

# SQUIRE JOHN

## A TALE OF THE CUBAN WAR

A. S. GEORGE BATHURNE

Copyright, 1895, by F. Tennyson Nook. Copyright, 1896, by Street and Smith.

### CHAPTER IV—Continued.

Undoubtedly Spencer knew in some way the full particulars of the matter, and has conceived a gigantic plan whereby he may palm himself off as Jack Travers, marry the girl, come into the property, and strike a big thing.

And he has corresponded with this guardian of Jessie Cameron, this Spaniard or Cuban, who poses as the girl's stepfather, so that the game has all been cleverly arranged.

Jack can look back to an adventure he had recently, when he was waylaid by unknown men, robbed of money and papers and thrown into a deep canyon to die; but in some almost miraculous manner he caught in a treetop and managed to save himself.

Without a doubt Spencer was the cause of this attempt on his life, made before the London lawyer found him.

With this brief but necessary explanation the reader can appreciate Jack's feelings as he enters the room where he is to meet for the first time the girl who is destined to play such an important part in his life.

"Will you shake hands with me, for I am, after all, your kinsman, Miss Jessie," he says, upon meeting her.

She takes the proffered hand, and her eyes, which have been searching his face in such an earnest, beseeching manner ever since his entrance, drop before his ardent gaze.

"As I understand it, after the ceremony that makes us man and wife is completed you pass from my sight forever?"

"Forever," she echoes.

"Unless at some time in the future, should you relent—"

"I shall never do that. You understand, this is merely a business arrangement, and sentiment does not enter into it at all," she interposes.

Jack only smiles quietly. That was what he himself thought, only to find out his mistake; and he has strong hopes that she will also in time.

"Let me change the wording, then—I am not to seek your presence again without some desire on your part to see me. That is cruel. But I give you my word as a man to abide by the provisions; only I would like you to promise me in return that if at some future time you need a friend's

states. I believe we understand each other now."

"I am glad—" and she halts in confusion.

"What?" he asks curiously.

"To have found you such a gentleman. Say no more. Here are the others coming up!"

"Remember your promise," he adds, hastily.

Jack is more than satisfied. He believes he can conscientiously sacrifice himself on the altar of matrimony when the other party to the contract is Jessie Cameron, and deep down in his heart he has strong hopes that it will not be a great while ere a sweet message reaches him, calling him to keep his promise and come to her assistance.

### CHAPTER V.

#### Wedded, Yet No Wife.

The picturesque old gentleman, whom he now knows to be Senor Rafael Roblado, Jessie's Spanish stepfather, comes up, his face beaming with unctuous smiles, and rubbing his hands together after the manner of a man well pleased.

"Well, Senor Jack," exclaims the old hypocrite, believing all the while it is a base counterfeit and not the genuine Travers who has come to keep the contract, "you are of the same mind still—you do not desire to back out?"

"Not I," answers Jack, sturdily.

"The papers which passed between us are binding—there is no need of duplicating them. This fortune will be divided, as agreed upon—one half to each. You understand the arrangement? Now let me introduce you, senor, to these few people who are to witness the ceremony in order to conform to the law, all other provisions of which I have carefully prepared for."

First, there is the minister, a gentleman in the black garb of the Presbyterian church. Only one other gentleman is present, a Cuban evidently, from his name.

There are two females—one of them a Scotch lady, and possibly a neighbor or owner of the house; the second a character upon which Jack is inclined to spend more than a casual glance.

She is only a girl, with a dark face and a deformed figure—a girl who could perhaps only receive bearing attentions from cruel boys in the street.

Her face it is that attracts Jack; one forgets her deformity when looking into that. It is so strong, so changeable in its emotions. Here is, indeed, a character worth studying. In love or hate she would be a formidable antagonist. He wonders what relation she bears to Jessie Cameron, and seeing a soft look come over her face as her eyes fall upon the fair girl, guesses that the daughter of Senor Roblado worships the Scotch lassie, which somehow gives him great relief.

With such a guardian Jessie Cameron need never be quite helpless.

Quick as a flash the dark-faced girl gives him a frowning look as he advances—a look that may mean many things, but which Jack rightly interprets.

Then and there he knows absolutely that he has no need of going further in order to find the author of his strange letter; if she had signed her name Juanta to the scroll he could not be more positive.

At first Jack wonders why she frowns and darts lightning at him out of her sash-black eyes, until he suddenly remembers that undoubtedly the daughter, as well as the father, believes him to be that miserable impostor of a Howard Spencer.

Come, this will never do. He must find a chance to whisper the truth to the senor's daughter and make her his friend.

When one really desires such an opportunity, it is not so difficult to create it as might be supposed; and while some of the others were engaged in a little discussion concerning the particulars of the ceremony, Jack, in a few words tells the girl the truth concerning his identity.

Then her dark face for the first time lights up with a smile, and she gives him a little brown, slender hand.

