Webster-Man's Man

By PETER B. KYNE

Author of "Cappy Ricks," "The Valley of the Giants," Etc.

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The state of the s CHAPTER X-Continued.

John Stuart Webster changed into dry clothing and descended to the dining-room. Miss Rucy was already seated at her table and motioned him to the seat opposite her, and as he sat down with a contented little sigh, she gazed at him with a newer and more alert interest.

"I hear you've been baving adventures again," she challenged. "The news is all over the hotel, I heard it from the hend waiter."

"Coffee and pistols for two at daylight," he answered cheerily. "By the way, I have made my will, just to be on the safe side. Will you be good enough to take charge of it until after the funeral? You can turn it over to Billy then.

She fell readly into the bantering spirit with which he treated this serlous subject. Indeed, it was quite impossible to do otherwise, for John Stuart Webster's personality radiated such a feeling of security, of absolute, unbounded confidence in the future and disdain for whatever of good fortune or ill the future might entail. that Dolores found it impossible not to assimilate his mood.

At seven-thirty, after a delightful dinner, the memory of which Mr. Webster was certain would linger under his foretop long after every other memory had departed, he escorted her to the open carriage he had ordered, and for two hours they circled the Malecon with the elite of Buenaventura, listening to the music of the band, and, during the brief inlapping the beach at the foot of the broad driveway.

"This," said John Stuart Webster, as he said goodnight to Dolores in the by better man," lebby, "Is the end of a perfect day."

ing Senor Webster's return for the idlocy. past bour.

Webster glanced at the card and strode over to the young man. "I am Mr. Webster, sir," he announced civilly in Spanish. "And you are Lieutenant Arredondo?"

The visitor rose, bowed low and indicated he was that gentleman, "I in most excellent English, "in the in-Captain Benavides."

Well, what does the little squirt want now? Another ducking?"

Arredondo flushed angrily but remembered the dignity of his mission and controlled his temper. "Captain Benavides has asked me to express to you the hope that you, being doubtiess a man of honor-'

"Stop right there, Lieutenant, There is no doubt about it. I am a man of honor, and unless you are anxious to be ducked in the fountain, you will be more careful in your choice of words. Now then: You are about to say that, being a man of honor-"

"You would accord my friend the satisfaction which one gentleman never falls to accord another."

"That lets me out, amigo," Webster taughed. "Benavides isn't a gentleman. He's a cutthroat, a murdering little black-and-tan-hound. Do I understand he wants me to fight a duel with him?"

Lieutenant Arredondo could not trust himself to speak, and so be bowed profoundly. "Very well, then, Lleutenant," Web-

ster agreed. "I'll fight him." "Tomorrow morning at five o'clock."

"Five minutes from now if you say "Captain Benavides will be grateful for your willing spirit, at least," the

second replied bitterty. "You realize, of course, Mr. Webster, that as the challenged party, the choice of weapons rests with you." "Certainly. I wouldn't have risked

a duel if the choice lay with the other fellow. With your permission, my dear sir, we'll fight with Mauser rifles at a thousand yards, for the reason that I never knew a Greaser that could hit the broad side of a brewery at any range over two hundred and fifty yards." Webster chuckled flendishly.

Lieutenant Arredondo bit his lips in anger and vexation. "I cannot agree to such an extraordinary duel," he complained. "It is the custom In Sobrante for gentlemen to fight with

rapters." "Oh, dry up, you sneaking mur-Webster exploded. "There isn't going to be any dual except on my terms so you might as well take a straight tip from headquarters and stick to plain assassination. You and Benavides have been sent out by your superior to kill me-you got your orders this very afternoon at the entrence to the government palace-and I'm just not going to be killed. Beat it, boy, while the going is good." He pointed toward the hotel door. "Out,

you blackguard!" he roared. "Vaya!" Lieutenant Arredondo rose and with dignified mien started for the door. Webster followed, and as his visitor meached the portal, a tremendous kick,

well placed, lifted him down to the sidewalk. Shricking curses, he fled into the night; and John Stuart Webster, with a satisfied feeling that something accomplished had earned a night's repose, retired to his room his manye silk palamas and slept the sleep of a healthy, conscience-free man.

