

SENIOR JIM DANDY

By MARION WOODWARD

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When the American Silver company opened its mine at La Paz on concessions granted by the Peruvian government it was tacitly understood that the corporation would be "assessed" now and then for the benefit of a new revolutionary leader, but there was to be no further extortion. There was none, and the profits began to pile up.

Then there came a call from Senor Casolani. The senior was not the president of Peru nor yet the general of its army nor the admiral of its navy. He was simply Casolani, outlaw and guerrilla. When Peru was at war he was a guerrilla and aimed to kill more enemies than friends. When he was at peace he was an outlaw and robber and showed no favor. He had his headquarters in the mountains and a band of fifty cutthroats to do his bidding, and he was both feared and respected. Many attempts had been made to capture or kill him, but he always came out on top, and when bribes were offered he took the money and shot the bearers.

It was a merry life that Senor Casolani led. There was robbery in the morning, killing at noon and the sack-



"WILL YOU WALK OUT OR BE KICKED OUT?"

ing of a church or convent to live away the hours of evening. He lived on the fat of the land, felt that he owned all of South America, and there were times when he used to actually ache for some one to defy him. After the American mine began shipping ore that was 90 per cent pure and the stockholders had received a first dividend of 60 per cent the senior made a call at La Paz. He left his bodyguard of ten ruffians outside, entered the office and stated his case in a soft and gentle voice. He wanted a loan of \$5,000 in cash, and he didn't want to spend more than half an hour haggling about it.

Old Huabasco, native assistant superintendent at the mine, had known of the senior for many years. In fact, the senior had cut off his brother's ears and his brother-in-law's head on a festive occasion, and had only missed him by a hair's breadth. With old Huabasco to plead his case, assisted by threats to call in his bodyguard and turn them loose, the senior departed a richer and happier man. Three months later he tried the same thing and won. He tried it a third time and was as courteously received.

Then the officials in New York rebelled and sent Jimmy Clayton down to La Paz to replace the other superintendent and stop the leak. The most that any of them knew about Jimmy was that he had come from a good family, had been left half a million dollars, at the age of twenty-four and three years later was without a shilling in his name. He would not know a mine when he saw one, and his executive abilities had never been tested, but certain stockholders got the idea that Jimmy would be a match for Senor Casolani, and he was furnished with an outfit and shipped off to the Peruvian coast. He had been at La Paz for two weeks when old Huabasco said in confidence to the small office force, all natives:

"My children, I don't exactly understand the Senor Americano. He is soft and gentle and silent, but now and then I catch a look that reminds me of sleeping danger. I must wait until I see him in the presence of Casolani. He, too, is soft and gentle and silent, but what a devil! The Senor Americano will either prove a milkop or what they call in his country a jim dandy. Wait for a few days and we shall see."

Another fortnight passed away, and then the famous guerrilla called. This was the fourth call, and he had grown so used to the road and the humility of his receptions that he came alone. He had heard of the new superintendent and had a curiosity to see him. In his heart he respected a brave man, and as he entered the office, carelessly switching his leg with a branch cut from a tree, he found himself hoping that Senor Clayton would show a bit of gameness. The American sat reading a newspaper with his feet on

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the window sill, and Senor Casolani bowed low before him, purely in sarcasm, however, and politely said:

"Permit me to introduce myself as Senor Casolani, and to hope that Senor Clayton is well."

"Thanks, awfully," replied Jimmy as he looked up from his paper and back again.

"You may have heard of me?" continued the guerrilla, secretly admiring the other's coolness, though it stung him at the same time.

"Yes. You are the infernal murderer and outlaw who has been prancing through this part of the country for the last seven or eight years. Yes, I have heard of you. In fact, I was sent down here to make your better acquaintance, and I am glad you have called."

"The usual semiannual payment is due, I believe," suggested the man as his eyes began to burn in a way to make old Huabasco's flesh creep.

"And likewise something else," grimly replied Clayton.

"I do not understand the senior."

"No? Well, if I should tell you to get out of here, would you understand that?"

It was evident to Casolani that he had a man of mettle to deal with, and there was a smile on his face as he thought of how he would make the Americano beg for his life and lick the dust off the floor before he was through with him.

"Does the senior wish to insult me?" asked the guerrilla gently.

"I couldn't if I wanted to! Look here, Casolani, this thing is played out!"

"You mean—you mean—"

"I mean that if you don't take yourself off and keep away from La Paz I'll kill you like a dog. That's pat, and you don't want to miss it. You've killed scores and robbed hundreds, and think yourself a devil of a fellow, but I'm not afraid of you. There's the door you came in at, and if you are not gone in two minutes I'll kick you out!"

"And now let me have my say," replied the guerrilla in a voice hoarse with passion and with eyes blazing like a mad tiger. "I do not shoot you where you sit because—"

"Because you are a coward at heart," interrupted Clayton.

"Because I admire a brave man. You are game, senior, and I respect you. Let me say, however, that tomorrow I will return and sweep everything here off the face of the earth and carry away your ears in my pocket. Today the mine may work; tomorrow it shall be closed down forever. Today there are 200 living men here; tomorrow all shall be dead or scattered. That is the word of Casolani, senior."

"And I am much obliged to him. Will you walk out or be kicked out?"

The guerrilla walked out and was soon lost to sight in the forest, and old Huabasco whispered to his subordinates:

"Not yet, my children—not yet. The Senor Americano is cool and calm, and there is a sting in his words, but he may be what his countrymen call a bluffer. We must wait another day."

There was but one approach to the mine, and Senor Casolani and his band would come by that road. Men were brought up from the depths of the mine to dig and trench, the electrician laid his wires and the civil engineer planned his dynamite, and for two hours before the guerrillas appeared next day Senor Clayton sat on the same chair with a level within his

reach. Nobody had run away, nor had work been suspended. Everything was going on as usual when fifty or sixty cutthroats came charging down the wide road, yells on their lips and knives in their hands. Senor Clayton looked up and watched, and after a bit his hand reached out and touched the lever. There was an explosion which made the mountain tremble in its bowels. Then he picked up his paper and began reading again.

"My children," said old Huabasco after the excited people had counted up the dead and identified Don Casolani among the number, "I told you first we must wait until Senor Casolani had called; then I told you we must wait for today. Now I tell you we need wait no longer. Let us go back to the office and give what the Americano call three cheers for what the same people also call a jim dandy of a man!"

His 's.

General Ogle, when submitting a letter for approval by the Pennsylvania legislature, which he had addressed on their behalf to the newly elected president, General Andrew Jackson, was interrupted by a dapper little fellow from Philadelphia thus:

"Pardon me, general. I do not wish to assume to make a suggestion to so distinguished a gentleman as yourself, but I cannot refrain from saying that it is customary in the east, and I may say in almost all the civilized countries of Europe, to write with a capital 'I' instead of the small 'i' in using this personal pronoun in epistolary correspondence."

General Ogle drew down his heavy brows, piercing the dandy's marrow with the fierce shaft of scorn that shot from his eye.

"Sir," said he, beginning with a hiss and ending with a roar, "when I write to such a great man as General Andrew Jackson, Democratic president of the United States, I abuse myself—I abuse myself, sir! I use as small an 'i' as I can put on paper. But, sir, if I should ever get to such a low pitch as to have to write to such a little snipe as you are I'd use an 'I,' sir, that would fill two pages of foolscap!"

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