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I the tunnel, to the sigdozens of large bats. iched the vein, Webster iples of the ore every eet, crawled after Billy e stope and back to the n the face of which he erous samples; then he nto the sunshine again,

perspiring. I be a real miner yet: n't," was all the praise



is youthful partner,

him in anticipation of s Webster got out his l on Page Seven)



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(Continued from page 6)

For three days Webster worked, determining the values of each samole, only to find that his assays confirmed Billy's. "You were right, son," he finally announced. "This mine is a humdinger and no mistake; if you and I live ten years we'll be worth \$10,000,000 between us-maybe more." Billy's jaundiced eyes glowed hun-rily. "We'll put in a hundred

"Well, we'll try ten for a starter," Webster interrupted dryly, "and add more as the mine pays its way. It's the sweetest mining proposition on earth-only, like all high-class goods, it has one flaw when you examine it

closely."
"You're crazy," Billy challenged.

"Sarros!" Webster replied smiling-"That scoundrel makes a gamble out of an otherwise sure thing. However," he added, recalling the note received from Ricardo Ruey just before his departure from Buenaventura and reflecting that to be forewarned is to be forearmed, "we'll accept the gamble. That rascal can't live forever, and he may be eliminated before he causes us any trouble."

"What will it cost us to get this mine on a paying basis, Johnny?"

"Well, back home, I'd figure on spending at least \$100,000; but I dare say, taking into consideration the low cost of labor in Sobrante and the raw, natural resources of power and timber right on the ground, we ought to put this deal over for \$50,000 at the outside. Praise be, I have cashenough to do the trick without calling in any help, and such being the case, we'll not waste any time but hop to the job in a hurry and make the fur fly.

"Right, Jack. What's the program?" "Well, first off, son, I'm not going to stay in this country and lose myself managing this mine. That's your job, because you're young and unimportant in your profession and have the ability to get away with the job. You can afford to spend the next 15 years here, but I cannot. I can only afford to come down here every couple of years and relieve you for a va-cation."

"That's the way I figured it, Jack." "All right then, Bill, let us start in by giving you your first vacation. If you're going to dig in here and make the fur fly, you've got to be in tip-top physical condition—and you are thin and gaunted and full of chills and fever. Just before I left Buenaventura I cashed a draft for \$5,000 on my letter of credit at the Banco Nacional. and placed it to the credit of your account there.

"Tomorrow morning you will take your horse, one pack mule, and one mozo and ride for San Miguel de Padua, where you will take the train for Buenaventura. In Buenaventura von may do what you blame please, but if I were you, boy, I'd try to get married and go back to the U.S. A. for my honeymoon. And when I finally hit a town that contained some regand rebabbitt me and overhaul my bearings and put me in such nice running order I'd be firing on all 12 cyl-

"And when I was feeling tip-top once more I'd wire old John Stuart Webster and tell him so, after which I'd stand by for a cable from the said sourdough inviting me to return and take up my labors."

Billy's wan yellow face lighted up like a surrise on the desert. "I guess that plan's kind of poor," he announced feelingly. "You're right, Jack. I'm in rotten condition and I ought to be right before I start. Still, if I should arrange to get married before I leave, I'd like mighty well to have a good man and true see me safely over the hurdles."

"That's nice, son, but I haven't time to be your best man. Arranging the honeymoon lets me out, Bill. I'm in a hurry to finish here and get back, so the sooner we both start our prospective jobs the sooner we'll finish. Have a quiet little marriage, Bill, without any fuss or feathers or voices breathing o'er Eden. What are the odds, provided you get hitched properly? Besides, I'm in mortal dread of that town of Buenaventura. The sewer system is bad; it's rotten with fever; and you'd better get that girl out of it P. D. Q., and the quicker the better. Myself, I prefer to stay up here in these mountains in a tem perate climate where there are no

mosquitoes." Billy saw that Webster was serious and would resent any interference in his plans. "All right, Jack," he assented. "You're the boss."

