

LOOK AT YOUR LABEL.

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BEAUTIFUL JIM.

By JOHN STRANGE WINTER.

CHAPTER XIV.

IT IS A TERRIBLE DREAM. To follow me through a very close description of bricks and mortar, of stairways and rooms, of doorways and windows; but it is really necessary that they should know something of the plan upon which the mess-rooms and officers' quarters at Walsbury were arranged.

It was not a barracks intended for the accommodation of a regiment, but only for a detachment of six companies, and the quarters were arranged in a long row of buildings. On the left of the principal entrance gate stood the larger of two blocks of buildings—this contained the guard room and cells, the mess rooms, and the married and sergeants' quarters, on the right was a second block, which contained on the ground floor the orderly room and office, the mess-rooms, and some other rooms used either for married officers' quarters or as quarters for stall officers, such as the doctor or paymaster, if one happened to be needed. On the floor above were seven good sized rooms and all the officers' servants on that story.

This kitchen overlooked the road, and was of irregular shape, owing to the fact that the well of the staircase was taken out of it. On the side of it furthest from the entrance gate was an empty room, and on the other were the two rooms usually appropriated to the officer commanding the detachment, though, in this case, Owen had not troubled to furnish both rooms, and had only brought a portion of his goods and chattels from headquarters. Thus the room on either side of the kitchen was empty, while on the other side of the corridor which cut that floor of the building in halves were the quarters occupied by the doctor—who preferred to be on the upper story—Beautiful Jim, Tommy Earle and young Mansers.

This Beautiful Jim's room was exactly opposite to the kitchen, and it happened that one lonely evening at the beginning of May, after he had spent an hour with a pipe and the pleasure of dreaming about his sweet Nancy Earle, he was just beginning to dress when the door opened, and in came Capt. Owen, who came unceremoniously and walked in.

That something serious had happened to disturb Owen, Jim saw at once by the unusual cloud upon his face, which, which was to him the dearest in the whole regiment.

"Halloo old man, what's up?" he demanded.

It was still chilly enough, in spite of the lovely spring weather, for all the officers to have their fires blazing half way up their chimneys, and Owen, with the usual freedom of barracks life, began to tell him what was the matter by possessing himself of the chair and smoking vigorously the big lungs of coal.

"What on earth is it?" Jim asked, his curiosity now thoroughly aroused; for Owen was a man of quite unusually equable temper, and he had purposely spoken to her of Owen more than once, and said he had flushed up a little at the mention of his name, and a certain dewy tenderness had come into his eyes, a tenderness which he had never seen in any other man.

"Well, it was a pity, and Jim wished it the very bottom of his heart that it had been otherwise, but still, if Nell did not see it in that light it was no use his thinking any more about it.

And by their guests went off to their rooms, Owen going into Jim's for a last pipe instead of turning to the left towards his own. And for an hour or so they sat together smoking and chatting, and Jim told his friend his suspicions about Tommy's desertion, but his extreme satisfaction, it need hardly be said.

"And by the bye, Owen, you left the young fool's ring with me. I'll give it to you. Now, what the deuce can Leader have done with my keys? Pon my soul, Leader's infernal tidiness is the very curse of my existence. I don't know where he has put them."

"Never mind, old chap, you can give it to me to-morrow," answered Owen, who was getting tired. "Good-night, old fellow."

"Good-night, old chap," returned Jim, cheerily.

It is safe to say that he was not five minutes in throwing off his clothes and tumbling into bed, and in less than a minute after that he was sound asleep and dreaming—dreaming that he had committed some terrible misdemeanor, and that Owen—old Owen, his own special champion—ended with, "Consider yourself under close arrest. Go to your room at once, and I will send for your sword."

The dream was so real that he awoke trembling from head to foot, to find the fire still blazing cheerfully, and the sound of footsteps going along the corridor outside.

"Gad, what rot a fellow can dream," he said, and turning over fell asleep once more.

had been a better educated woman; but it has served its turn, and it seems to me that anything is justifiable to save a young fool from coming such a cropper as that.

"That's so," murmured Jim, turning the ring over, and thinking what she would say if she knew about it.

It was a valuable and very beautiful ring, the finest one of many possessed by the object of Owen's righteous indignation. In the center was a large sapphire of great price, on which was engraved the crest and motto of the Earles. Surrounding this were diamonds of much beauty, which flashed and sparkled as the freight fell upon them.

