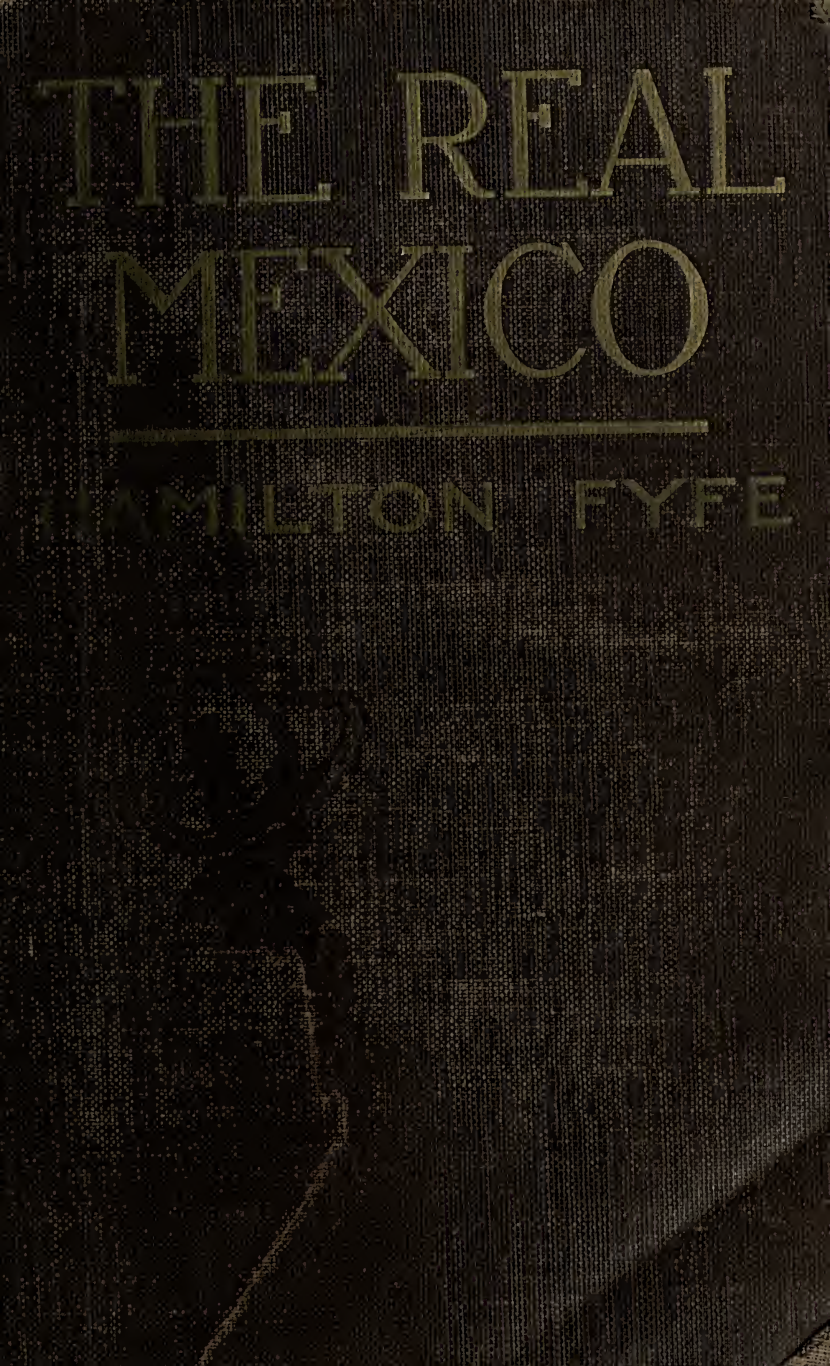
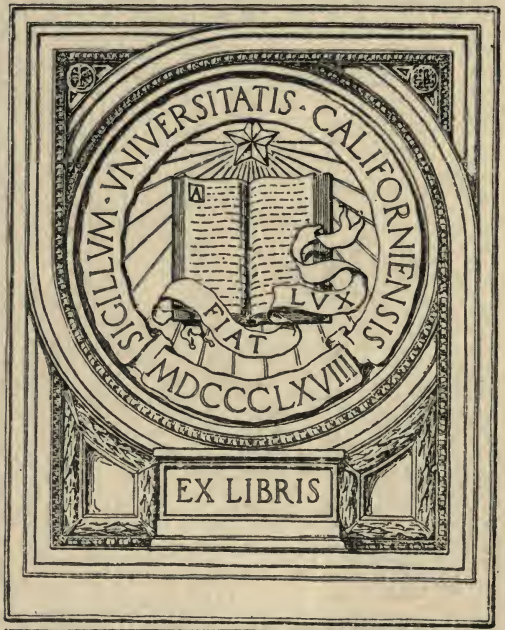
THE REAL MEXICO

HAMILTON FYFE





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THE REAL MEXICO

THE REAL MEXICO

A STUDY ON THE SPOT

BY

H. HAMILTON FYFE

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I

A CONVERSATION AT CHAPALA

On the terrace of a garden looking over Lake Chapala a group of people were talking in the warm glow of a late November afternoon. Through a dip in the mountains upon the opposite shore the snowy peak of Colima's volcano glistened against the blue. Over the shining water the boats of Indian villagers, their big sails boomed out to catch light airs, trailed lazily homeward. The bushes below us were thick with roses. The walls of the villa were blotched with the passionate purple of bougainvillia. The prospect, the quiet, the sunny golden atmosphere, should have tuned our minds to thoughts of peace and beauty. Instead we were talking of social disorders, the wreck and ruin of civil war.

"I hope, when you get Home," said one of the group, addressing me, "that you will tell them about the Real Mexico."

"I hope, for your own sake," sneered another, "that you will not. No one would believe you."

This was a business man who has lived in Mexico City for fifteen years.

"It's quite extraordinary," he went on, "how little is known about this country. The last time I was in New York a big man in Wall Street admitted to me that, until the revolution broke out, he had always thought of Mexico as being in South America. The

other day in England a rather famous man of science said he supposed it would be easy to put the rebellion down. I asked him why. He said, ' It's quite a small country, isn't it? ' and was mildly incredulous when I told him it was about as big as Europe."

