

# Webster—Man's Man

By PETER B. KYNE

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

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## "SHE'S THE FUTURE MRS. W."

Stuart Webster, mining engineer, man's man, 29 years young, boards in Death Valley, California, on his way back to civilization after a long absence. He is dreaming of cool baths, silk pajamas and hnm and eggs. He looks like a hole to the porter and the conductor. His way of changing his views gives a hint of the man. Then he meets a lady, who makes his heart flip over for the first time in all his days. Being what he is and also girl-shy, he does not take advantage of his opportunity. But he just had to find out who the no-longer-distressed lady was determined to hatch up a scheme to meet her again—and marry her. Dolores Rucy, clad in purple and fine linen, John goes to the club in Denver, the nearest approach to a home he has known in years. There he is offered a \$25,000-a-year job with the certainty of a salary by a capitalist friend, Edward P. Jerome. While he is hesitating, death to go to work again so soon, he receives a delayed letter from a particular pal, Billy Geary, asking him to finance a gold-mining proposition in Central America and go 50-50 with him on the profits. Thereupon he drops the big job and decides to answer the call of friendship and return to Sobrante.

### CHAPTER II—Continued.

Webster retorted humorously exactly what you might expect. I like to make more fun spending it. \$100,000, and now I want it—and I'm going to. Do argue with me. I'm a lunatic and I'll have my way. If I hear of Sobrante and with Billy Geary, there to come, red or black, I'd feel done something low and small. The boy's appeal I have made my answer, back alive but broke, you hear you'll give me the same.

"Poor Jerome admitted. The job open 30 days. At that period I'll give you a sweater, Neddy."

excitement and adventure in Sobrante and I've just seen. I'm like an old burro knee-deep in alfalfa just don't take kindly to the same old burro, you won't all you've sneaked through a fence to get out into a feed and starve." Jerome heartily and promulgated a proverb that life is just one after the other—an in- of liver and disappoint-

and it so?" Webster queried. "That he was being looked up sharply. Webster with that no, the man was also- whereupon Jerome faculty of further argu- John Stuart Webster loss. Still, he could not as he reflected how Web- Fate had granted him being. He marveled that he be so light-hearted and under the circumstances."

ad his thoughts. "Good," he said, and extended "Don't worry about me. ways kind to fools, my w is never their portion. Billy's call I have a feel- in answering the call of nature."

know how truly he spoke, it if he had, that knowl- not have changed his an-

### CHAPTER III.

following his decision role of angel to Billy concession in Sobrante, Webster, like Mr. Pepps,

found him in the office Joe Daingerfeld, of the engineering works, where, he had in his character- istic fashion purchased for a ten-stamp mill. It order, and Daingerfeld

ing to cost you about half Jack," he informed Web- the order was finally

ained. "You don't sup- enough to pay for it Joe?" he queried. first to scout the coun- meantime keep all this warehouse until I can cable to ship, when on me at sight for the with bill of lading at- upon investigation, I find the isn't all my partner cable a cancellation, fear that nice fat order it."

erfeld's office Webster purchase a steamer way ticket and sleep- station—after which he hotel and set about journey.

Jerome, as sour and ting hen, accompanied cab to the station, loth and pleading to the hope that Jack Web- would triumph over and boyish yearning He clung to Webster's walked slowly down the at the steps of the the wanderer's reserva- porter, carrying some passed them by, fol-

lowed by a girl in a green tailor-made suit. As she passed, John Stuart Webster looked fairly into her face, started as if hee-stung, and hastily lifted his hat. The girl briefly returned his scrutiny with sudden interest, decided she did not know him, and reproved him with a glance that even passed old Neddy Jerome did not fail to assimilate.

"Wow, wow!" he murmured. "The next time you try that, Johnny Webster, be sure you're right—"

"Good land o' Goshen, Neddy," Webster replied. "Fry me in bread crumbs, if that isn't the same girl! Let me go, Neddy. Quick! Good-bye, old chap. I'm on my way."

"Nonsense! The train doesn't pull out for seven minutes yet. Who is she, John, and why does she excite you so?"

"Who is she, you ancient horse thief! Why, if I have my way—and I'm certainly going to try to have it—she's the future Mrs. W."

