

SQUIRE JOHN

A TALE OF THE CUBAN WAR

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CHAPTER I.

Perhaps a Fool's Errand.

"Stop—we drop off here," sings out Jack Travers, as he thrusts his head from a carriage that has just passed the magnificent Scott monument facing Princes street in the beautiful city of Edinburg.

The Caledonian Jehu draws up to the curb, and his two passengers alight. Jack seems to be a young man; there is nothing at all extraordinary about his appearance as seen on this moonlit night, only that his quick actions would mark him as a fellow of considerable energy.

His companion, on the contrary, promises to attract an abundance of attention in the streets of Edinburg, being a Chinaman, who still wears his queue, and insists on dressing, to some extent, at least, in his national garb.

"Well," says Jack, when the vehicle rolls away from the spot. "here we are, Ah Sin, safely landed in Princes street. You see, we have loads of time; twelve was the hour appointed—that witching hour when churchyards yawn and graves give up their dead." Let us then saunter along Princes street in the direction of Calton Hill; and when we come to the north bridge over the railroad, we cross to High street, from which we can easily reach our destination, the historic Canongate."

If Ah Sin hears he makes no reply, being accustomed to such soliloquies on the part of the remarkable gentleman with whose strange fortunes he has for several years been united.

In adversity as well as prosperity this simple follower of Confucius had proven as faithful as the needle to the Pole. He knows more of Jack's life than any other person on earth, but secrets remain inviolate in his heathen breast.

He walks beside Jack, a trifle to the rear, as though he would not presume. Ah Sin knows his place, and in his eyes this tall young man is a god whom he worships in secret.

Sauntering slowly on, Jack casts an occasional glance aloft, and presently



The face is that of a young girl.

finds that they are exactly under the great clock suspended in air far up the face of the Old Tolbooth.

"We go no further, Ah Sin. This is the camping ground where we are to cool our heels waiting on the pleasure of—well, someone. If we fall to-night, then to-morrow at the same hour—any night this week will do.

I've passed through something of wild life as a cowboy and ranch owner, and finally a miner; but the last state that has fallen to my share is perhaps the most singular of all. Don't fancy it—can't believe I have any right to accept; that's why I am here searching for her. Find her yet, if I have to turn old Edinburg upside down, or follow that rascal over the sea to Havana, whence he came. Will I find what I seek? That's an open question; but since this photograph fell into my hands I must confess to an interest in the hunt second to none in my whole life. Jove! I haven't looked at the divine creature for over an hour."

From a pocket he takes out a notebook, and unfastening the rubber band of this, gently draws out a card photograph.

The face is that of a young girl—a charming face, that could hardly be found outside Scottish borders; for the claims of Scotch lassies as queens of beauty have long been recognized as well founded, and hardly need the inspired pen of a Burns to court the favor of the world's judges.

"Yes," says Jack, almost savagely, "I believe it with all my heart. This is my fate—sweet Jessie Cameron; and could I win her heart, gladly would I forego all those wonderful blessings Fortune has of late seen fit to shower on me. And it is to find her I have come to this northern capital, visiting the Canongate like a thief in the night, and courting not only arrest as a prowler, but what is worse, a cold in the head. Well, here's wishing luck to the most respectable enterprise I ever had anything to do with in the course of my natural life! Who knows but what, if Fortune favors me, it may be the little angel herself I set eyes on next?"

He actually sighs as he carefully replaces the picture in its receptacle, and then casts a quick glance around to discover if anyone has been a witness to his action.

Not a soul appears to be in sight save Ah Sin, and that acute Celestial has his back turned toward his young master, as though he would avoid giving him an awkward feeling—wise old Ah Sin, reader of human nature and pupil of the greatest of diplomats, Li Hung Chang.

Jack has just started to return to his former stamping ground, where he can rest his broad shoulders against the stone stairs leading above, when a strange thing happens—the most remarkable event in his experience so far as the vagaries of chance are concerned.

He hears a sound of wheels, and realizes that a vehicle of some sort is advancing from the direction of High street—a vehicle that is being carried at a rapid pace by the animal in the shafts.

They come spinning on at a joyous pace, and naturally Jack has his eye on the vehicle as it approaches, little dreaming how much of his fate is bound up in that cab.

As though the inmate has become somewhat anxious over his whereabouts, a face appears just as they are passing the lamp-post, a face that is so familiar to Jack that its presence here in old Edinburg almost takes his breath away.

He opens his mouth as if to call out a name; but before it can leave his lips the strangest part of the whole affair comes to pass.

Why it should happen just there in the presence of Jack Travers must be left to those more skillful in solving the problems of Fate. The three sisters spin their threads, and weave them into the warp and woof that go to make up the fabric of human lives with marvelous skill; and, look-

ing back, we sometimes shudder to contemplate what a change must have come over our fortunes if certain events, upon which our plans have been based, had not occurred.

At all events, one of the wheels of the cab takes a singular notion to proceed on its own account, having secured a divorce from the axle and its running mate.