" Well," chuckled the first speaker, " it isn't only folks a long way off who are ignorant about Mexico. I fancy I have heard you, and I have certainly heard any number of others who live here, say that, if old President Diaz could come back and restore his old ruthless despotic methods, all would be well."

" I've said so, and I say so still," returned the other defiantly. This brought a third speaker into the dispute.

" Rubbish ! " he declared. " Utter and absolute rubbish ! Can't you see that Mexico is in the throes of a land crisis? Exactly the same thing is happening here as happens, at some time or other, in every country. The land is first owned by village communities. They are jockeyed out of it, and it becomes the property of a few individuals. These live upon the many, who now cannot make a living unless they work for a master. At last the worms turn. They have turned here. It is the desire of the people for land which is at the bottom of the whole trouble. You have lived in the City. I live in the country and I know."

" You know about your own State," said the coffee-planter who had spoken first. " There, I admit, the land question is acute. But you must not imagine it is so all over the country. Certainly that was one of the causes of the revolution against Don Porfirio. But there was another, which in my opinion was stronger and wider-spread. I mean the creation of a middle class. Formerly in Mexico there were the high people

and the low people : those who lived on their revenues and did the head-work of the country and ran it as they pleased; and those who lived by the sweat of their brows, earning contentedly just enough to keep themselves alive. Now, between these classes there exists one composed of men who have risen from the low condition, who earn good wages as skilled artisans, who read and have begun to think. It is they who have made the old Porfirian system impossible. It is they who inflame the low people against the high."

" Then they ought to be punished and put down," pleaded a pretty woman plaintively. " I suppose that is what happened to the *peons* on our plantation. They were all right until they suddenly threatened to kill us all and set fire to the house. My husband frightened them thoroughly with his Mauser pistol— I think he killed one or two. But of course I couldn't stay there. I had to go to the City and I'm dreadfully anxious about him."

" I expect he's just as anxious about you, my dear," put in another woman, elderly, grey-haired, swaying herself energetically in a rocking-chair. " How can any one be safe in the City? The house I lived in was shot all to pieces in February. My niece in Monterrey had her dining-room wrecked by a shell in October. One isn't safe anywhere."

" Yet you find the life of the City and of Monterrey, and even of places that have been worse treated, going on very much as usual," the coffee-planter observed. " Bands play on the Plazas, people dine and dance as in ordinary times. That is what misleads the casual observer."

" The truth is," broke out the man from the City, who had been awaiting his opportunity, " that the

Mexicans regard civil war, not as a calamity, but as a natural state of affairs. You have, no doubt, had many of them confide in you," he continued, turning to me, " their horror at this ' war between brothers.' Don't believe them. They aren't horrified at all. They do nothing to try and stop it. I tell you this is a barbarous nation, and the only way to keep it in order is to use an iron fist."

It was an interesting conversation and it lasted a long time. I heard that the Indians were brave, industrious and faithful; that they were cowardly, " bone-idle " and knew no gratitude; that they were kindly and child-like; that they were devilish in their lust and cruelty. I heard from some that the Spaniards were " the worst grafters of the lot "; from others, that their honour could always be trusted. I was told that Porfirio Diaz was a heaven-born statesman, a short-sighted military despot, a brutal oppressor. One assured me that if Madero " had been given a chance," he would have brought Mexico into line with " other great countries." The rest united in denouncing him as a crazy, incompetent dreamer. " He was known as *loco Franco* (mad Frank) when he was young. He never grew out of it." I was told that General Huerta could have crushed the revolutionists " long ago " if the United States had recognized him, and immediately afterwards by the same people that his army was a joke and his generals a public scandal. " They will not end the war in a hundred years."

Dainty women talked unconcernedly about *peons* hung on telegraph poles and the " funny way " in which soldiers spun round when they were shot. Genial Britons and Americans spoke of the execution of prisoners as a regular practice and approved it, because

" if the Mexicans would only exterminate one another, the country would have a chance." I had impressed upon me by a dozen tongues the contrast between the high-sounding Constitution and the actual conditions of government; between the pretensions of Mexico to rank among civilized nations and the barbarities she practised; between the flimsy veneer of modernity which imposed upon the world " while Porfirio was consul " and the undeveloped, ill-regulated old Adam beneath.

I came away with my mind awhirl. Was there any rational explanation of Mexico's troubles, or were they all due to an extra inheritance of original sin? Must I regard Carranza, the Chief of the Revolution, as a strong-souled patriot, fighting for liberty and progress, or as a narrow-minded egoist, swayed by ambition and greed? Were the Mexicans ripe for self-government on Anglo-Saxon lines, or did they still need an autocrat to hold them down? Were they, in truth, a nation at all, or merely a group of racial elements not yet fused into a coherent whole?

The Real Mexico! After such a conversation it seemed impossible of discovery, and for a while afterwards every talk I had—whether with governing Spaniards, or with *peons* in the fields, or with officers in troop-trains, or with foreigners in their pleasant houses, their hospitable clubs—left me more puzzled, more in doubt. Yet all the time an image was gradually forming. Out of mists and shadows something real and solid began to come forth.

To pretend that I can give an exactly accurate account of Mexico and her problems would be foolish presumption. Those who know the country well may find in my rapid survey many shortcomings, much to

disagree with; it is likely, some mistakes of fact. All I can claim is that I have tried to do what my kind friend at Chapala suggested, that is, to tell about the Real Mexico, as opposed to the Mexico of those who during the reign of President Diaz found everything perfect, and to the Mexico of writers who, going to the opposite extreme, would make the world's flesh creep by relating stories of revolting savagery. I think that, at this moment especially, such an attempt to describe the Real Mexico may be useful. It may help towards a better understanding of what has happened and what is happening there. Possibly it will suggest a forecast of what the future may bring.

