

# DR. JACK'S WIFE

By ST. GEORGE RATHBORNE

Author of "Dr. Jack," "Captain Tom," "Miss Caprice," Etc., Etc.

(Continued from last week.)

THIS does not bother Jack. He is more vitally concerned regarding a train just now.

So he whips the two small leather trunks from the boot of the vehicle with as much ease as though they were handbags.

By this time Larry is on the pavement with Kirke beside him, and Avis appears. As Doctor Jack shoulders a portmanteau, Larry makes for the other, but finds the Texan ahead.

"Look out for Doctor Jack's wife. I'll take care of this," says Kirke, quietly.

Leaving the deserted hall, the odd appearance which they undoubtedly present, but business allows little regard for looks, and Doctor Jack snaps his fingers at such things as this.

Straight to where they see some official in the uniform of the railroad company they proceed, and there Jack drops his burden.

"Are we too late for the eastern train?" he asks.

"Unfortunately, yes. It left fifteen minutes ago," is the discouraging reply, but Doctor Jack has prepared himself for this emergency.

"It is of the utmost importance that I should overtake that train, sir."

"It is our last express, sir, a flyer."

"Never mind. I will engage a special."

"An expensive business, my dear sir."

"Hang expense, man. Direct me as to what I shall do."

CHAPTER XXV.

The official takes another look at Doctor Jack and makes up his mind that this man is fully able to stand the racket. Besides, he discovers something familiar about the other.

"I have met you before, my dear sir."

"Very likely, I have traveled much."

The official is eyeing him steadily.

"Were you in Spain two years ago?"

"Yes."

"Ah! I am proud to meet you, Doctor Jack. I won a wager on your success at that bull fight."

"So did I," remarks the doctor, with a glance in the direction of his wife.

"And any favor I can do, Doctor Jack, I will be only too glad of the opportunity."

"Then see about the special as quickly as you can, sir. I have a tremendous amount of interest in overtaking that train."

"You will be on board, Doctor Jack, long before it crosses the Rockies, I give you my word; but it may cost you half a thousand dollars."

"A mere bagatelle, sir. If I fail to reach New York by noon on November the fourth, it will probably cost me a million dollars."

The official purses up his lips as if to whistle, but emits no sound.

"A pretty close shave even if you are on time. If it were any one else than Doctor Jack I'd say it could be done."

"I mean to do my best, and, as a general thing I have managed to succeed in the past. This special, sir—"

"I have telegraphed already for the man you must see, and here he comes. An hour won't make much difference. You will have only an engine and sled."

The dispatcher will make out your schedule and give it to the conductor. Thus you will know just at what point you can overtake the eastern flyer."

This is very soothing to Doctor Jack, who begins to see the wrinkles being smoothed out of the rough road in front. It is soon deeply engaged in conversation with the gentleman who comes up. Every one seems to take a decided interest in him when they hear who he is. Sometimes it pays to be famous.

The arrangements are speedily made, and our little party feel their spirits rise as they contemplate a solution of the problem that has so recently overshadowed them.

What does an hour count, when with a special they can rush over the rails like lightning. It is astonishing what money can be made to do in this world at any rate, it indicates in the wheel and makes traveling a pleasure.

Doctor Jack consults his watch as they arise from the lunch which has engaged their attention in the restaurant, more to pass the time away than because they were hungry.

"The hour is up," he remarks.

"Your train is ready, Doctor Jack," says the official to whom he has been turned over.

"Good!"

The small amount of luggage is put aboard, and presently they enter the Pullman sleeper which is to be their quarters until the regular train is overhauled.

It is not an unusual thing for a special to be sent flying over the rails, and, according to the rules of the road, everything gives way to such a wizard traveler.

The start is made.

Once they clear the yards their speed increases, and presently they rattle along in a way that causes Kirke Smith some anxiety, for the Texan, quite at home on the wisest horse one could find, is not much of a railroad traveler, and holds his breath when he finds himself being whirled over some level stretch, or down a slight declivity at the speed of a mile a minute.

And this is only a beginning.

When the locomotive gets warmed to the work, more astonishing figures will be shown.

As for Larry, this pleases him immensely. He lolls in a chair in the smoking compartment, and uses up numerous packages of cigarettes—a luxury he has been deprived of for some time, owing to the haste of their departure from Valparaiso. The others now understand the meaning of Larry's wonderful smile so child-like and bland, when he came in with bulging pockets, while they were at lunch. He had bought out the entire stock of the dealer in the station, resolved not to be left in the grand hustle across the Continent.

Jack has secured pillows from the porter of the car, and has a lower berth made up for Avis, who, feeling tired, will lie down for a time.

As for himself, he enters into conversation with the conductor, a bright, agreeable fellow, and picks up a number of facts connected with the route across the plains, some of which may prove valuable to him.