At about the same hour Neddy Jerome, playing solltaire in the Engineers' club in Denver, was the reciplent of a cablegram which read:

"If W. cables accepting reply rejecting account job filled otherwise beans spilled. Implicit obedience spells victory.

"Henrietta."

Neddy Jerome wiped his spectacles, adjusted them on his nose and read this amazing message once more, "Jumped-up Jehosophat!" he murmured. "If she hasn't followed that madcap Webster clear to Buenaventurn! If she isn't out in earnest to earn her fee, I'm an orang-outang! By thunder, that's a smart woman, All right! I'll be implicitly obedient."

Two hours later Neddy Jerome recelved another cablegram. It was from John Stuart Webster and read as follows:

"Hold job ninety days at latest may be back before. If satisfactory cable," Again Mr. Jerome had recourse to the most powerful expletive at his command. "Henrietta knew he was going to cable and beat the old sourdough to it," he solfloquized. He was wrapped in profound admiration of her cunning for as much as five mintermissions, to the sound of the waves utes; then he indited this reply to his victim4

"Time, tide and good jobs wait for no man. Sorry. Job aiready filled

When John Stuart Webster received It wasn't, for at that precise me that cablegram the following morning, ment a servant handed him a card, he cursed bitterly-not because be and indicated a young man seated in had lost the best job that had ever an adjacent lounging-chair, at the been offered him, but because he had same time volunteering the informa- lost through playing a good hand tion that the visitor had been await- poorly. He hated himself for his

CHAPTER XI.

For fully an hour after retiring John Stuart Webster slept the deep, untroubled sleep of a healthy unworr'ad man; then one of the many st cles of "jigger" which flourish just have called, Mr. Webster," he stated north and south of the equator grawled into bed with him and promptly terest of my friend and comrade, proceeded to establish its commissary on the inner flank of the Websterlan Ah, yes! The fresh little rooster thigh, where the skin is thin and the blood close to the surface. As a con sequence, Mr. Webster awoke suddenly, obliterated the intruder and got out of bed for the purpose of anointing the injured spot with alcohol-which being done, an active search of the bed resulted in the discovery of three more jiggers and the envelopment of John Stuart Webster's soul in the fogs of apprehension.

> "Tis an evil land, filled with tronble," he mused as he lighted a cigaret. "I wish Bill were here to advise me. He ought to be able to straighten this deal out and assure the higher-ups that I'm not butting in on their political affairs. But Bill's up-country and here I am under surveillance and unable to leave the hotel to talk it over with Andrew Bowers, the only other white expert I know of in town. And by the way, they're after Andrew, too! I wonder what for."

> He smoked two cigarets, the while be pondered the various visible aspects of this dark mess in which he found bimself floundering. And finally he arrived at a decision "These chaps aren't thorough," Webster decided. "They'll see me safely to bed and pick me up again in the morning -so I'll take a chance that the coast is clear, slip out now and talk it over with Andrew."

He looked at his watch-eleventhirty. Hurriedly he dressed, strapped on his automatic pistol, dragged his bed noiselessly to the open window and tied to the bed-leg the rope he used to lash his trunk; then he lowered himself out the window. The length of rope permitted him to de-

scend within a few feet of the ground. Webster made his way to the street unnoticed and ten minutes later appeared before the entrance of El Buen Amigo just as Mother Jenks was barring it for the night.

"I am Mr. Webster," he announced, "-Mr. Geary's friend from the United States."

Mother Jenks, having heard of him, was of course profoundly flustered to meet this toff who so carelessly wired his down-and-out friends peace ore in lots of a thousand. Cordially she invited him within to stow a peg of her best, which invitation Mr. Webster promptly accepted.

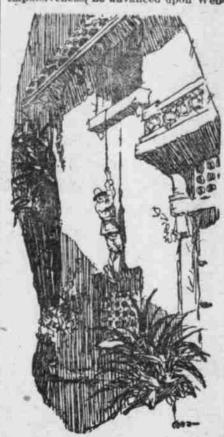
"To your beautiful eyes," Webster toasted her. "And now would you mind leading me to the quarters of Billy's friend Mr. Bowers?"