II

THE CHIEF OF THE REVOLUTION

I MET a man shortly before I left England who assured me that the troubles of Mexico were wildly exaggerated. He had just returned from a visit to Mexico City. He took boat from New York to Vera Cruz, and train from Vera Cruz to the capital. He saw no rebels nor any sign of their work—no bodies hanging from trees and telegraph poles, no ruins of dynamited trains, no broken bridges. He found the service of the Mexican Railway punctual and regular. He received official assurances that the rebellion was practically (much virtue in your " practically ") over. Business men joined with officials in making light of the disturbances, which were " caused by small bands of brigands who were rapidly being exterminated." He left by way of Vera Cruz again, and he honestly believed that the stories of continual fighting in the north were " a pack of lies."

Had I gone direct to Mexico City by the same route I should no doubt have taken the same view. It seemed to me to be wiser to go first to the districts which were said to be disturbed. From Washington, after seeing President Wilson and other men of authority, I took train to El Paso in Texas, a journey of some four days. From El Paso I went on to Nogales (Arizona), another frontier town, and as trains were running three times a week to Hermosillo, the capital

of the Revolutionists, I decided to go there first and hear what General Carranza, the Chief of the Insurgents, had to say in explanation of his methods and his aims.

From Hermosillo I hoped to pass through the lines of both armies and reach Guaymas (Wymas), a port on the Pacific, which for months past has been invested by the Insurrectos. However, that suggestion was not well received. I felt sure I could ride through without any risk, but I was told it would not be safe. Clearly the Carranzistas did not wish it, so I was obliged to return by the way I had come. I went back along the frontier to San Antonio, and started thence for Monterrey. As will appear later, it took me a long time to get there !

Already then I had travelled to and fro along some 1,200 miles of frontier between Mexico and the United States. I had been across that frontier at several points. I had visited all the United States military posts along the border and seen something of their excellent training and hard condition. I had talked with scores of men who have lived in Mexico through the past three years of revolution. The result had been to show me that the troubles of this distracted country had certainly not been exaggerated in Great Britain or in Europe. Indeed, I learnt so much which was entirely new to me that I was forced to the admission that, outside Mexico, very few people knew what was happening at all.

El Paso, a clean, bustling little city hemmed about with mountains, is one of the chief sources of the information about Mexico which is supplied to readers of newspapers in the United States, and which is copied from these into other newspapers all over the

world. I am bound to say it is information in which little confidence can be placed. An " el paso-gram " has come to be used as a synonym for a sensational, scare-headed exaggeration. This is due partly to the natural talent of the Texan journalist for brilliantly imaginative fiction, partly to the sympathy which is felt in Texas for the rebels. In Texas there are hundreds of thousands of Mexicans. El Paso is almost a Mexican city. In many small towns and villages Spanish is the language more in use than English. These American Mexicans are almost all on the side of the revolution, and have been for years past persuaded by clever revolutionary agents to supply money for the purchase of arms and ammunition.

Many Texans hold with them that *el pueblo* (the People with a capital P) have been downtrodden and oppressed in Mexico and that their turn has now come. Many other Texans are eager to foment trouble in Mexico, because they hope to see the northern States annexed by the United States. The land in these is of much the same character as the land in Texas, which, until 1835, formed part of Mexico. Since its annexation by the United States in 1845, after a short existence as an independent republic, the face of Texas has been changed. Irrigation and industry have turned what was desert into fertile country. Many cities bear witness to the prosperity of the State. As one sees what has been done in the valley of the Rio Grande, or in the district between San Antonio and Laredo, and as one contrasts this rapid development with the stagnation across the border, one cannot be surprised at the impatience of Texans to go over and possess the land. One may doubt, however, whether the Texas Rangers, fine force though they be, could

conquer it all by themselves, as Texans frequently claim!

It is curious in El Paso to see street-cars marked "Mexico." These run across the International Bridge to the Mexican town of Juarez, where there has been frequent fighting. The battles are treated by the Texans as spectacles. The American bank of the Rio Grande is black with sight-seers. Excursions are run and points of vantage leased at high rates. In Washington I had been solemnly warned about the dangers of a journey into troubled Mexico. Here such fears were smiled at. All the same I had not neglected precautions. I had obtained in Washington, from a pleasant Mexican gentleman officially connected with the rebels, a safe conduct, which asked all officers of the Constitutionalist forces to pass me safely along. Now in El Paso I was given letters to General Carranza and his secretary by another "agent" of his party, who openly has an office there in spite of the United States neutrality laws. I noticed in this office a very old man, clearly of refinement, acting as typist. He must have been seventy, and as I watched his stiff fingers hitting the keys, I wondered how he had come to such employment. I was still more astonished to learn that under the previous Government of Mexico he had been a judge in that country! I could multiply such cases indefinitely. I met on the United States side of the border numbers of Americans who have been forced to leave their Mexican businesses or properties on account of the disturbed state of the northern districts. I came across an oldish American, who had been very well off in Mexico, acting as night clerk at a small hotel in Arizona. A Mexican "hacendado," proprietor of a "hacienda" (estate) in Sonora, had an

unusually fine crop in 1913 after several poor ones. The revolutionists seized the whole of it on the ground that he was a supporter of the "illegal Government." He is living in poverty at Los Angeles, a ruined man, until his side is "top dog" again. Then he may be rich once more.

The State of Sonora I found quiet. With the exception of the port of Guaymas, the whole of it is in the hands of the Insurrectos. Next to Chihuahua (pronounce Cheewahwah) it ranks as the largest in the Republic of Mexico: its area is rather greater than that of England; it is rich in minerals, especially copper; and wherever there is water its soil brings forth every kind of produce.

In the north of the State there are many vast cattle ranches, some of them belonging to English and American *rancheros*. These have suffered little from the revolutions, though an Englishman in Chihuahua who brought some cattle up to the United States had to pay in successive "contributions" $7½ (about 15s.) a head before he got them across the line. In Sonora there have been some "levies" of this kind, but I heard no serious complaints from English or American cattle-men. Mexican *rancheros* have been less fortunate. Many of them have fled into the United States lest a worse thing should happen unto them. Both upon them and upon mine-owners frequent demands have been made for the support of the rebel cause. Most of the mines are idle, and have been so for months past. Some had their stores raided and found it too difficult to get fresh supplies. Others ran short of labour. In the south the farmers have suffered heavy loss. In the Yaqui Valley many of them saw their crops rot. In the Mayo Valley, where a peculiar kind

of pea called the *garbanzo* is cultivated, chiefly for export to Spain, the interruption of the railway service hit the growers very hard.

