of a single individual to encompass the destruction of the blaze.

Should they attempt to extinguish the fires that already begin to snap and crackle as they greedily seize upon new material, they will naturally become a target for those of the bushwhackers who may still linger near.

Hence nothing can be done. The others begin to notice the increasing light.

They comment on the fact that presently they will offer fair targets to the aim of the enemy; but strangely enough none of them appear to grasp the most serious part of the impending disaster.

Even Smithers, usually so quick to see such things, makes no mention of it.

It is suggested that they seek the interior once more. None of them are loth to do so. The guard, and Ah Sin find an asylum in the end compartment as before.

Smithers appears to dislike this division of their forces, and one of his first acts upon entering is to examine the partition between.

His scrutiny appears to satisfy him, for he at once opens an assault on the wall, which proves to be a mere shell, and in wretched condition at that; for under the vigorous measures brought into play by the energetic agent, there is an opening made through which the stoutest of the party can pass with ease.

Don Roblado and Spencer are keeping watch at one door, and Jack opens the other in order to take an observation.

He is really startled and not a little worried at the amazing progress made by the fires. They have eaten their way along on that side of the track until the lines of separation have ceased to exist, and all are united. The flames, fed by dead leaves and branches from trees lopped off during the passage of some West India hurricane, now leap hungrily into the air, as though snapping at the branches overhead.

Travers cannot remember ever seeing a fire start with so much vim.

And while he leans there at the door, his mind endeavoring to plan new methods of meeting the deadly dangers that keep cropping up so continually, he feels a touch, and experiences a burning sensation. Some monitor of the heart, some marvelous intuition of the spirit tells him it is the hand of his Highland lassie that telegraphs thus to his soul.

"Is the danger over?" she asks, softly.

Roblado and his friend lean out of the other door and compare notes over the situation. Smithers has passed into the next compartment to speak with the guard, and no one is near but Juanita, Jessie's faithful friend and stepister, who loves her with the blind affection which the Aztec worshippers felt for their sun-god.

"That would be hard to say," he replies, softly. "These men are desperate characters, and although we have temporarily beaten them off, they may return. I hope you will not be alarmed, however. We have

been able to hold out this far, and give a good account of ourselves, and, with the favor of Heaven, will continue to do so."

"We are under heavy obligations to you!" she says; and Jack smiles grimly at the way Fate manages his case.

"I hope you will not think so. No man could stand by and not lift his hand to defend ladies," is what he manages to say.

"Pardon—you are not a Spaniard, senior?"

Travers suddenly remembers that he no longer holds the pebble in his cheek; he has been talking in his natural tones.

"Only an American, lady," he replies.

"I thought so," he hears her say, as though to herself, and immediately follows by asking aloud: "You appear to be more anxious than before, and I imagine we are threatened with some new danger. You see I am brave, I would know the worst. So please let us understand what is coming next."

"It will come from the fire," he says, quickly.

"I understand what you mean," she says, as she leans out of the door.



"Is the danger over?"

sustained by his arm—"the forest is afire. We are in danger of being burned alive. Well, sir, that is a terrible fate to face, but I had rather meet it than fall into the hands of those wretches," and Jack, remembering the savage appearance of the guerrillas, fully half of whom were black devils, can heartily say "Amen" to her words deep down in his heart.

What Jessie characterizes as a forest fire has really reached the dignity of such a conflagration, for the flames have seized the branches, and shoot upward with a vehemence that promises a wonderful result.

If the wind grows stronger it will sweep over the ridge and run a course of miles until checked by some stream or savanna.

"Can nothing be done? The heat is already becoming so dreadful. Perhaps the carriage may take fire, and we will lose our refuge," is what Juanita says, just behind them.

Jack has been considering the matter, and trying to decide which of two evils is the lesser.

He realizes that whatever is done must be accomplished quickly, else the intense heat may cause the old tinder-box of a railway carriage to take fire.

Before Travers can make any further remark upon the subject, he hears Smithers calling aloud for the "doctor" in the next compartment, and it suddenly flashes across his mind that it was agreed he should pass under the name of Dr. Jim.

Evidently his presence is needed. Smithers shows some trace of excitement in the tone of his hail, and it may be set down for certain that when he allows his well-trained nerves a little holiday, there is good reason for alarm.

(To be Continued.)

PANAMA CLIMATE NOT DEADLY.

Temperature and Rainfall Not Worse Than in the United States.

There is a widespread belief that the climate of Panama is so fatal that the construction of the canal can only be accomplished at an enormous sacrifice of human life. Both malaria and yellow fever may be said to be to-day practically under control, and these are the two diseases, says the Scientific American, which are most to be dreaded when the great construction camps are assembled and work is in full swing throughout the whole length of the canal. According to Gen. Abbott, the records of the hospital of the old Panama canal company show that the total death rate among the laborers was far less than is commonly supposed, being in fact from 44 to 67 per 1,000.

