WEBSTER—MAN'S MAN

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

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"I'LL SEND HER BACK TO THE UNITED STATES"

John Stuart Webster, missing [illegible] years young, boards a train in Texas [illegible] station after hearing [illegible] a distressed lady, who speaks [illegible] days. He eliminates [illegible] the world ever being [illegible] of his opportunity. But [illegible] lady is being determined to [illegible] her. She is [illegible] Texas [illegible] Engineers' club in [illegible] the greatest open [illegible] twenty years. There he is offered [illegible] of a fortune by a capitalist friend [illegible] fing, being both to [illegible] from his own particular pal, Billy Geary, [illegible] proposition in Central America [illegible] Webster [illegible] answer the call of friend. The foreign [illegible] turn down the big job and [illegible] ship and adventure to Sabinas, [illegible] to get him to change his mind [illegible] to the same train [illegible] a girl [illegible] who does not recognize [illegible] Jenks [illegible] secretly sees the girl and later writes [illegible] John to take his [illegible] now shifts to [illegible] his heart out looking [illegible]

CHAPTER IV. Continued.

For two months Jed had existed entirely because of the bounty of Mother Jenks in the matter of meals. He could not pay her cash, desirable as he hoped to do some day, and he considered it of the most vital importance that in the interim he should prove how serviceable he could be to her cash he paid her compliments, which she appreciated immensely.

An inventive genius was Billy. He never employed the same deferment tactics two days in succession, and when personal flattery threatened to fail him, a large-scale reproduction of the late Henry Jenks which hung over the back bar was a never-failing source of inspiration.

This was the "old friend" previously referred to by Mother Jenks. He had been a sergeant in Her Britannic Majesty's Royal Horse artillery, and upon retiring to the reserve had harkened to a proposal to emigrate to Sabinas and act as instructor in the art of colonial of artillery with the government forces then in the throes of a revolutionary attack. The rebels had triumphed, and as a result Geary had been saluted with the [illegible] pestilence rate, whereupon his wife had had recourse to her early profession of barmaid, and El Buen Amigo had resulted.

However, be no return to [illegible] sheeps, as Mr. Geary would have expressed it. Smoothly the effect of Billy's compliment was instantly evident, for Mother Jenks set out two glasses and a bottle.

"I know yer a trifler, Willy Geary," she simpered, "but if I did not know as shouldn't, I was accounted as 'ind some a barmaid as you'd find in Bristol town. I've lost my good looks, what with grief and worritin' after losin' my sainted Emery, but I was 'andsome once."

"I can well believe it, Mother, since you are handsome still." For my part," he continued confidentially, as with shaking hand he filled his friend's glass, "you'll excuse the drinkin' of drink, Mother, but I only 'ad a couple shakes nasty last night, for my part, I prefer the full-blown rose to the bud."

Mother Jenks fluttered like a bantante as she lapped her drink. Untouched glasses were filled with [illegible] that they were.

He tossed off his drink. It warmed and strengthened him after his night of chills and fever, and bravely he returned to the attack.

"Changing the subject from feminine grace and charms to those straight and virtue, I've been nursing lately the resolute pulse of your married husband's head on his fine military shoulders. There was a time, if I may judge from his photograph, that would fight a soldier."

"Oh, mighty 'e wouldn't!" Mother Jenks hastened to declare. "You know, Willie, I was present when they shot 'im, a-waitin' to claim 'is body. 'E kisses me good-bye an' says 'e: 'Brace up, ol' girl. Remember your husband's been a sergeant in His Majesty's Royal 'Orse artillery an' don't let the bloody blighters see you cry.' Then 'e walks out front, with 'is 'ead straight back to the wall, dress a circle on 'is blue tunic with white chalk an' says: 'Shoot at the dress, my lads-bolled bunnders as bold—and to 'eart.'"

"To be the widow of such a gallant son of Mars," Billy declared, "is a greater honor than being the wife of a duke. It is. Mother," he added with a note of genuine regret in his voice, "I've been a devil of a fool to leave you without you'll. He laid his head on her fat arm. "Mother, one of these days I'll get mine, and when I do I'm going to make you be a nice little girl back in Bristol."

She smiled at him with motherly tenderness and shook her head. In a concrete niche in the mortuary of the Catedral de la Nuva Cruz the bones of her husband reposed. She knew it, when her hour came she would be beside him.

"Yer a rascal, Willy," she told him. "An' I'd trust yer for double the score. Sheep 'ave been known to 'aven't much, but what I 'ave I shares freely with them I likes."