"Fine. Now, Bill, you listen to father and be guided accordingly. When you get to Buenaventura, wire the Bingham Engineering company Denver, using my name, and tell them to add to my order given them last month and held for shipping directions, 12 dozen picks, 12 dozen shovels, 12 dozen mattocks, say six dozen axes, brush knives, a big road p'ow, and whatever other things you happen to think of and which would come in andy when building our road. Also, when you get to New Orleans buy a

need it for getting in supplies from San Miguel de Padua. Pay for the truck also, and if you go broke and cannot reach me by cable, wire Neddy Jerome at the Engineers' club in Denver and kick his eye out in my honored name.

"I guess that's about all of your job, Bill. As for me, I'll camp right here. I'll have a deal of surveying to do and I plan to sweat the booze out of that Cafferty person. I'll make Don Juan my chain man and run the tail off him. Then I'll be busy with preliminary plans, arrang-ing for labor and so on, and when I'm idle I'll go hunting."

In conformity with this plan, therefore, Billy said good-by to his friend and packed out for San Miguel de Padua bright and early next morning. During the following ten days Webster managed to keep himself fairly busy around the camp at the mine; then for a week he hunted and fished, and finally, when that began to pall on him, his agile mind returned to business and the consideration of the possibility of a flaw in Billy's title to the claim; whereupon he suddenly decided to return to Buenaventura and investigate (that title fully before proceeding to throw dol-

lars right and left.

At the head of his little cavalcade, therefore, he rode out one morning for the railroad, whereat providence, in its inscrutable wisdom, ordained that en route he should fall in with no less a personage than Don Ricardo Luiz Ruey, ne Andrew Bowers. Ri-



and at sight of Webster he shouted with delight and spurred toward him. "What the devil! You, Rick, the government cut-up. What are you doing in these parts?" Webster rode up and shook hands.

"Oh, I'm Robin Hooding it around this part of the country. It is so secluded, you know, and Sarros hasn't any friends or any telegraph lines or any garrisons up this way. I heard in San Miguel de Padua that you were camped yonder, and I was on my way over to confer with you on matters of state. Met your friend, Geary, at El Buen Amigo a couple of weeks ago, just before he sailed for the United States. He was telling me you had to have a lot of tools for road building, so I cabled in a secret cipher to the Sobrantean revolutionary junta in New Orleans to ship these tools to you immediately. They arrived on the last trip of the Atlanta and now repose in Leber's warehouse waiting for you to call and remove

"You scoundrel! What have you sent me?

"A couple of hundred rifles and three machine guns, branded axes, picks, shovels, plows, and so on. I also ran in three cases of ammunition. labeled grindstones, two more cases disguised as bolts, and quite several thousand labeled nails in kego. should feel rather sorry for you if my friend, Sarros, should get suspicious and investigate, but I haven't any fear that he will. You see, he knows you're here on legitimate business. He has investigated and learned that you are a bona fide mining engineer of considerable reputation-and then, you know, your friend, Geary, dickered with him for the concession. The mining property you are about to develop belongs to the people, not to Sarros; yet he has bartered it away and will divert the royalty to his own pocket instead of the public treasury." "Hum-m-m! What do you want me

to do with all those munitions consigned to me?" "Arrange with Leber to keep them there until you get ready to build

your road into me mine, I want them there when my American mercenaries arrive in Buenaventura. By the way, you are going to import these mercenaries for me. They are American miners and road builders in the employ of the Honda Mining & Development company, which is to be the name of your enterprise. I hope you'll like the name, Webster. I picked it out myself."

"You cool scoundrel! You're making cat's paw out of me.'

"That is because you happen to be so handy for my purpose. You see my plan, do you not? I'm going to attack Buenaventura from within and without. I'm going to come down on Sarros like a wolf on the fold, and the job is scheduled for next Saturday night a week."

"Look here, Rick, my boy, I have

no desire to mix in the politics of this country."

"You have some desire, however, to mix in its wealth," Ricardo reminded "Well?"

"I'm the only man that can help you. By the way, do not order your machinery shipped until after I am seated firmly on the throne of my fathers."