It seems, moreover, that the rainfall has been the subject of as gross exaggeration as the diseases. It varies from about 130 inches on the Atlantic to sixty-five inches on the Pacific, a record that can be duplicated in the United States, where the average rainfall on the Atlantic coast is about fifty inches and the fall on portions of the Pacific coast compares in total precipitation with that of the Atlantic terminus of the canal. Furthermore, it will be news to many residents of our more northerly latitude to learn that the temperature ranges at Panama from 70 degrees to 85 degrees Fahrenheit, and that it is very rarely that the thermometer reaches the high temperature which is experienced when a hot wave passes over the United States.

A poor man may be a crank, but a rich one is eccentric.

LEGISLATURE of NEBRASKA

A Synopsis of Proceedings of the Twenty-Ninth General Session.

SENATE—These bills were read a third time and passed in the senate on the 14th: S. F. 61, allowing any one, whether an officer or not, to seize a seine or net being used illegally. S. F. 79, to provide that inebriates and those addicted to the "dope" habit be confined in the asylum for treatment. 40, providing a penalty for overworking a horse or mule and for unnecessarily tormenting any other animal. S. F. 41, providing that corporations shall act as guardians, trustees, etc. This bill was objected to yesterday because it was argued that it would place all of the probate business of the state in the hands of foreign corporations, but today there was no objection to it. A large number of bills were reported for general file and many recommended for passage.

HOUSE—The house, on the 14th, took up bills on third reading and passed: To give to cities and villages the right to foreclose tax sale certificates immediately after their purchase and to provide rates of interest in such tax sale certificates. Providing for a state accountant at a salary of \$2,000 a year. Giving to restaurant and boarding house keepers the same legal protection against fraud as is accorded hotel and inn keepers. Providing for the payment of the entire county road tax in cash. To make the penalty for breaking and entering apply to buildings of all characters. Providing for construction of plank, brick, stone and concrete sidewalks in cities under 50,000 population. Making the open season for deer and antelope August 15 to November 15; on prairie chickens, sage and grouse, September 1 to November 30; ducks and other wild water fowl, September 1 to April 15; jacksnipe and yellow legs, September 1 to May 1; wild pigeons, doves and plover, June 15 to August 1; trout, April 1 to October 1; other fish, April 1 to November 15; prohibiting the killing of quail during 1905-6 and fixing open season on them after 1907 from November 1 to November 30; limiting number of geese or brant to be killed per day by a single hunter to ten; game birds twenty-five and prairie chickens ten during the month of September. The bill imposes a fine of \$5 a bird or sentences of ten days for each for all birds killed in excess of the legal number. Providing that the proceeds of inheritance tax shall be used for the construction of permanent roads and go into the road fund. Vesting in the State Banking Board discretionary power as to the integrity and responsibility of persons applying for banking charters. Appropriating the \$15,000 balance from the World's Fair state fund to enable Nebraska to participate in the Lewis and Clark exposition in Portland, Ore., and providing for the appointment by the governor of a board of commissioners to carry out the provisions of this act. A call of the house was necessary to secure the two-thirds for an emergency clause.

SENATE—The Shreck fraternal bill, providing for an elected membership of 95 per cent to control the affairs of lodges, was killed in the committee of the whole in the senate on the 15th. House roll No. 39 was recommended for passage, giving the fraternal societies the right to incorporate. All the orders were included and senate files Nos. 10 and 12 were indefinitely postponed. House roll No. 102, by Ward, to give \$3,000 to the South Bend hatcheries was recommended for passage. House roll No. 146 was recommended for general file. The bill regulates the speed of motor cars. Senate file No. 169, the Shreck drainage bill, was recommended for general file. House roll No. 128, by Rouse, regulating the payment of hotel bills and providing a penalty for neglect thereof was read for the first time in the senate. Senate file No. 7, by Sheldon, was passed without the emergency clause. The bill provides a 1 mill levy to pay the state debt. Senate file No. 21, by Vore, to regulate the passage of traction engines over bridges was recommended to the committee. Senator Giffin's reapportionment bill was recommended.