"Alas! Poor Yorick, I knowed him well," Jerome answered. "Take a tip from the old man, John. I've been through the mill and I know. Never marry a girl that can freeze you with a glance. It isn't safe. By the way, what's the fair charmer's name?"

"I've got it down in my memorandum book, but I can't recall it this minute—Spanish name."

"John, my dear boy, be careful," Neddy Jerome counseled. "Stick to your own kind of people— Is this a—er—a nice girl, John?"

"How do I know—I mean, how dare you ask? Of course, she's nice. Can't you see she is? And besides, why should you be so fearful?"

"I'll have you understand, young man, that I have considerable interest in the girl you're going to marry. By the way, where did you first meet this girl? Who introduced you?"

"I haven't met her, and I've never been introduced," Webster complained, and poured forth the tale of his adventure on the train from Death valley. Neddy was very sympathetic.

"Well, no wonder she didn't recognize you when you saluted her to-night," he agreed. "Thought you were another brute of a man trying to make a mash. By thunder, Jack, I'm afraid you made a mistake when you shed your whiskers and buried your old clothes."

"I don't care what she thinks. I found her. I lost her, and I've found her again; and I'm not going to take any further chances."

The porter, having delivered his charge's baggage in her section, was

and God bless you. If your fit of insanity passes within 90 days, cable me; and if you're broke, stick the Colorado Con. for the cable tolls."

"Good old wagon!" Webster replied affectionately. Then he shook hands and climbed aboard the train. The instant he disappeared in the vestibule, however, Neddy Jerome waddled rapidly down the track to Car 9, climbed aboard, and made his way to Lower 6. The young lady in the green tailor-made suit was there, looking idly out of the window.

"Young lady," Jerome began, "may I presume to address you for a moment on a matter of great importance to you? Don't be afraid of me, my dear. I'm old enough to be your father, and besides, I'm one of the nicest old men you ever met."

She could not forbear a smile. "Very well, sir," she replied.

Neddy Jerome produced a pencil and card. "Please write your name on this card," he pleaded, "and I'll telegraph what I want to say to you. There'll be a man coming through this car in a minute, and I don't want him to see me here. Please trust me, young lady."

The young lady did not trust him, however, although she wrote on the card. Jerome thanked her and fled as fast as his fat old legs could carry him. Under the station arc he read the card.

"Henrietta Wilkins," he murmured. "By the gods, one would never suspect a name like that belonged to a face like that. By jingo, it would be strange if that madman persuaded her to marry him. I hope he does. If I'm any judge of character, Jack Webster won't be cruel enough to chain that vision to Sobrante; and besides, she's liable to make him decide who's most popular with him—Henrietta or Billy Geary. If she does, I'll play Geary to lose. Well! Needs must when the devil drives." And he entered the station telegraph office and commenced to write.

An hour later Miss Dolores Rucy, alias Henrietta Wilkins, was handed this remarkably verbose and truly candid telegram:

"Miss Henrietta Wilkins, Lower 6, Car 9, on board train 24.

"Do you recall the bewhiskered, ragged individual you met on the S. P., L. A. & S. L. train in Death valley ten days ago? He lifted his hat to you tonight, and you almost killed him with a look. It did not occur to him that you would not recognize him disguised as a gentleman, and he lifted his hat on impulse. Do not hold it against him. The sight of you again set his reason tottering on its throne, and he told me his sad story.

"This man, John Stuart Webster, is wealthy, single, forty, fine and crazy as a March hare. He is in love with you. You might do worse than fall in love with him. He is the best mining engineer in the world, and he is now aboard the same train with you, en route to New Orleans, thence to take the steamer to Buenaventura, Sobrante, C. A., where he is to meet another lunatic and finance a hole in the ground. I do not want him to go to Sobrante. If you marry him, he will not. If you do not marry him, you still might arrange to make him listen to reason. If you can induce him to come to work for me within the next 90 days, whether you marry him or not, I will give you \$5,000 the day he reports on the job. Please bear in mind that he does not know I am doing this. If he did, he would kill me, but business is business, and this is a plain business proposition. I am putting you wise, so you will know your power and can exercise it if you care to earn the money. If not, please forget about it. At any rate, please do me the favor to communicate with me on the subject, if at all interested.

"Edward P. Jerome, President Colorado Consolidated Mines, Ltd., Care Engineers' Club."

