

Webster—Man's Man

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CHAPTER XIV—Continued.

Don Juan's Iberian blood thrilled; he cast about for a weapon in this emergency, and his glance rested on the body of the dead officer beside the gate. To possess himself of the latter's heavy "cut-and-thrust" sword was the work of seconds, and with a royal good will Don Juan launched himself into the heart of the scrimmage. He had a hazy impression that he was striking and stabbing, that others were striking and stabbing at him, that men crowded and breathed and pressed and swore and grunted around him, that the fighting-room was no better than it might have been, but was rapidly improving. Then the gory fog lifted, and Doctor Pacheco had Don Juan by the hand; they stood together in the arsenal entrance, and the little Doctor was explaining to the war-mad Don Juan that all was over in so far as the arsenal was concerned—the survivors of the garrison having surrendered—that now, having the opportunity, he, Doctor Pacheco, desired to thank Don Juan Cafetero for his life. Don Juan looked at him amazedly, for he hadn't the slightest idea what the Doctor was talking about. He spat, gazed around at the litter of corpses on the arsenal lawn, and nodded his red head approvingly.

In an incredibly short space of time the news that the arsenal had been captured and that Sarros was besieged in the palace spread through the city. The sight of the red banner of revolution floating over the arsenal for the first time in fifteen years brought hundreds of willing recruits to the rebel ranks, as Ricardo Ruy had anticipated; these were quickly supplied with arms and ammunition; by ten o'clock a battalion had been formed and sent off, together with the machine gun company, to connect with the San Bruno contingent advancing from the south to turn the flank of the government troops, while the equipping of an additional battalion proceeded within the arsenal. As fast as the new levies were armed, they were hurried off to re-enforce the handful of white men who had, after clearing the arsenal, advanced on the palace and now, with machine guns from the arsenal commanding all avenues of escape from the trap wherein Sarros found himself, were calmly awaiting developments, merely keeping an eye open for snipers.

Thus the forenoon passed away. By one o'clock Don Juan Cafetero—who in the absence of close-range fighting had elected himself ordnance sergeant—passed out the last rifle and ammunition. He was red with slaughter, slippery with gun-grease, dripping with perspiration, and filthy with dust and dirt. "Bogorra," he declared, "a coward bottle of beer would go fine now." Then, recalling his limitations, he sighed and put the thought from him. It revived in him, however, for the first time since he had left the steamer, a memory of John Stuart Webster, and his promise to the latter to report on the progress of the war. So Don Juan sought Doctor Pacheco in his headquarters and learned that a signal-man, heliographing from the roof of the arsenal, had been in communication with General Ruy, who reported the situation well in hand, with no doubt of an overwhelming victory before the day should be over. This and sundry other bits of information Don Juan gleaned and then deserted the Sobrantean revolutionary army quite as casually as he had joined it, to make his precarious way down the Calle San Rosario to the bay.

CHAPTER XV.

Throughout the forenoon Webster and Dolores, from the deck of the steamer, watched the city. By ten o'clock the sounds of battle had swelled to a deeper, steeper roar, and refugees arriving brought various and fragmentary stories of the fighting. From this hodge-podge of misinformation, however, Webster decided that Ricardo's troops were forcing the issue with vim and determination, and since the most furious fighting was now well in toward the heart of the city, it seemed reasonable to presume the struggle was for possession of the arsenal and palace.

At noon the deep din of conflict began to slacken; by one o'clock it had died considerably, and at two o'clock Webster, gazing anxiously cityward, observed Leber's launch coming rapidly out from shore. At the wheel stood Don Juan Cafetero; as the launch shot in under the vessel's side he looked up, searching for Webster's face among the curious throng that lined the rail.

"Who has won?" a voice called, and another, evidently a humorist and a shrewd judge of human nature, replied: "Why ask foolish questions? The rebels, of course. They fellows Irish and the Irish are born rebels. Look at the scoundrel. He's black with gun grease and burned powder where he isn't red with blood. The butcher!"

"Futiga-hallah!" he shrieked. "We've got the devils cornered now. We'll hear fine news from."