Nor is it only of the Mexicans that the American farmers in this valley complain. They are even more angry with the United States Government. Just after President Wilson's message had suggested to American subjects in Mexico that they should "clear out," an American consul, accompanied by an American naval officer from the *Yorktown*, then at Guaymas, went round to about 125 of these farmers warning them that they had better leave immediately. The message was at once so urgent and so mysterious that they imagined the United States to be on the point of declaring war. They nearly all abandoned their property and made haste into California. Some of them have since returned; others are without the means to do so. They express their opinion of Mr. Bryan, who refuses to pay their fares back, in the most lurid terms.

Beneath the surface there is in Sonora, among all who have anything to lose, resentment either against the Constitutionalists or against the Government of General Huerta, or against both, and a longing for a settlement which will bring peace. Yet the outward appearance of the State is normal. The State authorities and officials work as usual. Good order is kept. State paper money and State postage stamps have been issued. Mails from other parts of the country and from abroad are irregular, but they mostly arrive. Customs duties and taxes are collected in the ordinary way.

The life of Hermosillo goes on quietly. The Plaza is filled on Sunday evenings with promenaders enjoying the balmy night air and the music of a good band. In

the market, splashed with the vivid green and scarlet of " chiles " dear to the Mexican palate the old women chaffer over peaches and pomegranates, quinces and melons, green oranges of delicious juiciness, which are grown all round the town. They are especially grateful in so thirsty a climate. All the sun-baked streets are thick in dust, against which the low grey houses shutter themselves all day, to open up when the cool of evening comes and the palm-trees stand out black and sharp against a crimson sky of unimaginable ecstasy. The deep-toned bells of the cathedral tell out the hours which pass in such deliciously deliberate fashion, slow-footed like the pace at which every one moves, yet never wearisome, for is there not always in a hot country the spectacle of life to entertain one? Some delightful young Mexican misses, all in white frocks and dainty ribbons, are having a party almost in the street, so wide are the windows open and so jutting the balconies to the rooms. Picturesquely ragged small boys and weary *peons* are buying red and green drinks from the stall yonder. See this fine old fellow coming along, erect and soldierly. He is a captain of sixty-nine years. On the active list? Yes, indeed, and eager for battle. He was a carpenter and painter before the revolution. Now he and his five sons are all in the rebel army and his six daughters in the " Red Cross."

There seems to be enthusiasm among all classes for the Constitutionalist cause. It is not until one talks alone and in confidence with those who form the more substantial element in the population that one understands how thankful they would be for any kind of Government in Mexico which could keep the peace and which would really govern. When one tries, however, to discover whether any such Government is possible

one trips against several stumbling-blocks. Not only is it very hard, on account of interrupted communications, to discover the truth for oneself—to decide, for example, how many of the "victories" and "captures" announced every few days by each side have really happened. It is even harder to form any conclusions upon the statements of others. To begin with, every one is violently prejudiced in favour of one side or the other. In addition to that, almost every one bolsters up his view with statements which are, on the face of them, exaggerated and, from a practical common-sense standpoint, usually grotesque. Take one example. All who believe that General Huerta is the strong man of the situation and the man most likely to give Mexico the firm yet kindly Government she needs, describe General Carranza, in common with all the insurgent leaders, as a "brigand." I have been assured over and over again that he had no regular organized forces, only bands of outlaws, living, as he himself lived, by plunder, and spreading ruin wherever they went. As soon as I talked with General Carranza its full absurdity was plain.

A Spaniard of pure descent, he is a man of striking personal dignity. If he had happened to become Provisional President, every one would have said how well he graced the position. It is true that many of the bands which call themselves "Carranzistas" practise the methods of bandits, extorting money, driving off cattle, stealing horses, looting houses and shops. Although Carranza may disapprove, he must recognize that these are the usual methods of civil warfare. *Qui veut la fin veut les moyens.* The General has no choice. If his troops did not steal, they would starve.

That Carranza is ambitious I do not doubt. He would probably have revolted against Madero, if Madero had not been deposed. Those who knew and watched him said that he thought his moment had come when the little President lost his popularity. Felix Diaz and General Reyes anticipated him, but the inopportune murder of Madero by "Felixistas" gave him a better pretext than he could have offered, had Madero lived. He seized it without hesitation. Clearly he is a man of resolution and enterprise. But he does not look it.

Like Madero (whose own words I quote from his famous pamphlet against President Diaz) Venustiano Carranza lived until a few years ago "tranquilly occupied, in common with the immense majority of Mexicans, with private business and the thousand futilities of social life." He belongs to the land-owning class in the State of Coahuila, where he was Governor and where he had spent most of his life. He is a great reader; his serious studious face, with deep, vertical lines between the brows, betrays "the pale cast of thought." His eyes gleam patiently and kindly through spectacles. His hair is dark still, but mouth and chin are hidden by a heavy grey moustache and beard, though the cheeks are shaved. His voice is gentle and his movements are deliberate. He sits perfectly still listening to questions, and answers them without hesitation, in an even tone, his hands loosely clasped, his eyes searching his interrogator's face to see if his meaning is made clear.

It is hard to understand how a man of this professorial student type can have gained such an ascendency over the Revolutionists. When I saw him he was suffering a little from the effects of bad water and

short rations of food during his three months' journey on horseback from Piedras Negras, in Coahuila (which was formerly the insurgent capital), to Hermosillo. But he can scarcely be a man of overflowing physical vitality at any time. It must be by force of character and intellect that he has reached his present dangerously high position.