The result naturally is a sudden wreck of the vehicle; the horse takes it upon himself to fling up his heels and might have beaten the cab into kindling wood, as the driver sprawled upon the stones, only that Jack springs out and grasps his bit in a firm hand, effectually quelling the devil that had cropped up in the usually sedate animal.

CHAPTER II.

The House With the Seven Gables.

The driver has been momentarily overwhelmed by the disaster that has come upon him without a second's warning; but he quickly recovers his head, and picking himself up from the



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street, runs to the assistance of the young man.

"I have the beast all right; look you to the passenger—I'm afraid he's been hurt," sings out Jack. Obediently the Jehu turns toward his dilapidated vehicle, and the inmate of the forlorn hansom is assisted out.

Fortune has indeed played him a scurvy trick, for he is badly battered, and doubtless believed the case far worse than it will turn out in the end.

Jack remembers the glimpse he had of the gentleman's face, and is more than curious to ascertain whether it can be possible he knows this unfortunate traveler.

So he bends over him, and discovers he has made no mistake. "Howard Spencer!" he exclaims.

The man, who has been groaning with pain and is evidently considerably bewildered by the blows he received, looks at him vacantly as he mutters:

"That was my name once—heard it somewhere or other. Badly hurt, ain't I? Too plagued mean it comes just when I was about to take a leap into the lap of Fortune. Say, who are you, anyhow?"—to Jack, who bends over.

"Why, Howard, old boy, don't you remember me—Jack Travers?" says the other, cheerfully.

The man on the pavement breaks out into a laugh, that grates on the nerves.

"Tell that to the marines. Jack Travers! Why, he's dead, and I'm his ghost—take my oath on it. Haunted by the name. What's all this? Blood? Then I'm badly hurt, ain't I? Must go on—promised to be there by twelve. A fortune at stake, you know. Show me the house with seven gables at the corner. I tell you I must get there, or all is lost."

The man has an amazing amount of pertinacity about him; at any rate, he reels forward, takes three steps, and falls headlong, so that it is only a

quick movement on the part of Ah Sin that saves him from crashing to the pavement.

"Badly hurt. I will send for help and have the gentleman taken to a hospital," says a police officer who has arrived.

"It would be a wise plan," remarks Jack, for he may have received internal injuries. You see he talks as if he's off his head."

At the same time the words that fell in such broken sentences from the lips of the wounded and dazed traveler seem to have been written on his brain indelibly, as if seared by letters of fire.

By this time numerous heads have appeared at windows along the Canongate, and a small crowd has collected around the broken hansom, which the driver is endeavoring to patch temporarily together, so that he may drag it away to the mews where his quarters are located.

Jack attempts to question the man, whom he has apparently known at some former period of his adventurous past, hoping to discover where he puts up; but the other pays no attention, muttering to himself about his appointment, and swearing horribly every time he moves his wrenched or broken arm.

Turning to the hansom driver, Travers learns that he picked up his fare at the station, the gentleman having come by a delayed train.

Quickly, in response to the policeman's call, an ambulance arrives, showing how systematically everything is done in this beautiful city on the Forth. The unfortunate gentleman is lifted into it, and almost before Jack realizes the fact, the vehicle vanishes down the street.

He turns round; the Jehu is also leaving the spot, with his horse towing the wrecked hansom; the little crowd disperses, heads are drawn in from windows, and almost like magic the Canongate resumes its normal state of midnight silence.

Jack rubs his eyes in bewilderment.

"Come, was all this a dream, or did it really happen? That poor devil had an awful shake-up. Once we were chums, and many times have we slept under the same blanket, until that little affair down at Santa Fe separated us. I never could forgive Howard his treatment of that black-eyed beauty. What brings him across my path again, and, of all times, now? Heigho! what o'clock is it up there—eleven fifty? How the minutes drag! Have I really been asleep and dreaming! Ah Sin, did a vehicle smash to pieces here?" he demands, turning on his faithful follower.

(To be continued.)

POINTER FOR THE IMPECUNIOUS.

Scheme That Enabled Young Man to Keep Up Appearance.

The cashier in the candy store who had married the telegraph operator had just returned from her honeymoon, and was receiving her friends in a new flat.

"Did he get on to the way you crimped your hair, Mamie?" asked the mischievous manicure girl.

"I don't know whether he did or not," replied Mamie, "but I twigged the way he pressed his trousers. When he used to call on me I noticed that they were freshly creased every evening, and I knew he couldn't afford that pace at a tailor's. I noticed that before going to bed he straightened his trousers carefully and put the front edge of them into the jam of the bedroom door. Of course he had to get up some time in the night and change sides. But he told me he had been doing it so many years he was accustomed to it.

"He had to be very careful putting them in, or the door wouldn't shut. But I'll tell you, girls, in the morning he had a crease that had a tailor's job whipped to a suspender button. Men saving up to get married have their little tricks of making a good appearance on little money, just as girls have in making themselves so pretty that men want to marry them."