## AT HALF PAST.

Sometimes we are greeted in the morning by flags at half-past for some prominent official who yesterday was apparently in perfect health. When we inquire the ailment by which he was stricken it is not uncommon to be told "acute indigestion" or "stomach trouble."

It is time people learned that indigestion or any form of "stomach trouble" is not a thing to trifle with. The result may not be fatal, but there can be no condition of diseased stomach which does not carry with it physical loss and weakness.

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CHAPTER XXVI.

Once more their speed is as swift as the wind that whistles down from the defiles of the mountains.

The time lost will soon be made up, for the express train ahead cannot begin to annihilate space as they do, so there is a constant gaining on their part.

It is possible to figure out a victory again, unless their enemies hatch up some new form of devilry to baffie them, which Jack looks out for.

The red lantern of warning was only placed on the track to alarm those on board the special simply because Doctor Jack's wife was present. Only for this fact the special would have plunged into deep water to strike a broken rail, when going at the rate of a mile a minute, means even more than death—annihilation.

Avis sleeps no more.

She is too thoroughly interested in the events going on around her, for what concerns Jack interests her. She listens and even offers suggestions at times, which more than once appear to be timely, and are readily seized upon by Jack.

All of them note the passage of time now, and figure on results. When the special is halted once at a station for new orders, Jack takes advantage of the short delay to ask questions, learning that the Rocky Mountain Overland Flyer express passed this point just twenty-five minutes before, being an hour and ten minutes late.

This is cause for congratulation, since they have reduced the lead thus far more than half, and it begins to look as though before a great while their end will be reached.

Several times something occurs to delay them, but Doctor Jack shows no signs of despair. He feels that his clutch is a long and sure one—victory must come.

When morning arrives it finds them in a wild part of the mountains. They have left the green valleys behind. On either side from the walls of great canons through which defies the train dashes.

So close are they upon the heels of the regular now that the engineer is compelled to keep a sharp lookout lest he run by accident into what has happened.

When the flyer stops at the next station they will be close behind, and possibly able to transfer.

Jack exults in their speed.

"Would that we could keep this up until New York is reached. There would be no question, but not being on time," he laments, as the car swings like a pendulum while tearing around sudden curves, until even Avis utters a low cry, fearful that it is going over, which, of course, is not the case.

Then a long whistle announces that they are drawing near a station. The conductor directs their attention to smoke hovering above in the canon, which he says was left by the locomotive drawing the regular train.

Heads are thrust from the car windows as they issue from the mountains—the station is half a mile beyond, with a good many cars around it. A freight has stopped upon a siding to let the regular passenger pass—but their eyes are seeking something else.

"She's there!" exclaims Larry, and all of them see a line of passenger coaches beside the station.

"Confusion, no; the engine heads this way," cries Kirke Smith.

"You're wrong, comrade. That is the locomotive of the freight just peeping out beyond the last Pullman," puts in Doctor Jack, whose sight is better than that of either companion.

Avis seconds him, and all feel like cheering as they run down the line and overtake the Overland Flyer, which has remained at the station five minutes under orders to await the arrival of the special.

There are some passengers on board who note the coming of the special with anything but pleasure. Indeed, the dearest chagrin would be more apt to describe their feelings, since they have endeavored every dishonorable means possible to keep Doctor Jack from traveling east on the New York by November fourth.

People, and the more they would have given up in despair when these difficulties arose like insurmountable barriers before them; but we have seen how one man succeeded in riding over the worst and wins his Waterloo here at the station.

There are some who come to a stop, and a transfer is soon made. This time they do not have a car to themselves, but there is plenty of room. Doctor Jack will not be crowded, and, if necessary, he would have engaged the sleeper which on the special engine drew to take them on to Ogden and Denver.

Once more, forward.

He knows he is now on board the same train as his foes. Milord and Colonel Garcia are in the Pullman with them. The latter looks out of the window when our party passes, but the unabashed Englishman, with a very glass in his left optic, eyes the questioningly, much to Larry's unbounded admiration, for he is able to pick up an idea or so here.

Jack has time to think matters over. He believes his enemies, who have combined against him, will not give up the ship as long as he is west of New York, and he has time to think of the stake to give up until the last pop is knocked away. The Chilians are banded by their league to fight for the possession of the packet, or at least to keep Doctor Jack out of New York until the day which he has set upon reaching the metropolis.

Larry's alarm increases. Now he draws his revolver, and hurries to the end of the platform. Once he starts in that direction, but it turns out to be a couple of trainmen conversing.

A man is under the cars with a light and a hammer, testing the wheels, for with these fast trains it is necessary to take every possible precaution in order to prevent accidents.

Larry's coolness vanishes. He even drops his beloved cigarette, such is his anxiety to discover what has become of his friend. While he thus prances about, not daring to wander far from the train, he leaves his seat, and in a minute the signal comes that the track is clear. He catches sight of a moving figure.

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