"Have you seen him?" Jim asked at last, looking up from the ring.

"No, I went into his room, but he has not come back from Blankhampton yet; he is due to-night, though," Owen answered. "I think if he makes any fuss about the matter I had better write to the colonel and tell him about it, and get him to send one of the other fellows here and let the young ass go back to the regiment. What do you think?"

"I think he'll get into the devil's own mischief wherever he is," Jim replied, his faith in Tommy having been shattered long before.

"Perhaps; still there are plenty of ladies in Blankhampton to keep him out of harm's way, and if he were to go and get engaged to one of the Leslie girls, her father would soon choke him off, or if he wouldn't be choked off, old Earle couldn't possibly object to anything in the engagement, but his son's youth and general idleness, I suppose I must be off to dress, it only wants ten minutes to midnight—then, without waiting for a reply, Owen went out, shutting the door with a bang, and leaving Beautiful Jim with Tommy Earle's ring still in his hand.

He had a sort of guess, next night that evening, for in addition to the three officers of the Blankshire regiment and the doctor, who mess with them, they had a young fellow staying a mile or two away who was not of the millonaire type, common to the Walsbury neighborhood, the officer in charge of the commissariat department, the clergyman who acted as chaplain, and the Roman Catholic priest of the district.

Thus it was quite a dinner party; an although Beautiful Jim looked once or twice across the table at Owen to see whether he had got over his annoyance, he very soon entered into a discussion of a more interesting subject than Tommy's delinquencies, with his neighbor, the priest, and speedily forgot all about the matter.

Nor did he remember it till Tommy himself came on to the scene some days later, apparently utterly tired out with the short journey from Blankhampton where he had been spending a two days leave. It struck him more than once that the lad looked very white and fagged, and he put it down to his having tired to cram too much into his few hours he had to spend in the old city.

"Any news from Blankhampton, Tom?" he inquired, civilly.

"None in particular," returned Tommy then got up and moved away as if he had heard enough on the subject of Blankhampton, and did not want to be questioned about it.

"Poor lad," said Beautiful Jim to himself, "he has evidently had an awakening to the real value of the charms and fascinations at the Duck's Tail. What a good thing for him! Poor old Owen will find the business easier to manage than he thought."

He looked across the room at his friend and found his thoughts running away to his little cousin, Nell Marchmont. "Jim had never seen a woman and Nell had never said a word either—yet he knew that Owen had spent the greater part of his leave in London, and guessed that he had tried his fate and that Nell had said no, and he had purposely spoken to her of Owen more than once, and said he had flushed up a little at the mention of his name, and a certain dewy tenderness had come into his eyes, a tenderness which he had never seen in any other man."

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Jim sat bolt upright in his cot. "Capt. Owen dead! Good God! Leader, is it true, or are you mad, or am I dreaming?"

"That's enough," returned Leader, "Jones went to call him ten minutes ago and found him dead and still."

By this time Jim was out of his cot, and getting rapidly into the first clothes that came to hand, and in less than a minute from the time he realized the information which Leader had brought him he was across the corridor and in Owen's room.

But up to that moment he had scarcely believed that it was quite as Leader had said, that Owen was really dead. Still there was no mistaking the evidence of his own eyes, for poor Owen was lying just as they found him half on the floor and half on the cot, his hands still clutching the bed clothes, which were stained darkly and deeply by a great pool of blood which had coozed from a frightful gash at the base of his head, and in less than a minute "My God!" gasped Jim, staggering back.

"Great heavens! what an awful thing!" he exclaimed. "Here, Jim, help me to lift him over and see if anything can be done." Then, as they simultaneously touched him, he shook his head. "Alas, poor chap—it's no use—he's been dead for hours."

"Ay, it was true enough; there could be no mistaking the ashen gray face, the closed lips, the blank stare of the dimmed eyes, even to the most inexperienced tender of the room; and besides, as they had found him on the cot, with knees bent and hands stiffly clutching at nothing. Oh! awful, awful sight!"

"The best friend I ever had in my life," cried poor Jim Beresford, the big tears chasing one another down his cheeks.

He was so blinded by his grief that he never noticed that Tommy Earle had come in and was standing looking with horror stamped on every feature, at the awful thing on the bed, all that was left of what twelve hours before had been a living, breathing, gallant man of honor.

"What did it?" the lad asked, speaking the words with his lips rather than shaking them.

It was Owen's servant, Jones, who answered the question.