"Then it is better than I thought. But you will keep your promise just the same? Perhaps circumstances may arise that will make it necessary for you to claim my sister. Who can say? If they should, I am glad for her sake that you are what you appear to be—a gentleman."

"Thank you," he replies. "I have already told her that should she need



"I believe you."

assistance at any time, not to forget me as a distant cousin."

"We are ready, Senor Jack," calls out the genial old gentleman.

Jessie-Cameron no longer blushes, but looks very pale. She will not meet Jack's eye, but stands there at his side with downcast head.

It is a strange marriage—possibly as singular a ceremony as has ever been celebrated within the limits of "Edinbro' town."

Jack's responses are made boldly, while the bride's voice falters, as though she realizes how poorly constructed for a marriage of convenience are the forms of a religious ceremony.

Then it is over.

Jack Travers, bachelor exeunt—enter the benedict, receiving the congratulations of the happy senor.

The next act in the drama promises to be of an altogether different nature, and just as likely as not war will follow love.

He has indulged in the hope that he may have a chance to say good-bye to his wife, and even counts on a last touch of that shapely little hand; but looking round presently, he discovers she has left the room.

A look of disappointment comes over his face, which being noticed by the shrewd eyes of the bluff old gentleman, start him into a fit of laughter, much to Jack's discomfiture, since he knows his secret has been read.

"She has gone, Senor Jack; the bright star has dipped behind the horizon. There was a penalty attached to the contract, you know. Carramba! I am really sorry for you; but women are capricious, and the dear girl may yet relent. At any rate, hope on, Senor Jack."

"Oh, I intend to," declares the new-made Benedict, with a significant smile.

Senor Roblado plucks him by the arm.

"Ah, my dear Jack, when shall we have our final settlement?" he asks.

"When you please—say to-morrow," replies the other, indifferently.

"Good. Where will I find you?"

"I put up at Stevens' Crown hotel,

not more than ten minutes' walk from here, in Princess street."

"I know it well, Senor Jack."

"I have apartments on the third floor above the street. Call about four."

"At four it is; you will be ready? If necessary, we can call in a lawyer."

"Yes, or a doctor, if you desire. I'm the easiest man in the world to get on with, and always ready to accommodate. If there is nothing else to detain me, I shall now say good night."

So Jack bids them all adieu, shaking hands with each in turn, and when he reaches the owner of the black eyes he bends low enough to whisper:

"If danger threatens her I beg of you in heaven's name to let me know."

"I promise, if she will allow," is what he hears in return, and with that he must remain satisfied.

The "buenos noches" of the suave Castilian floats after him like a benison as he leaves the house of the seven gables.

The moon, now having climbed to a higher point in the blue arch, looks down benignly upon the scene as Jack, having struck a wax vesta, applies the fire to his weed and stalks along in the direction of High street, followed by his shadow, Ah Sin.

The recollection of Jessie Cameron haunts him as might the sweet perfume of a flower after it has been lost to sight.

His wife! Will he ever get used to the startling fact? That lovely girl belong to him by reason of a legal chain! He heaves a sigh as he remembers his word of honor and the slender chances of their meeting again.

Jack's is a buoyant nature. Nothing daunts him, and he has a deep-rooted conviction that this is all but a beginning to an end.

"Some day," he mutters, as he sits in his room at the Crown hotel, looking up at the Castle, "who knows but what I may find that same sweet face smiling at the other side of my breakfast table? I have faith to believe. And now to sleep, perchance to dream it has all come out like the novels do."

(To be continued.)

### WAS BOUND TO FIND OUT.

Incident Proves Women Are Not the Only Curious Creatures.

We had been married just a month and my inquiries as to all his doings during the day had begun to draw forth remarks about woman's proverbial curiosity, when, one evening after tea was on the table, I picked up the evening paper and found a recipe for "prune whip," which I cut out and laid away for future use.

After the head of the house had changed his coat, donned his slippers, eaten and made himself comfortable, he asked, "What did you cut out of my paper?"

"Oh, something that would not be at all proper for you to read," I replied.

"Well, I guess I'll read what I choose. Please get it."

I refused, and things grew uncomfortable, and when I returned from the kitchen I found an empty chair, empty slippers and a discarded paper. About an hour after the head of the house returned and with a particularly jubilant air opened a brand new newspaper. He scanned column after column eagerly until he found a recipe for "prune whip." Now when the head of the house becomes any way domineering I feed him on "prune whip."—Elizabeth Ogilvie in Good Housekeeping.

### Senator Scott's Last Campaign.

Senator Scott of West Virginia, says that this is his last national campaign. With the death of Frederick S. Gibbs and Henry C. Payne he has lost all of his old associates in national committee work, and he feels that it is time for him to step aside and let younger men take up the party burden.



"Forever," she echoes.

help you will call upon Jack Travers. Can you—will you make me that promise?"

"There is no reason I should refuse, since I can appreciate your motive. Yes, I promise you that Cousin Jack," she replies, looking directly into his eyes with her clear grey orbs.

"Let's shake hands on it—that's the way they ratify bargains in the