She shuffled away, to return presently with the news that Mr. Bowers was in his room and would be delighted to receive Mr. Webster. Mother Jenks led Webster to the door, knocked, announced him and discreet-

ly withdrew. "My dear Webster!" cried Andrew Bowers enthusiastically, and he drew his late fellow-passenger into the room. Webster observed that Andrew was not alone. "I want to see you privately," he said. "Didn't know you had company, or I wouldn't have intruded."

"Well, I knew I had company, didn't 1? Come in, you crazy fellow, and neet some good friends of mine who are very anxious to meet you." He turned to a tall, handsome, scholarly looking man of about forty, whose features, dress and manner of wearing his whiskers proclaimed him a personage. "Dr. Eliseo Pacheco, I have the henor to present Mr. John S. Webster, the American gentleman of whom you have heard me speak."

Doctor Pacheco promptly leaped to his feet and bowed with ostentatious reverence then suddenly, with Latin impulsiveness, he advanced upon Web-



He Lowered Himself Out of the Window.

ster, swept aside the latter's outstretched hand, clasped John Stuart Webster in fraternal embrace, and to the old sour-dough's inexpressible horror, kissed him upon the right cheekafter which he backed off, bowed once more, and said in Spanish:

"Sir. my life is vones "It is well he gave it to you before you took it," Andrew said in English, and he laughed, noting Webster's con-

fusion. "And this gentleman is Colonel Pablo Caraveo," "Thunder, I'm in for it again," Webster thought-and he was, for the amiable colonel embraced Webster and kissed his left cheek before turning to

Andrew. "You will convey to our guest, in English, Don Ricardo, assurances of my profound happiness in meeting

him," he said in Spanish. "The Colonel says you're all to the mustard," Andrew at once interpreted

"Rather a liberal translation," Webster retorted in Spanish, whereat Colonel Caraveo sprang up and clapped his hands in delight.

"Your happiness, my dear Colonel," Webster continued, "is extravagant grief compared with my delight in meeting a Sobrantean gentleman who has no desire to skewer me." He turned to Andrew, "While introductions are in order, old son, suppose you complete the job and introduce yourself. I'm always suspicious of a man

"Then behold the death of that impudent fellow Andrew Bowers, late valet de chambre to this eminent mining engineer and prince of gentlemen. Mr. John Stuart Webster. Doctor Pacheco, will you be good enough to perform the operation?"

"This gentleman," said the doctor, laying his hand on Andrew's shoulder, "is Don Ricardo Luiz Ruey, a gentleman, a patriot, and the future president of our unhappy country."

Webster put his hands on the young man's shoulders, "Ricardo, my son," he asked earnestly, "do you think you could give me some little hint of the approximate date on which you will assume office? By the nine gods of war, I never wanted a friend at court so badly as I want one tonight."

Webster sat down and helped himself from a box of cigars he found on Ricardo's bureau. "I feel I am among friends at last," he announced between preliminary puffs "so listen while I spin a strange tale. I've been the picture of bad luck ever since I started for this infernal-this wonderful country of yours. In New Orleans I took a Sunday morning stroll in Jackson square and came across two men trying to knife another. In the interest of common decency I interfered and won a sweeping victory, but to my amazement the prospective corpse took to his heels and advised me to do the

Ricardo Ruey sprang for John Stuart Webster. "By George," he said in English, "I'm going to hug you, too. I really ought to kiss you, because I'm that man you saved from assassingtion, but-too leng in the U. S. A., I suppose; I've lost the customs of my country.

"Get out," yelled Webster, fending him off. "By the way, Ricardo-I'm going to call you Rick for short-do you happen to have any relatives in this country?"

"Yes, a number of second and third cousins."

"Coming down on the steamer, I didn't like to appear curious, but all the time I wanted to ask you one question." "Ask it now."

"Are you a Sobrantean?" "I was born in this country and

raised here until I was fourteen." "But you're-why, hang it, You're not a Latin?"

'No, I'm a mixture, with Latin predominating. My forebears were pure Castillans from Madrid, and crossed the Western ocean in caravels. It's been a matter of pride with the house of Ruey to keep the breed pure, but despite all precautions, the family tree has been grafted once with a Scotch thistle, twice with the lily of France, and once with the shamrock of Ireland. My mother was an Irish woman."