"You'd better not touch anything until the police come," said the doctor, who had kept his senses about him better than most people would have done under the circumstances. They will be here in a few minutes now. Mr. Beresford, I should advise you to have the room cleared and a guard mounted over the door. It is no use our stopping here now—we can do nothing."

Thus reminded that he was now the officer commanding the detachment, Jim gave orders to have the room cleared, and having locked the door, set a double guard upon it. Then he went back to his room and dressed himself, being already in his uniform, by the time the police arrived from the town, half a mile away.

And although the entire barracks seemed to be in a state of commotion, Jim was not disturbed by the awful deed, Beautiful Jim found himself with plenty of work on his hands. First he had to be with the police while they made a close examination of the room and of the dead man, together with the army surgeon and a civilian doctor, who had come up with them from the town.

"Ere's the thing that did it," said one of the men, suddenly stooping to pick something off the floor.

The others all pressed forward to see what it was, Beautiful Jim among them; the man held in his hand an iron dumb-bell of about seven pounds weight, which Jim at once recognized as one of his own.

"That's mine," he exclaimed, instantly. The inspector of police looked up sharply.

"You'd better say nothing, sir; anything you now say is liable to be used in evidence against you."

"Against me?" repeated Beautiful Jim, staring at the man as if he were mad, or drunk, or both. "Why, you don't mean to say that you suspect me of murdering the best friend I have in the world?"

"Be quiet, old fellow," put in the doctor, soothingly. "Of course, the inspector does not suspect you, except as a suspect in all that gets at the truth. He only warned you to say nothing that might lead to suspicions being thrown upon you. But, inspector, I suppose there would be no harm in my asking Mr. Beresford how the dumb bell came to be here?"

"Not the least, sir."

"I am sure there cannot be," said Jim, rather haughtily, "nor in anything I may say. I wish my conscience was as clear as a bell, and I have lifted a finger against that dear old chap. As to the dumb bells, that is simple enough. I lent mine to him weeks ago, for I've never been able to use them since I broke my collar bone last year. Capt. Owen's own are ten pounds weight, and he fancied they did him more harm than good, so he used mine for some time before we left Blankhampton."

"I can answer for that," put in Jones, who had been admitted during the examination; "and there's the other by the door there. My master always had them stand there, close by where his bath was."

There was no doubt whatever that the dumb bell in the policeman's hand was the weapon with which the foul deed had been done, for it was dabbled with blood, to which a good many short dark hairs were clinging.

Then the inspector, after declaring that they could do nothing further at present, looked and sealed the door and went away, leaving the sentries still on guard in the courtyard.

And as I said, Beautiful Jim had once

to do—send telegrams off to headquarters, and to various members of Owen's family, and a host of people who looked upon all parts to learn the details of the terrible event—to carry on the work of the entire detachment and make all manner of arrangements in connection with the funeral and funeral of the man who had happily never fallen in his way before. It was an awful time for them all, the men stood about the barracks yard in groups and the few women clustered round the door, and talked and talked it over until there was positively no light left in which they had not looked at it.

The three officers, with such guests as had gathered about them, discussed the matter in the ante-room in much the same way, and over and over again: "Who could have done it?" and "What motive could anybody have had to murder the dear old chap, who was everybody's friend, and had never been known to have an enemy in the world?"

"And he was hit from behind," Beautiful Jim wound up, bitterly, after the question had been repeated for about the fiftieth time. "That's the hardest rub of the whole thing, and Owen was straight-forward and honest himself, should have been hit from behind. But it will all come out—mark my words, it will all come out yet—the hound who did it!"

"Gad, it's a mystery, my grant it," said the chaplain, solemnly; "and rest assured, Mr. Beresford, that if he does not see fit to grant it in this world, the murderer will meet with his reward in the next. Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

Beautiful Jim took off his cap and bared his curly head. "Amen," he said, solemnly, and one by one every man in the room bowed his head, and the benediction came to young Earle, who, with the slightest perceptible hesitation, took off his cap also, with a hand that shook so violently that he scarce could hold it.

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"I couldn't touch it," he said.

"I don't suppose any of us did it," the doctor returned. "I know I feel myself as if I should be able to touch food for a month. But you're such a youngster, you'll be giving way altogether if you don't eat something. Here, I'm going to bring you a glass of strong brandy and water, cold, and get him a basin of good soup or beef tea as soon as possible."

The man departed, and in an incredibly short time appeared with the beef tea and brandy, whereupon the doctor just stood over the lad and insisted on seeing him dispose of both.