HOUSE—When the house met on the 15th Jones of Polk called up his resolution calling for an investigation of the action of the state board of public lands and buildings for having used, to build cottages at the Norfolk asylum, \$100,000 that was appropriated two years ago to rebuild the west wing of the asylum, which had been destroyed by fire. A motion to table the resolution was defeated. House roll No. 133, by Jouvencat, to provide a guaranty deposit fund on interest-bearing deposits, in state banks, by an annual tax of one-fifth of 1 per cent on deposits, to be paid by the banks, was defended by its introducer and opposed by Howe of Nemaha, Ferrar of Hall, Wilson of Pawnee and other members. The bill was recommended for indefinite postponement. These bills were introduced: To permit state officers, in case of emergency, to purchase stationery costing less than \$25 without intervention of the state printing board. To redistrict Nebraska into senatorial and representative districts. To amend chapter 43 of the Compiled Statutes of the state of Nebraska of 1903, by adding a

new section. To prohibit the stealing of, or attempting to steal, rides on trains, engines or cars, or any part or portion thereof, or climbing thereupon while stationary or in motion, and to provide a penalty and punishment not exceeding sixty days in jail and \$25 fine. Authorizing county boards to acquire title to land to be used for public road purposes. To amend sections 5 and 45, chapter 28, of the Compiled Statutes of Nebraska for the year 1903, relating to the fees of sheriffs, and other county officials. Fixing the salaries of sheriffs and the manner of appointing and paying their deputies. To fix the minimum number of trains and regulate the running time on railroads in the state of Nebraska.

SENATE—The senate got busy on engrossed bills on the morning of the 16th and passed these measures: S. F. 107, transferring \$2,646.15 from the penitentiary special labor fund to the general fund. S. F. 104, allowing county courts to dispense with administration of estates and to enter decrees in certain cases. S. F. 128, providing when a husband or wife is competent to testify for or against each other. S. F. 113, to prevent the illegal expenditure of public funds. S. F. 123, to repeal the statute providing for the appointment of county attorneys. S. F. 106, to transfer \$6,939.45 from the inheritance tax fund to the general fund of the state. S. F. 129, to provide for suspended sentences in cases of wife desertion. S. F. 86, district clerk fee bill. S. F. 116, providing for the payment of road taxes in cash or labor. A motion by Sheldon of Cass was adopted to not consider H. R. 49, providing for the establishment of a binding twine factory at the state penitentiary until the appropriation bills had all been considered.

HOUSE—In the house on the 16th H. R. 20, by Richardson of Madison, appropriating \$35,000 for general repairs at the Norfolk Insane asylum, including the rebuilding of the old wing, was favorably acted on, despite the protest of Jones of Polk, who wanted the bill to lay over until the investigation committee appointed under his resolution yesterday reported. H. R. 62, by Ernest of Johnson, provoked much discussion, being an appropriation bill. It provided \$10,000 for an agricultural pavilion at the State fair. It was recommended for passage. H. R. 110, Junkin's anti-trust bill, was amended so as to have suits brought under this act for its enforcement in the state and not county courts. The bill has been recommended for passage. H. R. 195, by Rouse of Hall, requiring saloonkeepers to give guaranty bonds of \$5,000, was recommended for passage, but Horton moved to except it from the committee's report and have the bill recommended for indefinite postponement. Burns moved to except H. R. 169, his bill to allow university regents to condemn land for university purposes, which had been reported for indefinite postponement, and recommended it for passage. S. F. 198, by Ellerson of Clay and Meserve of Knox—To establish a State Engineers' Examining board. S. F. 199, by Gilligan of Holt—To amend an act to regulate the purchase of supplies and to create a Board of Control therefor. The Board is composed of the members of the Board of Public Lands and Buildings and is authorized to purchase supplies in wholesale quantities. S. F. 200, by Cady, by request—To allow the state board to grant certificates to osteopaths when latter have diploma from a school of osteopathy.

SENATE—On the 17th S. F. 60, increasing the salary of the game warden and fish commissioner, was passed. Standing committee reported as follows, for the general file: S. F. 181, allowing a township, road district or precinct to vote a tax of 25 mills for the improvement of public roads. S. F. 51, making state warrants draw 4 per cent interest; school district warrants, 5 per cent; warrants of townships or subdivisions less than a county to draw 7 per cent interest. S. F. 50, 51, 52 and 53, bills to amend the present decedent law. H. R. 52, legalizing the use of voting machines. H. R. 29, to pay to former Attorney General Prout \$240 which he paid for a bond. H. R. 98, to provide jury trials in justice courts. H. R. 97, to provide for a change of venue where cases are to be tried in justice courts. H. R. 100, to provide for payment of cost in changes of venue from one justice court to another. H. R. 99, to fix fees for jurors in cases tried in justice courts. Among new bills were the following: Establishing a standard for state printing. To label penitentiary made goods and to regulate the sale thereof. A judicial apportionment bill, recently printed herewith. To make justice of the peace outside of towns overseers for the poor and to compel county boards to employ physicians for country districts, to be paid not more than \$200 yearly. To authorize the leasing of the home for the friendless when vacated. To fix the salaries of deputies to state officers at \$1,800. The present law provides that the deputy secretary of state and deputy superintendent shall each receive \$1,500 a year. Each is now getting \$1,700.