"You allbi yourself perfectly, Ricardo, and my curiosity is appeased. Permit me to continue my tale," he added in Spanish, and forthwith he related with humorous detail his adventure at the gangplank of the steamer that had borne him and Ricardo Rucy south. Ricardo interrupted him, "We know all about that, friend Webster, and we knew the two delightful gentlemen had been told off to get you-unofficially, The Sobrantean revolutionary junta has headquarters in New Orleans. It is composed of political exiles, for Sarros, the present dictator of Sobrante, rules with an iron hand, and has a cute little habit of railroading his enemies to the cemetery via the treason charge and the firing squad. He killed my father, who was the best president this benighted country ever had, and I consider it my Christian duty to avenge my father and a patriotic duty to take up the task he left unfinished-the task of making over my country.

"In Sobrante, as in most of the countries in Central America, there are two distinct classes of people-the aristocrats and peons-and the aristocrat fattens on the peon, as he has had a habit of doing since Adam. We haven't any middle class to stand as a buffer between the two-which makes it a sad proposition. My father was an idealist and a dreamer and he dreamed of reform in government and a solution of the agrarian problem which confronts all Latin-America. He trusted one Pablo Sarros, an educated peon, who had commanded the government forces under the regime my father overthrew. My tender-hearted parent discovered that Sarros was plotting to overthrow him; but instead of having him shot, he merely removed him from command. Sarros gathered a handful of bandits, joined the old government forces my father had conquered, hired a couple dozen Yankee artillerymen and-he won out. My father was captured and executed; the ished in the flames. I'm here to pay off the score."

"A worthy ambition! So you organized the revolutionary junta in New

Orleans, eh?" Ricardo nodded. "Word of it reached Sarros, and he sent his brother Raoul, chief of the intelligence bureau, to investigate and report. As fast as he reported, Colonel Caraveo reported to me. My father's son possesses a name to conjure with. Consequently it was to the interest of the Sarros administration that I be eliminated. They watched every boat; hence my scheme for eluding their vigilance-which, thanks to you, worked like a charm."

"But," Webster complained, "I'm not sitting in the game at all, and yet I'm caught between the upper and nether

"That is easy to explain, You interfered that morning in Jackson square: then Raoul Sarros met you going aboard the steamer for Buenaventura and you manhandled him, and naturally, putting two and two together, he has concluded that you are not only his personal enemy but also a friend and protector of mine and consequently an enemy of the state."

"And as a consequence I'm marked

for slaughter?" "It would be well, my friend," Doctor Pacheco suggested, "to return to the United States until after Ricardo and his friends have eliminated your Nemesls."

"How soon will that happy event transpire?" "In about sixty days we hope to be

ready to strike, Mr. Webster." Colonel Caraveo cleared his throat "I understand from Ricardo that you and another American are interested in a mining concession, Mr. Webster."

Webster nodded. "Is this a concession from a private landholder or did your friend secure it from the Sarros government?"

"From the government. We pay ten per cent. royalty, on a ninety-nine-year lease, and that's all I know about it. I have never seen the property, and my object in coming was to examine it and, if satisfied, finance the project."

"If you will return to your hotel, my dear sir," Colonel Caraveo suggested, "and remain there until noon tomorrow, I feel confident I can guarantee you immunity from attack thereafter. I have a plan to influence my associates in the intelligence office." "Bully for you, Colonel. Give me six-

ty days in which to operate, and I'll nized you under the arc light," have finished my job in Sobrante and gotten out of it before that gang of cutthroats wakes up to the fact that I'm gone. I thank you, sir." "The least we can do, since you have saved Ricardo's life and rendered our

cause a great service, is to save your

life." Colonel Caraveo replied. "This is more comfort than I had hoped for when I came here, gentlemen. I am very grateful, I assure you. Of course this little revolution you're cooking up is no affair of mine and I trust I need not assure you that your confidence is quite safe with

The Doctor and the Colonel immedistely rose and bowed like a pair of marlonettes. Webster turned to Ricardo.

"Have you had any experience in revolutions, my son?" he asked.

Ricardo nodded, "I renlized I had to have experience, and so I went to Mexico, I was with Madero through the first revolution."