Of Owen's death to fit Doctors in general are not accustomed to stand much nonsense for a mere matter of disinclination, and it was useless for Tommy to protest that he was not hungry, that he couldn't swallow a morsel, that the brandy would be safe to go to his head, and that he would make an utter and complete fool of himself in consequence.

"Stuff and nonsense! Drink it off at once without any argument," said the doctor, who had a good deal of the old-fashioned "put it down your throat" way of talking, and he would not be deterred from his course by the young man's protests.

"I'll drink it," said Tommy, who had the doctor's bidding.

CHAPTER XVI.

Private Edward Leader, batman to Mr. James Beresford, of the Blankshire regiment, sat in the kitchen of his master's quarters looking and feeling that a more miserable devil than himself did not exist upon the face of the whole earth that day.

He was not a young man who had enjoyed the advantages of a liberal education; in fact, he could just read and write, and he was a very good hand at his sweetheart's, and to make out the addresses on his master's letters, but certainly not sufficiently well to trouble to make himself acquainted with the contents of the epistles which came to him sent off by Mr. Beresford. Had he been a better educated young man he might have known and felt the wisdom of a certain very sensible remark which he had once heard in the mouth of one of the epistles which came to him sent off by Mr. Beresford.

"The man who reads a letter for another is a traitor," said the old man, who had been a soldier for many years, and he had learned the wisdom of a certain very sensible remark which he had once heard in the mouth of one of the epistles which came to him sent off by Mr. Beresford.

Now that the mischief was done and the effect of his babbling tongue and passion beyond his control, he saw but plainly the extraordinary value of silence; but it was too late—the mischief was done—the word had escaped his tongue—the arrow had sped from the bow, and its point was in the heart of the man who should let it fly—no, not even though it should lodge in the very heart of the one who had all the wide world least deserved it.

For, during the excitement of that fatal day on which Capt. Owen was found still and stark in his own quarters, done to the death by the dastardly hand of a murderer, Leader had, in talking over the events of the previous night with his comrades, let slip that his master and Capt. Owen had had a shindy in Mr. Beresford's quarters immediately before dinner.

"Some at must have appeared to put the captain out," said Leader, shaking his head, "for in general his such a quiet sort—ay, dear, yes, I mean—pon my life, it's hard to believe that 's really gone."

"And they 'ad a row?" asked one of the bystanders.

"Yes; of course, you know, I wasn't there in the room, but the captain, 's come up the stairs and banged into my master's room—and then I 'eard 'igh words, and at last the captain 'eard again and into his own room."

"But you don't mean to say, Leader, exclaimed another listener, "that you think Mr. Beresford did it?"

"Course not, but it looks rath that they should 'ave 'igh words that very night," returned Leader, stubbornly.

Naturally, after this, it did not take very long for a rumor to spread through out the barracks, that Leader had good reason to believe that Mr. Beresford was the murderer of Capt. Owen; and when the London detective, who came down from Scotland Yard to watch the case for the Owen family, appeared on the scene, it was the first impression he received

say the matter about which Owen came to you could not in any way be connected with the after events of the day."

There was a moment's silence, but then Beautiful Jim looked up at his commanding officer, who, by his life, had never called him Jim in all his life before.

"I'm very glad that you believe in me, colonel," he said, simply, "because it puts new heart into me; but I do hope that, while these fools of detectives are trying to fasten it on me, they won't let the real man slip through their fingers. I've an idea that it will all come out—dim and confused sort of feeling that I ought to be able to put my finger on the villain, and yet, though I've been thinking and thinking night and day ever since it happened, I can't hit it."

"It will come out, never fear," said the colonel; "and meantime, your great object must be to prove your own innocence. Better far that the poor fellow should go unavenged altogether, so far as this world is concerned, than that the wrong man should suffer for it. I'm sure Owen himself would be the very first to say so, more especially as they have picked out you as the wrong man."

"Colonel," said Jim, solemnly, "he was the best and truest friend I ever had in my life, and, speaking slowly and clearly, 'I give you my word that I would sooner suffer the worst myself, if it would insure the murderer being brought to justice, than that his cruel death should go unpunished and unavenged.'"

"Hush!" said the older man, imperatively, "you must never say what you say, unless you are sure of the facts. The issues of life and death and justice lie in higher hands than yours. Vengeance is mine. I will repay, saith the Lord," and as the words which the chaplain had used on the previous day for upon his ears the wrong man died out of Jim's resolute face, and he let his hands fall to his side.