Mother Jenks preceded him into the shady side of the veranda, where on dinnerin she was wont to breakfast in solitary state. Her table was set for two this morning, however. Billy flipped an adventurous cockroach off the table and fell to with fine appetite.

He was delving with a special brew of coffee, with condensed milk in it, when the Jamaica negro employed from the cantina to attend to Don Juan Cafetero with a cablegram.

"A cablegram!" Mother Jenks cried. "Good's truth! I'll wager the pub it's for you, Willie. Bob!" turning to the negro and addressing him in her own private brand of Spanish—"give Don Juan a drink of rum to help him recover from the shock of receiving a cablegram."

Within the cantina Bob returned with a long yellow envelope which he [illegible] Mother Jenks. Without [illegible] a glance at the [illegible] Geary [illegible] open and read:

Hacienda Villa Calle de Constancia No. 10, Encinavienta, Sonora [illegible] A

Will be glad to have you. Will cable from New Orleans exact date of arrival. DOLORES.

The shadow of disappointment settled over Billy's face as he read. Mother Jenks noted it instantly.

"What's 'e got to say, Willie?" she demanded.

"It isn't he. It's she!" Billy replied. "Besides the cablegram isn't for me at all. It's for one Henrietta Wilkes Calle de Constancia, No. 10, and who the devil Henrietta Wilkes is I haven't the faintest notion. Poor Ellen and my sister by that name, Mother!"

Mother Jenks' red face had gone white. "Henrietta Wilkes was my maiden name, Willie," she confessed shortly, "but there's only one human being as 'ad either me or me mother's name. Good, Willie, 'ow's Ellen?"

Billy read the message aloud, and when he had finished, to his amazement, Mother Jenks laid her head on the table and began to weep.

CHAPTER V.

Without quite realizing why he did so, Billy doubled that four and had grief on the bottom of that. Mother Jenks' distress, and in his awkward, masculine way he placed his arm around Mother Jenks' shoulders should her gently and bade her remember that chins might come and go again, but the old William Geary would remain half true and steadfast friend in any and all opportunities that might occur.

"For them are brave words, Willie," Mother Jenks replied between sobs, "an' I'll not 'ave you go back to the past if you don't want to."

"Whatever you've been up to, Mother, it was a kind and charitable deed of that kind, I am certain. I'll be proud to stand up to his own Emery, sincerely.

"Ah, Geard is my babee, Willie," cooed out that way," moaned Mother Jenks, and the aggrieved Billy's hand ran from that mellow, shaking voice to the gray head and comforted.

"Her name is Dolores Rose. If I'm not my big friend Ricardo Rivas, president of this blasted oil on earth, or me and my sainted Emery first come to Encinavienta. It was too good to be something for them up from the government on the square, and they couldn't understand, till along with been kicked in—cuffed by a long pair of bloody rotters.

Regards as grace, sainted Emery, a commission as colonel in the battalion.

"Yonder stand the hills," Mother Jenks continued. "On the rebels got up a dozen Hanoverian gunboats, and Emery, 'e 'ad command of them. Then Emery's battery to hills—now the government forces fell back upon Encinavienta, an' as we won the docks to go to work to if they wouldn't 'ave the—and let the hundreds an' hundreds of the rebel side, leavin' Don Ricardo an' Emery an' maybe fifty—the gentry in the palace. In course they fought to a finish, aristocrats, all of them, they 'ad to die fight it or starve a prince-pended.

"He had heard the tale before including the recital of the sainted Emery's gallant dash from the blazing palace in an effort to save Don Ricardo's only child, a girl of seven, and of his capture and subsequent escape.

"That ended the revolution," Mother Jenks continued. "But one's some think I've never told a livin' soul exactly 'ow Emery was be-wounded, a-told me before 'e'd all the younger.

"I'm a-sittin' out on the Malecon, so I tried a four wheeler an' went out and rescued the poor lamb. I did 'er until the hurricane of the next fruit steamer, a-on I shipped 'er to New Orleans in care of the shareholders. He did 'er, care in the Catholic convent there for 'er, Emery said: 'Henrietta, keep an eye on the little slipper an' do yer damndest to see she's raised a lydy.' He rather was a gentleman, an' you 'ave got to forgive a mode you Mrs. Colonel Jenks.' So I've made a lydy out of 'er. Willie, education, planner lessons, paintin' singin', an' deport mind. After she graduated from the convent I 'ad 'er take a course in the University of California. New orleans wasn't swathy for 'er, an' she needed a change of climate an' for [illegible] complexion. Knowing I 'ad a friend at the United Fruit company's line of vessels showed me the passenger and I'll explain that as a result of your de- parture for the United States it will [illegible] Encinavienta [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]