" I am the only leader recognized as supreme by all the chiefs of the revolution," he told me in his quiet, measured speech, not with pride, but as one upon whom a heavy responsibility lay. " What we fight for is the Constitution of our country and the development of our people. Huerta outraged the Constitution when he overthrew and murdered President Madero. He continues to outrage it by attempting to govern despotically as Diaz did, and refusing to administer fairly the laws, which are equal for all. This revolution cannot cease until either we, the Constitutionalists, triumph, or until Huerta triumphs completely over us. Even in the latter case it would only cease for the moment. It has its roots in social causes. The land, which was formerly divided among the mass of the people, has been seized by a few. The owners of it compel those who are working for them to buy the necessities of life from them alone. They lay a burden of debt upon the poor people and make them virtually slaves, for as long as the poor people owe them money they cannot go away. If they try to go away, they can be brought back. They can be put in prison. Another cause of the revolution is the growth of a middle class. Formerly there were only the rich and the poor. Now there is a class in between which does not like to see the poor oppressed; which knows what democracy and social reforms mean in other countries, and which is

resolved to take successive steps forward in the direction of complete self-government."

"Have you any definite plans for land reform and other reforms?" I inquired.

He thought a moment. Then he replied: "The first necessity is the fair and free election of a President. The election which is proposed now will be a farce. In the disturbed state of our country it is impossible to hold a proper election. Large numbers of voters will not know anything about it. We Constitutionalists refuse to recognize any President who may be returned at the fraudulent election. We shall execute anybody who does recognize him."

"I beg your pardon," I said. "Would you kindly repeat your last statement?"

I thought I must have misunderstood it.

"We shall," the General said calmly and as if he were making a perfectly natural remark, "execute any one who recognizes a President unconstitutionally elected and directly or indirectly guilty of participation in the murder of Madero."

Some two months after my visit, General Carranza was interviewed by a Major Archer-Shee, a British Member of Parliament, and being told that this remark of his had had a bad effect, he denied having made it. I bear him no malice for this. I expected that he would deny it, if ever he were told how strangely it sounded in English and American ears. When he made it, he did not understand this. It seemed to him, no doubt, a commonplace of civil warfare as conducted in Mexico. My asking him to repeat it, and the inquiry of his nephew, Captain Gustavo Salinas, who speaks English perfectly, thanks to being educated in the United States, whether I had understood it aright,

might have warned him, but he did not offer to tone it down in the least.

To hear this amiable, scholarly old gentleman define so bloodthirsty and to us so utterly unreasonable a line of action made me feel as if I were dreaming. It threw a strange light upon his profession of belief in democracy. I have no doubt that he sincerely imagines himself a believer in that creed. I am sure that the best of his followers are equally sincere, though many fight simply because they prefer disorder and make a profit out of looting. The very fact that the party calls itself the "Constitutionalistas" and not the "Carranzistas," proves that it follows a principle rather than a man. But the discrepancy between their professions and their avowed policy shows how far the mentality of Mexico is distant from that of Europe and the United States, and how impossible it is to apply to it, as President Wilson persists in doing, the same tests and the same standards which obtain in countries where the idea of self-government is a plant of mature growth.

It is the custom of the Constitutionalists and Federals alike to execute all the general and field officers who are captured; sometimes other officers, and even men. They justify this by reference to a law of 1862 against fomenting treason. Each side calls the other side "traitors," and the only course to take with a "traitor" —that is, a man who differs from your views—is to shoot him. Several Mexicans have quite seriously told me that Madero failed simply because he tried to make terms with those who fought and plotted against him, instead of killing them. They are mistaken. Madero failed chiefly because he was a bundle of nerves and what Americans call a "crank," and because he

promised what he could not possibly perform. He made the poor *peons* think they would immediately be given the equivalent of the English peasant's " three acres and a cow," and they turned against him when they awakened from the dream. But the blame cast upon him for not " removing his enemies " is a sign-post towards understanding the Mexican mind.

I thought of these sayings as I sat in the Palacio de Gobierno listening to flowery speeches, such as all Mexicans can make, about the beauty and justice of popular rule, at a meeting upon regular European or American lines held in honour of General Carranza. I thought of them as I watched a working men's procession march through the streets of Hermosillo bearing banners on which were inscribed " Club Liberal," " Club Democratico de Obreros y Artesanos " (labourers and artisans), and so on. And I am bound to admit that the meeting and the procession impressed me not very greatly, now that I knew what, to the Mexican Constitutionalist, Liberalism and Democracy mean.

III

HOW PROPERTY SUFFERS

My hope of penetrating to the heart of Mexico by way of Guaymas being gone, I had to seek some other entrance. In ordinary times I should have had the choice between three. Four lines run from the United States frontier southwards. On the (1) Southern Pacific of Mexico I had already travelled to Hermosillo, but could get no further. The (2) Mexico North-Western, which starts at Juarez and runs to the city of Chihuahua, was blocked by burnt bridges and torn-up rails. Across the line of the (3) Mexican National Railroads, which begins at Eagle Pass, I found a battle in progress, the battle which won back Piedras Negras for the Federals and general rank, at the age of thirty-three, for the victor, Colonel Maas. I went on, therefore, to (4) Laredo, whence the main line of the "National" runs direct to Mexico City through Monterrey. This had been closed for four months, but in the autumn was re-opened, and at the beginning of October was said to be free from rebels. Thither accordingly I turned my face.

The south-western United States through which I travelled, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, are monotonous to the traveller's eye. For hundreds of miles nothing but sand and scrub, with low hills in the distance on either side. Wherever there is water there are rich crops, but water is scarce. One night, after a gorgeous

sunset which turned the brown hills first rose, then crimson, then a blue purple like the bloom on a dark plum, we had a moon riding in the southern sky, while to westward there were banks of heavy cloud ripped by zigzag lightning, and presently torrents of rain. " Time it came," said some one in the observation-car laconically. " Haven't had any for a year."

The towns are what one would expect—dusty and hot and dry. The smaller ones are of a dreariness and squalor hardly imaginable by those who only know the towns and villages of Europe. You wonder how people of active mind and refined manners can bear to live in such places, until you discover what delightful homes they have—big, airy rooms, furnished with taste, provided with every convenience, full of books; wide, cool " porches," or, as we say, verandahs; balconies to sleep out on; every kind of bath.