The girl read and reread this telegram several times, and presently a slow little smile commenced to creep around the corners of her adorable mouth.

"I believe that amazing old gentleman is absolutely dependable," was the decision at which she ultimately arrived, and enlisting for a telegraph blank, she wired the old schemer:

"Five thousand not enough money. Make it \$10,000 and I will guarantee to deliver the man within 90 days. I stay on this train to New Orleans."



"I'm Old Enough to Be Your Father." returning for another tip. Webster reached out and accosted him. "Henry," he said, "where did you stow that young lady's hand baggage?" "Lower Six, Car Nine, sah."

"I have a weakness for colored boys who are quick at figures," Webster declared, and dismissed the porter with the gratuity. He turned to Jerome. "Neddy, I feel that I am answering the call to a great adventure," he declared solemnly.

"I know it, Jack. Good-bye, son,

"Accept. When you deliver the

goods, communicate with me and get your money."

"JEROME."

She snuggled back among the pillows and considered the various aspects of this amazing contract which she had undertaken with a perfect stranger. Hour after hour she lay there, thinking over this preposterous situation, and the more she weighed it, the more interesting and attractive the proposition appeared. But one consideration troubled her. How would the unknown knight manage an introduction? Or, if he failed to manage it, how was she to overcome that obstacle?

"Oh, dear," she murmured, "I do hope he's brave."

She need not have worried. Hours before, the object of her thought had settled all that to his own complete satisfaction, and as a consequence was sleeping peacefully and gaining strength for whatever of fortune, good or ill, the morrow might bring forth.

### CHAPTER IV.

Day was dawning in Buenaventura, republic of Sobrante, as invariably it dawns in the tropics—without extended preliminary symptoms. The soft, silvery light of a full moon that had stayed out scandalously late had merged imperceptibly into gray; the gray was swiftly yielding place to a faint crimson that was spreading and deepening upward athwart the east.

In the patio of Mother Jenks' establishment in the Calle de Concordia, No. 13, the first shafts of morning light were filtering obliquely through the orange trees and creeping in under the deep, Gothic-arched veranda flanking the western side of the patio. Presently, through the silent reaches of the Calle de Concordia, the sound of a prodigious knocking and thumping echoed, as of some fretful individual seeking admission at the street door of El Buen Amigo, by which euphonious designation Mother Jenks' caravansary was known to the public of Buenaventura. In the second story, front, a window slid back and a woman's voice, husky with that huskiness that speaks so accusingly of cigarettes and alcohol, demanded:

"Quien es? Who is it? Que quiere usted? Wot do yer want?"

"Ye might dispense wit' that paranoic conversation whin addressin' the likes av me," a voice replied. "Tis me—Cafferty. I have a cablegram Leber give me to deliver."

"Gawd's truth! Would yer wake the 'ole 'ouse with yer 'ammering?"

"All right. I'll not say another word!"

Without the portal stood Don Juan Cafetero, of whom a word or two before proceeding.

To begin, Don Juan Cafetero was not his real name, but rather a free Spanish translation of the Gaelic John Cafferty. Mr. Cafferty was an exile of Erin with a horrible thirst. He had first arrived in Sobrante some five years before, as section boss in the employ of the little foreign-owned narrow-gauge railway which ran from Buenaventura on the Caribbean coast to San Miguel de Padua, up-country where the nitrate beds were located. Prior to his advent the railroad people had tried many breeds of section boss without visible results, until a Chicago man, who had come to Sobrante to install an inter-communicating telephone system in the government buildings, suggested to the superintendent of the road, who was a German, that the men made for bosses come from Erin's isle; wherefore Mr. Cafferty had been imported at a price of \$5 a day gold. Result—a marked improvement in the road bed and consequently the train schedules, and the ultimate loss of the Cafferty soul.

Something in the climate of Sobrante must have appealed to a touch of laissez faire in Don Juan's amiable nature, for in the course of time he had taken unto himself, without bell or book, after the fashion of the proletariat of Sobrante, the daughter of one Esteban Manuel Enrique Jose Maria Pasqual y Miramontes, an estimable peon who was singularly glad to have his daughter off his hands and no questions asked. Following the fashion of the country, however, Esteban had forthwith moved the remainder of his numerous progeny under the mantle of Don Juan Cafetero's philanthropy, and resigned a position which for many years he had not enjoyed—to-wit: salting and packing green hides at a local abattoir. This foolhardy economic move had so incensed Don Juan that in a fit of pique he spurned his father-in-law (we must call Esteban something and so why split hairs?) under the tails of his canvas, with such vigor as to sever forever the friendly relations hitherto existing between the families, Mrs. Cafferty (again we transgress, but what of it?) subsequently passed away in child birth, and no sooner had she been decently buried than Don Juan took a week off to drown his sorrows.