"How are you arming your men?" "Mannlichers, I've got 20,000,000 rounds of cartridges, 25 machine guns, and a dozen three-inch field guns. I have also engaged 200 American exsoldiers to handle the machine guns and the battery. These rascals cost me \$5 a day gold, but they're worth it; they like fighting and will go anywhere to get it-and are faithful,"

"You are secretly mobilizing in the mountains, ch?" Webster rubbed his chin ruminatively. "Then I take it you'll attack Buenaventura when you strike the first blow?"

"Quite right. We must capture a seaport if we are to revolute successfully."

"I'm glad to know that, I'll make it my business to be up in the mountains at the time. I'm for peace, every rattle out of the box. Gentlemen, you've cheered me wonderfully. I will now go home and leave you to your evil machinations; and, the good Lord and the liggers willing, I shall yet glean a night's sleep."

He shook hands all around and took bis departure.

Mother Jenks was waiting for Webster at the foot of the stairs. He

paused on the threshold. "Mrs. Jenks." he said. "Billy tells me you have been very kind to him. I want to tell you how much I appreclate it and that I stand willing to re-

ciprocate any time you are in need." Mother Jenks fingered her beard and reflected. "'Ave you met Miss Dolores Ruey, sir?" she queried.

"Your ward? Yes." "'Ow does the lamb strike you, Mr. Webster?"

"I have never met many women: I have known few intimately; but I each other. Benavides was smiling should say that Miss Dolores Ruey is the marvel of her sex. She is as beautiful as she is good, and is as intelligent as she can be."

"She's a lydy, sir," Mother Jenks affirmed proudly. "An' I done it. You can see with arf a heve wot I am. but for all that, I've done my dooty by her. From the day my sainted 'Enery-'e was a colonel o' hartillery under President Ruey, Dolores' father -hescaped from the burnin' palace with 'er an' told me to raise 'er a lydy for the syke of ber father, as was the finest gentleman this rotten country'll ever see, she's been my guidin' star, of his shot roared through the silent ain't done my whole dooty by her. I half drawn, lifted a bloody, shattered want to see 'er marrie man as'll maintain 'er like a lydy."

"Well, Mrs. Jenks, I think you will live to see that worthy ambition at stant went skyward. tained. Mr. Geary is head over heels in love with her."

"Aye. Willie's a nice lad-I could wish no better; but wot 'e's got 'e got from you, an' where'll 'e be if 'is mine doesn't p'y big? Now, with you. sir, it's different. You're a bit older'n Billy, an' more settled an' serious; you've made yer fortifne, so Willie tells me, an' not to go beatin' about the bally bush, I s'y, wot's the matter with you an' her steppin' over the broomstick together? You might go a

bloomin' sight farther an' fare wuss." "Too old, my dear schemer, too old!" John Stuart replied smilingly. "And she's in love with Billy. Don't worry. If he doesn't make a go of this mining concession, I'll take care of his finances until he can do so himself. I do not mind telling you, in strictest confidence, that I have made my will and divided my money equally between them."

"Gord bless you, for a sweet, kind gentleman," Mother Jenks gulped, quite overcome with emotion,

Hastily Webster bade Mother Jenks good night and hurried away to escape a discussion on such a delicate opic with Billy's blunt and singleminded landlady. His mind was in a tumult. So it was that he paid no attention to a vehicle that jogged by him with the cochero sagging low in his seat, half asleep over the reins, until a quick command from the closed interior brought the vehicle to an abrupt halt, half a block in advance of Webster.

Save for an arc light at each end of the block, the Calle de Concordia was dim; save for Webster, the carriage and the two men who piled hurriedly out at the rear of the conveyance, the Calle de Concordia was devold of life. Webster saw one of the men hurriedly toss a coin to the cochero; with a fervent "Gracias, mi capitan," the driver clucked to his horse, turned the corner into the Calle Elizondo and disappeared, leaving his late passengers facing Webster and caimly awaiting his approach. He was within 20 feet of them when the taller of the two men spoke.

"Good evening, my American friend. This meeting is a pleasure we scarcely hoped to have so soon. For the same we are indebted to Lieutenant Arredondo, who happened to look back as we passed you, and recog-

Webster halted abruptly; the two Sobrantean officers stood smiling and evidently enjoying his discomfiture. Each carried a service revolver in a closed holster fastened to his swordbelt, but neither had as yet made a move to draw-seeing which, Webster felt sufficiently reassured to accept the unwelcome situation with a grace equal to that of his enemies.