In the " cities " there is more life and movement than there would be in a European town of similar size. El Paso has grown up since the railway came; outwardly it is, therefore, uninteresting; the usual huge office blocks and banks and stores, and big, pretentious hotels, seldom more than one-third full. San Antonio is pleasanter; it has roots in the past. In the middle of the town is one of those old grey missions which Spanish Franciscan friars built all over this country in the early eighteenth century. There are others among the cotton fields a few miles out of the town. Their architecture is not thrilling, but their crumbling towers and broken cloisters refresh one after the barrack-like banality of American city streets.

It was pleasant after a very hot and very dusty twenty-four hour run, to find in San Antonio a hotel (the Menger) with a cool, lovable charm of its own. It

is built on the Spanish plan, round garden courtyards. In one of these, after a bath and a change, I sat on a sultry October night at dinner in the open air, listening to a Texan view of the Mexican muddle. Along the border I had begun to understand how much loss and suffering have been caused to subjects of the United States. The fact that some 60,000 Mexicans have been killed concerns Mexico alone. So long as the *peons* can count upon four shillings a day for being soldiers instead of one shilling a day, or less, for being labourers (with frequent opportunities of loot thrown in), they will fight willingly for either side and run the risk of getting killed. If they lived on a barren island all by themselves they might go on fighting until they were all exterminated and no one would greatly care. But when one learns that two hundred Americans have been killed, not to mention the enormous losses suffered, one is driven to ask with Mr. Roosevelt whether it is not the duty of a Government to protect its subjects?

In New York, in the Eastern States generally, in the Middle West, they know next to nothing about events in Mexico. The channels through which news flows are untrustworthy, not so much because of the Yellow tendency to exaggerate, which causes newspapers in the United States to be read with cynical scepticism, as on account of two forces that are operating against any full unprejudiced statement of the truth. These forces are—

1. The disposition of the Mexican Government (and of the Constitutionalists also) to expel any newspaper correspondent who sends news which they would prefer to suppress.

2. The widespread sympathy with the rebels (in some cases paid for by them) which animates the

American Press, and causes it to ignore aspects of the rebel campaign which might tell against it in the American mind.

All founts of information must therefore be distrusted. What is called " news " is frequently supplied by Constitutionalist agents, and is of no more value than official statements from the other side. How much these are worth may be gathered by comparing one made early in October by the Minister of the Interior to the effect that " All Governors reported their States free from disturbances " with the fact, verified by myself, on the spot, that each of the four railways running south from the United States frontier was blocked by fighting.

Most people in the United States are, therefore, densely ignorant about Mexico, although it lies next door to them. They are flatly opposed to " intervention," if it means losing lives and spending money. They say, " If Americans go to these barbarous lands they must take their chance." If they have any view of the political situation at all it is that " President Huerta is a bad man " and that a pious country (like the United States) ought not to encourage him; or that the best plan—this I have heard hundreds say—would be to let each side buy arms and ammunition freely (from the United States) and fight it out. But in Texas, in New Mexico, in Arizona, especially in the southern parts, which lie next to Mexico, feeling against President Wilson and Mr. Secretary Bryan is bitter and contemptuous.

I travelled one day with an official of the United States Immigration Department. In the course of duty he had to go over from El Paso to Juarez to make inquiries about a coloured man who had committed

some offence in the United States. This man had in the meantime joined the Mexican Army and been made a lieutenant. He had the immigration agent arrested by four soldiers without any warrant on a charge of "being about to attempt to kidnap him." The soldiers marched the agent off towards the hills; being convinced that they would shoot him if they got him there, he ran away. They fired and shot him through the stomach. He managed to get to the Civil Police Post, but even there he lay for twenty-four hours without proper treatment, and his release was only secured by the resolute action of another immigration officer. I asked him what his Government had done. "Done? Done nothing!" he said savagely. "Holding some sort of an inquiry! I tell you the people of my country, so long as they get enough to eat and can go to the picture shows at night, don't care what happens." I was reminded of what a fine old American soldier had said to me a day or two before. "There isn't as much red blood in this people as there used to be."

If there were, they would surely resent and demand redress both for injuries inflicted and for property destroyed. Out of a great number of cases related to me by people who have suffered in pocket at the hands of the Constitutionalists I pick a few. At Poquilla, in Chihuahua, where a dam is being built for power and irrigation, a demand was made upon the manager for £1000. His refusal to pay was followed immediately by a threat to shoot him. He was thrown into a ditch while the offices were seized and searched. After a time he agreed to find the money in return for an undertaking that he should not be molested again. That undertaking was not kept. The owner of a flour mill in Saltillo described to me the utter devastation of

his property. Everything was taken. Even the belts of the machinery were cut up into accoutrements. Fine grain was poured out in vast quantities for the horses to trample as they fed. For two days this mill was the hottest centre of a battle; as he put it, "the place was shot all to pieces." Near Saltillo the Mazapil Copper Company, of which the capital is held mainly in the North of England, has done no work to speak of for eight or nine months. The Federals are at one end of its private line of railway from Saltillo to Concepcion; the rebels at the other, so they are between two fires. Close to this is a big ranch upon which the rebels seized all the animals and all the crops; the loss is reckoned at £150,000. In another part of Coahuila the Cloete ranch was pillaged to the extent of £10,000 while the Constitutionalists were in control of the district.

The Mexico North-Western Railway in Chihuahua has been at a standstill since June 1913, after suffering losses for two years before that. Its 500 miles of track are in a part of the country where fighting has been pretty well continuous. Both sides have damaged it. Mr. Crockett, the general manager, told me that up to the beginning of October 856 bridges had been rebuilt or repaired; at that time seventy-eight were still down. This railway links up a series of mines and lumber properties, belonging to the S. F. Pearson interest (which has nothing to do with Lord Cowdray's firm). The mines are mostly idle. The railway is doing nothing; miles of its track are torn up; its rolling stock is scattered all over the country. The loss is roughly calculated at half a million sterling, and the end is not yet. While I was in El Paso the Governor of Chihuahua was urging Mr. Crockett to run trains over a certain part of the line, assuring him that the

line was clear of rebels. At the same time the rebels threatened to destroy more bridges if any train should start !

The Southern Pacific of Mexico has also lost the greater part of its traffic. For a long time it has been running at a loss, and to repair the damage done would cost, so Colonel Randolph, the president, estimates, £800,000. Between the two parties the position of any business is difficult and dangerous; that of a railway in the heart of the rebel country is desperate indeed.