In this condition he had encountered Esteban Manuel Enrique Jose Maria Pasqual y Miramontes and called him out of his name. In the altercation that ensued Esteban, fully convinced that he had received the nub end of the transaction from start to finish, cut Don Juan severely; Don Juan had thereupon slain Esteban with a .44-caliber revolver and upon emerging from the railroad hospital a month later had been tried by a Sobrante magistrate and fined the sum of \$20,000, legal tender of the republic of Sobrante. Of course, he had paid it off within six months from his wages as section boss, but the memory of the injustice always rankled him, and gradually he moved down the scale, and successively from section boss to day laborer, day laborer to tropical tramp, and tropical tramp to beach-

comber, in which latter state he had now existed for several months.

To return to Mother Jenks. Before Don Juan could even utter a mattutinal greeting, Mother Jenks laid finger to lip and silenced him. "Go back to Leber's and return in an hour," she whispered. "I 'ave my reasons for wantin' that bloomin' cablegram delivered later."

Don Juan hadn't the least idea what Mother Jenks' reasons might be, but he presumed she was up to some chicanery, and so he winked his blood-shot eye very knowingly and nodded his acquiescence in the program.

When he had gone, Mother Jenks went behind the bar and fortified herself with her morning's morning— which rite having been performed, her sleep-benumbed brain livened up immediately.

"Gord's truth!" the lady murmured. "An' me about to turn him adrift for the lawst fortnight! Well for 'im 'e allers admirded the picture o' my sainted 'Emery, as was the splittin' image of his own fawther. 'Evings! 'E'lls bells! But that was a bit of a tight squeak! Just as I'm fully convinced 'e's beat it an' I'm left 'oldin' the sack, all along o' my kindness of 'eart, 'e gets the cablegram 'e's been lookin' for this two months past; an' 'e allers claimed as 'ow say time 'e got a cablegram it'd be an answer to 'is letter, with money to foiler! My word, but that was touch an' go!"

Still congratulating herself upon her good fortune in intercepting Don Juan

Cafetero, Mother Jenks proceeded upstairs to her chamber, clothed herself, and adjourned to the kitchen. After giving orders for an extra special breakfast for two, Mother Jenks returned to her cantina, and formally opened the same for the business of that day and night.

To her came presently, via the tiled hallway, the object of her solicitude, a young man on the sunny side of thirty. He was thin for one of his height and breadth of chest; in color his countenance resembled that of a sick Chinaman. His hair was thick and wavy, but lusterless; his dark blue eyes carried a hint of jaundice; and a generous mouth, beneath an equally generous upper lip, gave ample ground for the suspicion that while Mr. William Geary's speech denoted him an American citizen, at least one of his maternal ancestors had been wooed and won by an Irishman. An old Panama hat, and relic of a prosperous past, a pair of soiled buckskin pumps, a suit of unbleached linen equally befouled, and last but not least, the remnants of a smile that much hard luck could never quite obliterate, completed his attire—and to one a stranger in the tropics would appear to constitute a complete inventory of Mr. Geary's possessions.

"Dulce corazon mio, I extend a greeting," he called at the entrance. "I trust you rested well last night, Mother Jenks, and that no evil dreams were born of your midnight repast of frijoles refritos, marmalade, and arrau-arr!"

"Chop yer spoonin', Willie," Mother Jenks stammered. "My heye! So I'm yer sweet'eart, eh? Yer wheedin' blighter, makin' love to a girl as is old enough to be yer mother!"

"A woman," Mr. Geary retorted sagely and not a whit abashed, "is at the apex of her feminine charms at thirty-seven."

He knew his landlady to be not a day under fifty, but such is the ease with which the Irish scatter their blarney that neither Billy Geary nor Mother Jenks regarded this pretty speech in the light of an observation immaterial, inconsequential and not germane to the matter at issue. Nevertheless, there was a deeper reason for his blarney. This morning, watching the telltale tinge of pleasure underlying the alcohol-begotten hue of the good creature's face, he felt almost ashamed of his own heartlessness—almost, but not quite.