Don Juan tied up the launch at the gangway and leaped up the ladder, three steps at a time. "Glory be to God," he panted and hurled himself into Webster's arms. "I was in it! I was. I got back in time to catch up with the lads at the warehouse an' they were the fine, fightin' devils, I'll gamble you. Och, 'twas a grand bit av a fight—whilst it lasted. They put me in the motor-thruck, loadin' the belts wit' cartridges as fast as the gunners emptied 'em, but faith they couldn't keep me there. I got into the heart av the scrimmage in the yard av the arsenal an' faith 'twas well for that little Doctor Pacheco I did. 'Twas wurk to me likin'. I'd a machete—"

"You bloodthirsty scoundrel!" Webster shook the war-mad son of Erin. "I told you not to mix in it, but to hang around on the fringe of the fight,



Launched Himself into the Heart of the Scrimmage.

and bring us early news. Suppose you'd been killed? Who would have come for us then? Didn't I tell you we had a dinner engagement in the palace?"

"Me on the fringes av a fight?" sputtered Don Juan, amazed and outraged. "Take shame for yourself, sor. There was niver the likes av me hung around the fringes av a fight, an' well ye know it."

"I'm amazed that you even remembered your instructions," Webster rasped at him.

"Sure, our division had cleaned up nicely an' I had nothin' else to do, God bless ye. They were besleagin' the palace when I left, an' small chance av takin' it for a couple av hours; what fightin' there was on the outside was street shootin'—an' not to me likin'."

"Is it quite safe to bring Miss Ruy ashore, John?"

"'Tis safe enough at the Hotel Mateo. We have the city for half a mile beyant, in the rear av them—an' they're not fightin' to get to the bay. The guards an' some av the Fifteenth Infantry regiment are in the palace an' the cartel close by, an' them that failed to get in the arsenal have fled thim. But the bulk av the Sarros army is thyrin' to break through to the south an' west, to get to the hills. Dye mind the spur track that runs in a semi-circle around the city? Well, thim, the rebels are befin' the embankment, takin' it easy. Have no worry, sor. When we've took the palace we'll move on an' drive the vagabones from behind up to that railroad embankment, where General Ruy can bid them the time av day."

Webster turned to Dolores. "Do you wish to go ashore?"

"I do not like to have you run the slightest risk—"

he began, but she pook-pooked him into silence, took him by the arm with a great air of camaraderie, and declared they should go forth to adventure—but cautiously.

Webster glanced at Don Juan. "We can go a half or three quarters av a mile out the Calle San Rosario, sor," the Irishman answered. "After that 'twill not be a pleasant sight for the young leddy—an' there may be some shootin'. Squads av the government troops took refuge in the houses an' took to snipin'. 'Twill be shlow wurk roundin' the last av thim up. Even after the fight is over, there'll be scatterin' shootin' scrapes all av the night long, I'm thinkin'."

"At the slightest danger we'll turn back," Webster announced, and with Don Juan Cafetero scouting the way a block in advance they progressed slowly toward the center of the disturbance.

Soon they passed a horse dead in the middle of the street; a little farther on one of the machine-gun company, a lank Texan, sat on the curb rolling a cigarette with his left hand. He had a bullet through his right shoulder and another through the calf of his leg and had received no first aid attention; the flies were bothering him considerably and he was cursing softly and fluently, like the ex-ample-knower he was.

Further on another white invader lay face down in the gutter; for him the fight had ended almost ere it had begun. In the next block half a dozen sandal-footed Sobranteans, in the blue and red-trimmed uniform of the Guardia Civil, lay sprawled in uncouth attitudes, where the first blast of a machine gun had caught them as they rushed out of the police station to repel the advancing mercenaries.

Seeing that the main street of the city would assume even a more grisly aspect the longer they followed it, Don Juan led Webster and Dolores a couple of blocks down a cross street and turned out into the Calle de Hernandez, parallel to the Calle San Rosario. There had been no shooting in this street, apparently; as they proceeded not even a stray bullet whined down the silent calle.

Four blocks from the government palace they found the narrow sidewalks of this quiet street lined with wounded from both sides, with a doctor and half a dozen of Ricardo's hired fighters ministering to them; as they threaded their way between the recumbent figures they came upon Mother Jenks, brandy bottle and glass in hand, "doing her bit."