In some cases the Constitutionalists have been " bluffed " by a bold front. Colonel Randolph himself was captured by Maderistas on his own line and ransom demanded. He refused it with so much spirit and threatened reprisals so fiercely that he was allowed to go on his way. That was during the rebellion against President Diaz. Six months afterwards on the same stretch of line he was warned of danger and he asked for a Federal escort. The " brigand " who had captured him before was now in command of the district, appointed thereto by President Madero.

It is the Mexican nature to give way before even a show of force. A rebel band about forty miles from Nuevo Laredo carried off five Americans and put a price (£800) upon their release. The United States Consul went out to look for them. He obtained permission to use soldiers and took seven men with him along the American bank of the Rio Grande. The rebels were on the other side of this river, which was almost dry. The Consul went across alone and asked for his fellow-countrymen. " I will release them when I receive $4000," replied the officer in charge. " You will release them now," said the old Consul. " Even

if they wanted to pay, I would not let them. Look across the river and see the army I have brought with me." The captain saw the seven men lying about and imagined the rest. He asked to be excused for a moment, went into another room, then came back and said cheerfully it was fortunate that he had just received an order to release the prisoners. This was his method of "saving his face."

If "bluff" is as effectual as that, the Big Stick would be far more so. Had the United States Government taken a firmer line and refused to permit its citizens to be robbed and murdered, Mexico would be safe for foreigners to-day. As things stand, neither Mexican nor American considers himself or his property secure. At Laredo there were, after the railway had been again cut, a large number of people waiting to return to their families or their business in Mexico. I could not understand why they made no attempt to travel by road. I soon found out. A few months ago a man started with a party in a motor-car. A rebel patrol called on them to stop. They did not stop and were fired on. That made them pull up. For seven days they were kept apart, scarcely speaking to any one. Then they were taken up to the frontier of the State of Coahuila and allowed to go. Six weeks later the motor-car was returned by train with £10 to pay. It was in a ruined condition; the rebels had used it until they could use it no more.

Yet for all these outrages there is no redress. The American theory seems to be that foreigners have no rights in Mexico and ought not to expect protection. "We don't expect it," an American said to me, a Southerner, too, who has been a Democrat all his life; "not from this schoolmaster at Washington. If

Roosevelt had been President he'd have known what to do." I heard that sentiment often expressed.

After my night's journey from San Antonio I jumped out of the train at Laredo expecting to find another waiting which would take me to Monterrey. My hopes were dashed immediately. There had not been a train south for three days. There might be one any day, but nobody knew. The last out was supposed to have been dynamited. A battle was known to be going on about ten miles down the line. Reports of rebel success flew about all day and by nightfall there was every expectation that the Mexican town across the river, Nuevo Laredo, would be shelled next morning.

But in Mexico the expected seldom happens.

IV

ACROSS THE DESERT IN A MULE-COACH

"THIS so-called twentieth century" is a phrase which often occurs to one in Mexico—without any ironical significance.

At sunny, dusty Laredo, while I waited day after day for a train to run south, I began by treating the complete isolation of Mexico City, so far as railways from the United States border are concerned, as a joke. Before I left there I had ceased to see the funny side of it. There are some places in which I might be forced to spend a week without grumbling, but Laredo is not one of them. Dozens of us were cooped up in two arid, comfortless hotels, with nothing to do but ask each other, "Is there no chance of a train?"

Every morning a little party of us would cross the bridge from United States Laredo to the Mexican town across the river (the Rio Grande) in order to ask the Mexican general if he had any comfort for us. He was invariably polite, although depressed. An oldish man with deeply furrowed forehead and lack-lustre eye, he looked at us wearily and mechanically repeated his formula, "Three or four days." At first he attributed the broken line to floods. But we knew there was fighting near at hand, for we saw troop trains going off, saw wounded brought in, and heard from rebel sympathizers of a plan to cut Laredo off from Monterrey. So after a while the old general dropped pretence and

admitted that before he could repair the bridges blown up he had to clear the country of rebels.

That settled it. I gave up the railway as hopeless, and looked around for some other means of making my way south. With five others, who were very anxious to get either to their homes or their businesses in Mexico, I asked the general for a pass to go across country. He gave it on condition that we provided our own conveyance. We agreed cheerfully and he almost smiled. I wondered why at the moment. Afterwards I understood.

In high spirits we went to a motor garage on the American side. Could we have a car? Possibly. What would it cost? Fifty pounds. We gasped. Fifty pounds to go a hundred and fifty miles? Not a cent less, and in addition we must deposit £250, the value of the car, in case the Carranzistas seized it. "Ridiculous!" we said, and tramped off in a body to another garage. Here we had an amusing experience of the Mexican character. It was now nearing midday. In the shed which we entered half-a-dozen black-haired, olive-skinned chauffeurs and mechanics were lolling in attitudes of utter and unashamed laziness. Not one of them stirred. We asked for the proprietor. He was at home. Could he be telephoned to? A languid arm waved us to the instrument. Then the twelve eyes closed again and we were left to do the best we could. We got no satisfaction. The same demand for a deposit was made. We went sadly away.

However, we soon cheered up again. We must have a wagon, then. It would take longer, but that we must put up with. So back we went to the Mexican side and set about finding some one who would take us in a wheeled vehicle with a good span of mules.

We might as well have saved ourselves the trouble. If the Americans were afraid for their money, the Mexicans were afraid of their lives. Some of them said so frankly. Others trumped up excuses. One man "could have started yesterday," but to-day did not feel well. Another pleaded that his wife would be nervous. A third was not sure of the way. We left the Mexican town to frizzle in its hot sunshine and tried carriage-owners on the American side. Some were ready to talk business if we would guarantee the value of their horses or mules. Most of them refused even to discuss terms. I explained that I had a pass through the Constitutionalist lines in addition to our Federal safe-conduct. No, no, they knew the danger too well!