"It's been framed with Sarros to let you spend your money on that concession and get the mine in running order; then a fake suit, alleging an error in the government survey, will be filed. It will be claimed that the concession given your friend, Geary, is, by virtue of erroneous government surveys, the property of a citizen of Sobrante. The courts here do as Sarros tells them. You are to be kicked out, busted, and despairing, and your nicely equipped little mine will be taken over as a government monopoly and run for the benefit of the government, to-wit, Sarros and his satellites. We had to cook up a dirty deal like that to save your life. Of course, now that I have warned you in time, you are safe. We schemed a proposition, however, that worked both ways. It enabled us to save you and to save us, by permitting the shipment, free of suspicion, of arms for the rebels that are to attack the city from within. Naturally I had to cache their arms within the city-and that was a hard problem until you happened along. Thank you, fairy godfather."

"My thanks are due you, Ricardo. I'm for you, first, last, and all the time, and against this Sarros outfit. By the way, how do you purpose moving your machine guns?"

"We'll have to carry them, I guess." "Well, I'll have a small auto-truck delivered in Buenaventura by that time. You might arrange to armor it with sheet steel; and with a couple of machine guns mounted in it, and a crew of resolute Americans behind the machine guns, you could ca-per from one end of the city to the other and clear a path for your in-

"Thank you, my friend. I'll borarmor it. That's a bully idea. you bound for Buenaventura now?"

Webster nodded. "Then," Ricardo suggested "I'll meet you in my room El Buen Amigo next Wednesday night at 11 and explain the details of my plans to you if you care to hear I think they're air-tight myself, but somehow I think I'd feel more

certain of them if you approve them."
"I'll be there, Rick, and the day you run that outlaw Sarros off the grass you'll know why I am for you." "Good-by, old man. You will never know how grateful you have made,

Ruey shook hands with Webster and rode off through the timber, leaving John Stuart Webster to pursue the even tenor of his way, until at length he arrived once more in Buenaventura and sought accommodations at the Hotel Mateo. And there, as he entered the lobby and gazed through a glass door across the patio and into the veranda, he saw that which disturbed him greatly. In a big wicker rocker Dolores Ruey sat, rocking gently and busily stitching on a piece of

fancy work! Billy Geary gone back to the Unit-ed States, and Dolores was still in Buenaventura! Amazing! what the devil did Billy mean by letting her have her own way like Of course, they hadn't been married, or she would not now be out there on the veranda, and, of course, they hadn't quarreled, because that was an impossibility, and, of course, Billy had departed alone for the U. S. A., else he would have returned to their camp in the hills back of San Miguel de Padua.

"Well, I know what I'm going to do," Webster decided. "I'm not going to be led into temptation while Billy's not on the job—so I'll not put up at the Hotel Mateo after all. I'll just sneak around to El Buen Amigo and fix it with that old Mother Jenks not to tip off my presence in town to Dolores Ruey until I can get the lay of the land and see what the devil has happened to all my welllaid plans."

He retreated out me front door and called a carriage, into which he was about to step, bag and baggage, when I'on Juan Cafetero came rushing up in great excitement. "Sure, where are ye goin' now, sor. Is there no room for ye in the Hotel Mateo?"

"Their beds have jiggers in them; and I just remembered that," Webster fibbed. "Hop in, John, and we'll drive around to Mr. Geary's lodgings in El Buen Amigo."

"But I come t'rough the patio just now," Don Juan explained, "an' who should I meet but the young leddy." "You infernal scoundrel! Did you tell her I was in town?"

"Sure I did, sor. An' why not?" "None of your infernal business.
You've spoiled everything. You're a muddle-headed monkey and I've a great notion to let you get drunk Take the baggage back into

Don Juan Cafetero, greatly humble I and rebuffed, stepped aside and watched Webster stride back into the hotel. "God love ye, sor," he mum-bled, "knowin' what I know, is it likely I'd let ye make a monkey out av her or yerself? Ye made yer plans wit' Misther Geary wit'out consultin' her. Now go, ye grrand big divil, an find out why she kicked yer schame to smithereens." And with a solemn and knowing wink at the duffle bag. Don Juan picked that article up and followed after his master.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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