"Hah! So here you are, my lamb," she greeted Dolores. "Right-o. Just where yer apt to be, poor bless yer sweet face. Let these poor misfortunate lads see that the sister o' the new president ain't too proud to care for 'em. Ere, lass. 'Old up the 'end o' this young cockerel with the 'ole in 'is neck. Ere, lad. Tyke a brace now! 'Ere's some o' your own people, not a lot o' bloomin' yellow bellies, come to put something else in yer neck—something that'll stimulate yer."

The "young cockerel," a blond youth of scarce 20 summers, twisted his head and grinned up at Dolores as she knelt beside him to lift him up. "Here, here, sister," he mumbled, "you'll get that white dress dirty. Never mind me. It's just a flesh wound, only my neck has got stiff and I'm weak from loss of blood."

Mother Jenks winked at Webster as she set a glass of brandy to the stricken adventurer's lips. "Give me a bit o' the white meat, as my sainted 'Enery used to s'y," she murmured emotionally.

Dolores looked at Webster. "I'll stay here," she said simply. "I've found a job helping Mother Jenks. You and Don Juan may run along if you wish, I know you're as curious as children."

They were. It would have been impossible for any man with red corpuscles in his blood to harken to the shooting and shouts only three city blocks distant without yearning to see the fight itself.

through a block plentifully sprinkled with the dead of both factions.

Don Juan led the way through an alley in the rear of the Cathedral de la Santa Cruz to the door of the sacristy; as he placed his hand on the latch three rifle bullets struck around them, showering them with fragments of falling adobe.

"There's a house party in the neighborhood," yelled Don Juan and darted into the church, with Webster at his heels, just in time to escape another fusillade. They walked through the sacristy and passed through a door into the great cathedral, with its high, carved, gothic-arched ceiling. Through the thick-closed doors of the main entrance, lost in the dimness of space out in front, the sounds of the battle half a block away seemed very distant, indeed.

They passed the altar and Don Juan genuflected and crossed himself reverently. "I'll be after makin' me confession," he whispered to Webster. "Wait for me, sor."

He leaned his rifle against the altar railing, crossed the church and touched lightly on the shoulder a monk kneeling in prayer before the altar of the Virgin; the latter bent his head while Don Juan whispered; then he rose and both went into the confessional, while Webster found a bench along the wall and waited.

Presently Don Juan came forth, knelt on the red-tiled floor and prayed—something, Webster suspected, he had not done for quite a while. And when he had finished his supplication and procured his rifle, Webster joined him, the monk unbolted the door and from the quiet of the house of God they passed out into the street and the tumult of hell.

"I've been close to death this day," Don Juan explained, "an' the day is not done. Be the same token, 'tis long since I'd made me last confession; sure, until you picked me out av the mire, sor, 'tis little thought I had for the hereafter."

From their place they could see a dozen or more of Ricardo's hired fighters crouched under the shelter of the palace walls across the street. "I think we'll be safer there," Webster cried, as a couple of bullets struck the stone steps at their feet and ricocheted against the cathedral door. "That rifle of yours is making you a marked man, Don Juan."

They ran across the street and joined the men under the palace wall.

"What's this?" Don Juan demanded briskly. "Have ye not smoked thim out yet?"

"Noddings doing," a young German answered. "Der chief has sent word dot we shall not artillery use on der balace. Men all around it we haf, mit a machine gun commanding each gate; most of der boys have chust moved out west in der rear of der government troops."

"Then," Don Juan declared with conviction, "there'll be no fighting here to speak av, until later."

"Der is plenty of choy hunting snipers, mein freund. Der houses hereabouts vos filled mit dem."

"I'll have no cut fights in mine," Don Juan retorted. "Come wit' me, so, an' we'll be in at the death out beyant at the railroad embankment."

"Too late," Webster answered, for on the instant to the west the crackle of rifle and machine gun fire interluded



with the staccato barks of a Maxim-Vickers broke out, swelling almost immediately to a steady outpouring of sound. "We'll stay here where we're safe for the time. When General Ruy has cleaned up out there he'll come here to take command."

dennis the uproar died away fully 50 per cent. "They're going in with the bayonet and machetes," somebody who knew remarked laconically. "Wait and you'll hear the cheering."