"What? You two bad little boys up this late! I'm surprised," he replied in Spanish. He folded his arms, struck an attitude and surveyed them as might an indignant father. "You kids have been up to some mischief." he added, as his right hand closed over the butt of his automatic, where it lay snuggled in the open holster under his left arm between his shirt and coat. "Can it be possible you are going to take advantage of superior numbers and the fact that you are both armed, to force me into a duel on your terms, my dear Captain Benavides?"

By a deferential bow, the unwholesome Benavides indicated that such were his intentions, "Then," said Webster, "as the challenged party I have the choice of weapons. I choose pistols."

"At what range?" the Heutenant asked with mock interest.

"As we stand at present. I'm armed, Pull your hardware, you pretty pair of polecats, and see if you can beat me to the draw."

Captain Benavides' jaw dropped slightly; with a quiet, deliberate motion his hand stole to his holster-flap. Lieutenant Arredondo wet his lins and glanced so apprehensively at his companion that Webster was aware that here was a situation not to his liking.

"You should use an open holster," Webster taunted, "Come, come-unbutton that holster-flap and get busy." Benavides' hand came away from the holster. He was not the least bit frightened, but his sense of propor-

tion in matters of this kind was un-

dergoing a shake-up. "In disposing of any enemy in a gun fight, so a professional killer once informed me," Webster continued, "it is a good plan to put your first bullet anywhere in the abdomen; the shock of a bullet there paralyzes your opponent for a few seconds and prevents him from returning the compliment. and in the interim you blow his brains out while he lies looking at you. I have never had any practical experience in matters of this kind, but I don't mind telling you that if I must practice on somebody, the good Lord could not have provided two more de-

lightful subjects." He ceased speaking, and for nearly half a minute the three men appraised slightly; Arredondo was fidgeting; Webster's glance never faltered from

the captain's nervous hand, "You would be very foolish to draw," Webster then assured Benavides. "If I am forced to kill you, it will be with profound regret. Suppose you two dear, sweet children run along home and think this thing over. You may change your mind by tomorrow morn-

The captain's hand, with the speed of a juggler's, had flown to his holster; but quick as he was, Webster was a split second quicker. The sound She's self-supportin' now, but still I calle, and Benavides, with his pistol hand from the butt as Webster's automatic swept in a swift are and covered Arredondo, whose arms on the in-

"That wasn't a half bad duel," Webster remarked coldly. "Are you not obliged to me. Captain, for not blowing your brains out-for disregarding my finer instincts and refraining from shooting you first through the abdomen? Bless you, my boy, I've been stuck for years in places where the only sport consisted in seeing who could take a revolver, shoot at a tin can and roll it farthest in three sec-

onds. Let me see your hand," Benavides sullenly held up that dripping member, and Webster inspected it at a respectful distance. "Steel jacket bullet," he informed the wounded man. "Small hole-didn't do much damage. You'll be just as well us ever in a month."

He helped himself to Arredondo's gun, flipped out the cylinder, and slipped all six cartridges into his paim. Similarly he disarmed Benavides, expressed his regret that circumstances had rendered it imperative to use force, and strolled blithely down the calle. In the darkened patio he groped along the wall satil he found the swinging rope by which he had descended from his room-whereupon he removed his shoes, tied the laces together, slung them around his neck, dug his toes into the adobe wall and climbed briskly to his room.

(To be continued)

About Wood Engraving, Wood engravings of high class are made almost exclusively of boxwood, and the large blocks are made of small

pieces fastened together. The engraving is done across the end of the grain, Japanese wood prints are made on lengthwise sections of cherry wood parallel to the grain.

Again, Swat the Fly.

The number of bacteria capable of being carried by one house fly varies from 550 to 6,600,000. Hence a crusade against this pest which is most numerous during the season of the year when epidemics are likely to occur will play a great part in prevention and spread of any malady.

Tidiness of the Ant.

No creature is more tidy than an ant. A well-known authority says their toilet articles consist of coarse and fine toothed combs, hair brushes, sponges and even washes and soaps. Their combs, however, are the genuing article, and differ from ours mainly in that they are fastened to their legal