"Gor, Willie, I ain't respectable. She's comin' to see me— an' I cawn't let 'er."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Jud Tunkins.

Jud Tunkins says everybody admits that honesty is the best policy, only a lot of folks differ as to the precise definition of the word.

Inter-Mountain Editorial Hilites

Selected for Western Newspaper Union Service by R. A. C. and C. B. W.

The laziest man knows that he's misunderstood; that he never had a chance, and besides, when he did have one, somebody took it away from him.—Carson (Nev.) News.

Prosecuting sounds a little like price-cutting if you say it fast. But it's doubtful if talk of the first had much to do with the second.—Pocatello (Idaho) News.

By paying \$40 a day for an apartment in Chicago, Ethel Barrymore finds that she is saving \$110 a day over the amount it would cost her to live in a Chicago hotel. Well, that is one way to save money. Another way would be to stay away from Chicago.—Goldfield (Nev.) Tribune.

No need to worry—there will be various important topics for discussion, even after the campaign is over.—Butte (Mont.) Miner.

Uncle Sam is employing beer testers to find law-breaking breweries. There are 20 applicants for every job.—Nampa (Idaho) Free Press.

English Coal Miners Strike—head line. And we suppose gasoline will go up another cent.—Caldwell (Idaho) Tribune.

Maybe the reason Russia doesn't join the League of Nations is she's afraid she'd first have to take a bath and get shaved.—Ephraim (Utah) Enterprise.

The sum of six-bits expended in labor and about \$2 in leather becomes a \$12 pair of shoes by the time it reaches the consumer. Ah, well, we never were very strong at figgerin'.—Logan (Utah) Journal.

The wind-bag orators on the soap boxes don't accomplish much to create unrest, but the profiteers taking in their millions and indifferent to the welfare of the people, are more successful along that line.—Elko (Nev.) Free Press.

After all, a Briton who has his winter coal in ahead of the strike seems to be much better off than an American who, despite the fact that there is no strike here, cannot get coal.—Tonopah (Nev.) Bonanza.

Many hundreds of hogs have been shipped out of this district the past year, but we still have the road hog with us.—Rupert (Idaho) News.

Under new prohibition regulations it is asserted that diplomats may no longer ship alcoholic beverages over the lines of common carriers, but may have them transported by private truck. The job of chauffeur for the minister of a foreign power is likely to attract numerous searchers for congenial employment.—Tonopah (Nev.) Bonanza.

The tide of emigration has surely set towards the United States, but up to a late hour it had not floated Emma Goldman, Berkman, et al. back to these shores, nor is it ever likely to have a chance to do so.—Butte (Mont.) Miner.

At eighteen they're terribly wise in their own conceit, and very foolish in our older estimation, but don't you wish you were that way and eighteen?—Carson City (Nev.) News.

Over in Europe soldiers deem it a great honor to be decorated for bravery and advanced from the ranks to some minor position. Down in Mexico the man who is brave enough advances himself to the highest position and selects his own decorations.—Emmett (Idaho) Examiner.

Adam went to sleep one night some thousands of years B. C. During the night one of his ribs was removed. In the morning he woke, looked about him, and exclaimed: "Hello, September Morn! How are you, old girl?"—Emmett (Idaho) Examiner.

There was a senator elected from Montana some years ago. He was elected by reason of his generosity in distributing "hooch." He was not well informed. When he reached Washington, where he ably misrepresented his constituency, he heard much discussion about the tariff bill, then before the house. He ran into one of his conferees and said to him: "Say, Pard, who in the hell is this Tariff Bill, they talk so much about; I know Buffalo Bill and Texas Bill and Wild Bill, but I hain't yet met this here Tariff Bill."—Paul (Idaho) Press.

The cost of operating the United States government is now more than eight times as great as it was six years ago. By dividing the expense of the government by the number of people residing in the United States, it will be found that the average per capita tax is more than \$50.—Salt Lake Telegram.

In Oregon has been found a cave which is heated by nature. Many flats are heated that way in the fall.—Salt Lake Telegram.



"Chop Your Spoonin', Willie."