They waited fully ten minutes, but presently, as the firing gradually died away, they heard it, faint and indistinguishable at first, but gradually coming nearer. And presently the trapped men in the palace heard it, too. "Viva Ruy! Viva! Viva Ruy!" "All over but the shouting," Don Juan remarked disgustedly. "The lads in the palace will surrender now. Sure General Ruy was right after all. For why should he shoot holes in the house he's goin' to live in, an' where, be the same token, he gives a dinner party this night?"

"I'm glad the end is in sight," Webster replied. "We have no interest in this revolution, John, and it isn't up to us to horn in on the play; yet if it went against the Ruy faction, I fear we'd be forced into active service in spite of ourselves. There is such a thing as fighting to save one's skin, you know."

Don Juan laughed pleasantly. "What a shame we missed the row out beyant at the railroad embankment," he declared.

"I wish you'd kept out of it, Don Juan. What business had you in the fight at the cartel? Suppose you'd been killed?"

"Small loss!" Don Juan retorted. "I should have mourned you nevertheless, John."

"Would you that same?" Don Juan's buttermilk eyes lighted with affection and pleasure. "Would it put a pang in the heart of you, sor, to see me stretched?"

"Yes, it would, John. You're a wild, impulsive, lunatic, worthless Irishman, but there's a broad vein of pay ore in you, and I want you to live until I can develop it. When Mr. Geary returns to operate the mine, he'll need a fore-man he can trust."

"And do you trust me, sor?"

"I do indeed, John. By the way, you never gave me your word of honor to cut out der liquor for keeps. Up till today I've had to watch you—and I don't want to do that. It isn't dignified for either of us, and from today on you must be a man or a mouse. If you prove yourself a man, I want you in my business; if you prove yourself a mouse, somebody else may have you. How about you, John? The casinos will be open tonight, and fire water will be free to the soldiers of the new republic. Must I watch you tonight?"

Don Juan shook his reckless red head. "I'll never let a drop of liquor cross my lips without your permission, sor," he promised simply. "I am the man and you are the master."

"We'll shake hands on that!" After the western habit of validating all verbal agreements with a hand shake, Webster thrust his hand out to his man, who took it in both of his and held it for half a minute. He wanted to speak, but couldn't; he could only bow his head as his eyes clouded with the tears of his appreciation. "Ah, sor," he blurted presently, "I'd die for ye—an' welcome the chanst."

A wild yell of alarm broke out in the next block, at the north gate of the palace; there was a sudden flurry of rifle fire and cries of "Here they come! Stop them! Stop them! They're breaking out!"

Without awaiting orders the hired fighters along the wall—some 15 of them—leaped out into the street, forming a skirmish line, just as a troop of cavalry, with drawn sabers, swept around the corner and charged upon the devoted little line. "Sarros must be thyrin' to make his get-away," Don Juan Cafetero remarked coolly, and emptied a saddle. "They threw open the big palace gate, 'an the guards are clearin' a way for him to the bay." He emptied another saddle.

In the meantime Ricardo's fire eaters had not been idle. The instant the guards turned into the street a deadly magazine fire had been opened on them. They had already suffered heavily winning through the gate and past the besiegers in front of it, but once they turned the corner into the next street they had the fire of but a handful of men to contend with. Nevertheless it was sufficiently deadly. Many of the horses in the front rank went down with their riders, forcing the maddened animals behind to clear their carcasses by jumping over them, which some did. Many, however, tripped and stumbled in their wild gallop, spilling their riders.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

On the Falkland Islands.
Who that would get his hair cut in the Falkland islands seems committed to a long wait in the barber shop; but perhaps the Falkland islanders are not fussy in this particular, and the one barber may be less busy than might be imagined. The population of the islands consists largely of shepherds, guardians of about 700,000 sheep, and shepherds, as a class are perhaps poor patrons of the barber, nor apparently do the islanders have much need of bricklayers, of whom there is one to keep the barber company; nor of house painters, of whom there are two. Shoemaking is more active, for there are four shoemakers.