HOUSE—On the 17th H. R. 111, by Copey of Carter, providing for the distribution of the temporary school fund on the basis of the number of school districts instead of population, was indefinitely postponed. Jackson of Antelope made a strong plea for the bill, urging that it was needed in the western part of the state, where the sparsely settled communities did not get their just share of this fund. One item of business was to hear and act on committee reports on forty bills. The general file, containing forty-three bills, was entirely cleaned up. All the bills which sifted through the strainer of the committees go directly to the general file. Casebeer of Gage won his fight to compel members to sign applications for supplies before receiving any at the first of each session. The bill provides that at the end of each session the State Board of Public Lands and Buildings shall invoice legislative property left over and hold it for the next session, and that no member shall be supplied until he shall have made written application on regular blanks furnished for that purpose. McClay's bill, appropriating \$10,000 to re-imburse T. P. Kennard, was recommended for passage. The bill says M. Kennard, as secretary of state under Governor Furnas, expended out of his own pocket \$10,000 in the prosecution of claims on the sale of Indian lands. He was to receive 50 per cent of the money thus collected. The house revenue committee reported for indefinite postponement the fusion caucus revenue bill and the report was confirmed by the house. The bill was rather voluminous and made sweeping changes in the present revenue law.

Senatorial Districts.

The apportionment bill introduced by Giffin of Dawson was amended by the steering committee as follows and placed on general file, on the 17th. Following are the senatorial districts as arranged by the measure:

District No. 1 shall consist of the counties of Richardson and Pawnee and be entitled to one senator.
District No. 2 shall consist of the counties of Johnson, Otoe, Cass and Nemaha and be entitled to one senator.
District No. 3 shall consist of the counties of Saunders and Sarpy and be entitled to one senator.
District No. 4 shall consist of the county of Douglas and be entitled to four senators.
District No. 5 shall consist of the counties of Cuming and Burt and be entitled to one senator.
District No. 6 shall consist of the counties of Thurston, Dakota, Dixon and Wayne and be entitled to one senator.
District No. 7 shall consist of the counties of Pierce, Madison and Stanton and be entitled to one senator.
District No. 8 shall consist of the counties of Cedar, Knox and Boyd and shall be entitled to one senator.
District No. 9 shall consist of the counties of Holt, Wheeler, Garfield and Antelope and be entitled to one senator.
District No. 10 shall consist of the counties of Boone, Merrick and Nance and be entitled to one senator.
District No. 11 shall consist of the counties of Dodge and Washington and be entitled to one senator.
District No. 12 shall consist of the counties of Platte and Colfax and be entitled to one senator.
District No. 13 shall consist of the counties of Hall, Howard and Greeley and be entitled to one senator.
District No. 14 shall consist of the counties of Polk and York and be entitled to one senator.
District No. 15 shall consist of the counties of Butler and Seward and be entitled to one senator.
District No. 16 shall consist of the county of Lancaster and be entitled to two senators.
District No. 17 shall consist of the county of Gage and be entitled to one senator.
District No. 18 shall consist of the counties of Saline and Fillmore and be entitled to one senator.
District No. 19 shall consist of the counties of Jefferson and Thayer and be entitled to one senator.
District No. 20 shall consist of the counties of Hamilton and Clay and be entitled to one senator.
District No. 21 shall consist of the counties of Adams and Kearney and be entitled to one senator.
District No. 22 shall consist of the counties of Franklin, Webster and Nuckolls and be entitled to one senator.
District No. 23 shall consist of the counties of Phelps, Harlan, Gosper and Furnas and be entitled to one senator.
District No. 24 shall consist of the counties of Frontier, Red Willow, Hitchcock, Hayes, Chase and Dundey and be entitled to one senator.
District No. 25 shall consist of the counties of Buffalo and Dawson and be entitled to one senator.
District No. 26 shall consist of the counties of Sherman, Valley, Custer, Loup and Blaine and be entitled to one senator.
District No. 27 shall consist of the counties of Rock, Brown, Keya Paha, Cherry, Sheridan, Box Butte, Dawes and Sioux and be entitled to one senator.
District No. 28 shall consist of the counties of Lincoln, Perkins, Keith, Deuel, Cheyenne, Kimball, Bonanza, Scott's Bluffs, McPherson, Logan, Grant, Hooker and Thomas and be entitled to one senator.

Force of Dynamite.

Dynamite explodes so rapidly that its force is exerted in the direction from which the greatest pressure comes. That is, if the dynamite is placed on the ground, the explosive force is down; if it be hung against a wall its force attacks the wall; if it be hung under an object its force is upward.

Cost of Capital Punishment.

France was on the verge of abolishing capital punishment because of the expense. Yet the salaries of the executioner and his assistants amount to only \$3,800 a year, with fees of \$4 for each execution outside of Paris, and it cost \$300 a year to "stabilize" the guillotine.

London Births.

The average of births in London is 11,000 a month. It is computed that a single month's births of male babies would nearly suffice to replace the men lost by England on the Boer battlefields.