"You are right, colonel," he said, humbly. "I'm unthinking and unreserved altogether, but I don't mean to say anything. Don't stay here any longer, sir; you'll do me more good by looking after my interests outside."

TO BE CONTINUED.

STEVENSON'S WEIRD LIFE.

A Courtship, Divorce and Marriage Struggle. An exciting story. By Robert Louis Stevenson, the novelist, who is soon expected here from his unsuccessful crisis for health among the South Sea Islands, has been discussed a great deal by the critics, but many facts in regard to his personal history have never been published. Stevenson first came here about eight years ago to get married. His bride he had met in France when she was the wife of a Californian. When Stevenson was taking that trip that bore fruit in his book, "An Island Voyage," he met in Paris Mrs. Samuel Osborne, of San Francisco. She came of Dutch parentage, her maiden name being Van der Graaf, but she was married young to Samuel Osborne, who was private secretary to Senator Stanford and somewhat of a protégé of the railroad millionaire. She was a brilliant brunette with the vivid coloring and many of the tastes of a gypsy. Her husband had gone with her on a vacation, but he had been recalled on business, and she was starting with friends in the French capital. She and Stevenson fell in love at first sight. Their literary and personal tastes ran in the same channels, and the author spent much time in her company.

When she left for home it was understood that she was to get a divorce from her husband by means of the easy process of the Californian courts, and this was accomplished. Stevenson would come out to the Golden State and make her his wife. Everything was carried out according to this program. When Sam Osborne was told of the desire of his wife he made no objection, but, like a model American husband, gave his wife all the aid in his power, and the result was that she obtained her freedom. Then the tidings were sent to the distant lover, and he prepared to come "out to the West" for his inamorata.

Original in everything, Stevenson determined to make this trip in novel fashion. So he engaged passage in the steerage of one of the previous class lines with the design of writing up his experiences. He secured plenty of material, for the voyage was rough and he had a sorry time among the emigrants, who were herded together like sheep. This experience, however, didn't cure him, as he took passage in an emigrant car and crossed the plains in that fashion. This was worse than the steerage trip, as the people were packed closer, and the journey, owing to the many delays and slow time, consumed two weeks.

When Stevenson reached San Francisco he was a sorry object. He had a hacking cough, spat blood, and had contracted a troublesome fever from his hearing with other emigrants. Food and air and poor food had reduced his strength, and he was a semi-invalid. He was received with open arms. As such as he was cleaned up by a series of sulphur baths and a trifle recovered from the fatigue of the long journey the fevering was held. The remarkable feature of it was that Sam Osborne was present and gave away the bride, his ex-wife, with the heartiness of manner that might have been expected in the most distinguished person, while he capped the climax of his performances by introducing to the bride and groom a handsome and stylishly dressed young woman who his affianced wife.

The marriage feast was very gay, and after it was over Stevenson went with his bride to a deserted mining camp, Howell Mountain, in Napa county, to recuperate his health. There he wrote the book which he called "The Silverado Squatters." He was then financially reduced and he had no reputation in this country. His book, however, and finally The Century editors published it in several instalments. It is a curious fact that Osborne, to whose good nature Stevenson was indebted for his wife, disappeared shortly after his second marriage. He dropped out of the world, and his old haunts were never again visited, and no one ever learned any trace of him. What the cause was is also a mystery. The dashing young woman whom he wedded remained here for several months after Sam deserted her, when she, too, packed up her belongings and departed as suddenly and as mysteriously as her spouse. To this day neither of them has ever been seen or heard of by their old friends.

Here's a romance from real life, with just one word of fiction.

Getting around. "Stevie," a bride told that he meant to get when v. Later after, at the house, where he was willing to eat, he was the straight sort of look, out."

Aunt Jane, I'm "Are you?" "Yes, I am so doughnut."

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Getting around. "Stevie," a bride told that he meant to get when v. Later after, at the house, where he was willing to eat, he was the straight sort of look, out."

Aunt Jane, I'm "Are you?" "Yes, I am so doughnut."

A little girl who noise in the early mother's room was and soon after a of which she was v. out to her.

This was the "at Snatching up her ging it tightly in bing eyes, she sobbed ms."

"I wouldn't "Judy done!"

Bennie Davis, E ing the recent ed the High School a good stand on considering that l of age. This