Beetles Bore Through Cables.
In studying damage to lead telephone cables in California by a wood-boring beetle it is shown the beetle is able to penetrate alloyed substances that are considerably harder than lead. The problem is still unsolved, says the American Forestry Magazine of Washington, and it will be difficult to find a practical means of controlling this pest, which is able to put hundreds of telephone out of commission by boring holes in the cables, through which the water enters, rendering the wire connections useless.

Home Town Helps

NOT ALLOWED TO BE PESTS

City of Boston Has Strict Regulations Governing Construction and Maintenance of Billboards.

The following regulations are in effect in the city of Boston, governing the use of billboards:

No outdoor advertising shall be permitted on any location within 500 feet of town or city parks, playgrounds, metropolitan parks, parkways, state reservations or public buildings.

No outdoor advertising sign shall exceed an area of ten square feet if within 500 feet of any public highway.

No outdoor advertising sign, wherever located, shall exceed an area of 100 square feet, and all such signs shall be rectangular in form.

No outdoor advertising shall be permitted upon any rock, tree or natural object of beauty.

All fields and backgrounds of outdoor advertising shall be of neutral colors, and the fields, backgrounds and letters thereon shall not be discordant with surroundings, and nothing shall be placed thereon except letters of the alphabet and numerals.

No outdoor advertising shall be allowed within the area between intersecting streets and within a radius of 350 feet from the point where the center lines of the streets intersect.

The structure and the materials of all outdoor advertising signs shall meet the approval of the department of public safety of the state as regards all questions of fire hazard.

No waste or other rubbish resulting from any billboard or outdoor advertising sign shall be allowed to accumulate on or in the vicinity of the premises where the same is located.

Bottoms of all signs shall be at least three feet from the ground.

No outdoor advertising shall be permitted or allowed to be maintained without an annual state license.

SEE VALUE OF PLAYGROUNDS

Cities Spending Much Money Now for Recreational Centers, Which Might Have Been Saved.

Memphis, Milwaukee, Indianapolis, Akron and Hartford are in the course of the last year doubled their appropriations for playgrounds, while Dayton trebled its appropriation the year before. Detroit has issued \$10,000,000 in bonds for parks and playgrounds; Portland, Ore., has issued \$500,000 for the purchase of playgrounds, and Pittsburgh \$981,000 for the same purpose. With the increase of congestion in the streets of American cities the business of being a child becomes more and more hazardous. In this connection the American City states that 23 children a month, on an average, were killed in the streets of New York city during 1920. Few blocks in the city have provision for play space. Of the 15 play centers planned by the Playground association all but six remained closed because of lack of funds. It is pointed out that the policy of providing accommodations for play should be adopted in connection with rebuilding and the construction of new buildings.

The time to lay out playgrounds and recreational centers is before the town has grown to an extent that makes it necessary to condemn property for such purposes. Let there be a properly understood, comprehensive plan followed in the development of the town from its start.

Trees Public Property.

The pioneers planted forest or shade trees when there was scarcely an argument for their planting—when they were hemmed in and surrounded by virgin forest, writes C. F. Rely in the American Forestry Magazine of Washington. Today we are enjoying the fruits of their devotion, wisdom and forethought. Shall we do less—when there is so much more need—for the rising generations and for those yet unborn? Not every husbandman has appreciated the value of shade trees, witness the ruthless cutting down and making into cordwood of whole lines of noble, stalwart sugar maples! A legal enactment in every state providing that every tree now or hereafter standing within the legal road boundary shall be considered public property is suggested.

Appropriate Symbols.

Symbols are curious things. Our language is full of them and so is religious ritual, the ceremonies of secret societies, and at times it is very picturesque. When we wish to imply that a man's head is full of absurd, chaotic ideas we say in slang that there are "nuts in his brain." Do you not see how in a dream a befy could symbolize a head, and bats, morbid, sinister and absurd ideas?

Friday Was Columbus' Fate.

It was on a Friday that Columbus set out from Spain to seek a new world; on Friday that he first caught sight of land; on Friday that he started on his return voyage; on Friday that he safely arrived back in Spain; on Friday that he first sighted the American mainland on his next voyage; on Friday that he first set his foot upon it, and again on Friday that he landed in his native land.