Exasperated, we asked one man, an American Mexican, what he was afraid of. "They would kill me," he said. "Why? They are your own countrymen, aren't they?" "No, señor," he responded. "I am an American." (He could not speak a word of English.) "But why should they kill you?" "Because, señor," he said with magnificent simplicity, using a vulgar Spanish phrase, which I translate into words less terse then the original, "because they are all the offspring of abandoned women."

Our ill-luck scared two of the party off. Now we were four. One was a German, determined at all hazards to get back to his wife and children in Monterrey. The next, an Englishman, had important business there. The third was an American, a mining engineer bound for his mines near Saltillo. We talked over all possibilities. We asked the general if we could travel in a work-train. "Si," he said, "when the next one is able to run." "And when will that be,

general?" He shrugged his tired shoulders. "We are at war, gentlemen. Who can say?" Next day we had further proof of the state of warfare. The Mexican end of the bridge was closed. Our safe-conduct gained us passage, but no one without a permit was allowed through.

Another annoyance was the scarcity of silver. Mexican currency is largely in notes. One of our party tendered a five-peso note (a peso is in normal times worth two shillings) to the conductor of the rickety street-car. He declined to give change, so four of us got our ride for nothing! At half a dozen places (including banks) he tried to get rid of it. Everywhere change was refused. No one would part with real money. Every one distrusted notes. And they had some reason, for the silver peso contains very nearly two shillingsworth of silver, whereas the exchange value of paper money had dropped in some places to one-and-fourpence. That is one result of civil war.

At last we made out plans. We decided to take train from Laredo to Brownsville, Texas, which is near the mouth of the Rio Grande. Thence we would travel by rail on the American side as far as the line along the valley goes. After that we would cross the river into Mexico and drive. Of course, all heavy luggage had to be left behind. We could only take a suit-case each. But the prospect of escape was so heartening that I believe we would gladly have started without anything at all. The other people in the hotel wagged their heads at us. "You're running a great risk," they maundered. I quoted Kipling at them—

"If there should follow a thousand swords to carry my bones away,
Belike the price of a jackal's meal were more than a thief could pay!"

Really there was no danger to speak of. But after a week of Laredo we would have taken any risk.

It took us eighteen hours to go by train from Laredo to Brownsville, and, when we arrived, we found that we had left the frying-pan for the fire. Laredo was hot, but dry. The heat of Brownsville wrapped itself round us like steaming wet flannel. Thirst was incessant. The slightest movement brought on prickly heat. Meals were torture : exhausted though one felt, there was nothing in the multitude of saucers slammed down before one to spur the appetite and scarcely anything one could eat at all.

This barbarian method of serving meals all at once makes travelling in Texas a nightmare. The meat is like leather. The messes which the saucers contain are the production of Chinese cooks, and at their best untempting. How any stomach can long endure them, washed down by coffee or iced tea, the universal dinner and supper drinks, I cannot understand.

However, we had no idea of staying longer than was necessary to fit out our expedition and to get the good word of General Lucio Blanco, the Constitutionalist commander in Matamoros, a Mexican town a mile or two across the border. Almost every one in these Texan frontier towns is on the side of the Constitutionalists, and many actively assist them, so we soon found a prominent man who was in their counsels and who agreed to be our friend. As the four of us jogged with him in a filthy street-car drawn by one wretched mule, through the long street of Matamoros, the desolation of the once flourishing city lay upon our spirits like lead. It was cynically curious to hear the gentle young Insurrecto officers talk about the benefits their party meant to heap upon the common folk,

and to look out of window upon the deserted unkempt Plaza. The Constitutionalists may be the friends of the people; but the people do not seem to have realized it yet.

These young officers were clever fellows, one a doctor, one an engineer, another an accountant, and so on. They told us proudly how the division of land among the peasants had already begun. They were clearly in earnest about their Radical plans: their enthusiasm for "the cause" was no pretence. One turned back his coat and showed me pinned over his heart a little button portrait of President Madero. "We most of us wear it," he said reverently. Then General Blanco came in, a big, dark, resolute-looking man of quite a different type. I doubt whether he had the Madero button on his shirt.

He was very civil to us, however, and issued through his Chief of Staff a permit to pass safely through the country held by the Carranza faction. This business settled, we did our shopping. First, we bought tin mugs and a tin can for boiling coffee in. For food we took baked beans, cracker biscuits and a few tins of jam. Then after a moving picture show, we went early to bed.

The journey next morning to a place called Sam Fordyce was tedious. We were to begin our two-hundred-mile drive from there, and we were impatient of the long drag in a slow and fusty train. Yet when we saw the motor-car which was to take us our first stage to a village called Roma, we heartily wished the train went further. I have never seen a car plastered so thickly with mud.

The driver said cheerfully he guessed there was a quarter of a ton of it. That showed us what the

roads were like. I say " roads," but, to speak truly, there are no roads in this part of Texas, any more than there are in Mexico. There are " trails " : we should call them cart-tracks, and bad cart-tracks at that.

If ever that driver wants a certificate of proficiency, I should be glad to give it to him. The way he took us through rivers and lakes and slush-ponds was marvellous. He covered forty miles in less than four hours and landed us in Roma just as dark fell with the suddenness of a switched-off electric light. We found we were in a queer place, an American village where there was only one American inhabitant (he was away) and scarcely any one who could speak English.

At the inn we were served by a Mexican waiter (who seemed to me to have stepped out of *Don Quixote* or *Gil Blas*) with a Mexican meal of tortillas (thin flat maize cakes), goat's-flesh (uneatable), red sausage meat (very palatable), " frijoles," the favourite Mexican bean, and coffee. When you get over the smell of tortillas (due, I believe, to the lime which is mixed with them), and the strong flavour of the meat, and the surprise of getting your mouth burnt by the red or green peppers with which every dish is seasoned, Mexican small-town cookery is pretty good—certainly better then American. On the other hand, I prefer the American small-town hotel. In five days—for a reason which I leave to be imagined—we only had our clothes off once : that was when we slept in a hospitable American house.

In Roma, having unanimously decided not to undress, we lay down disconsolate outside our dubious-looking cots. We were sad for this reason. After long negotiations with a pair of brothers, they had promised

to find us a wagon and mules to carry us to a place called Alamo, nine miles up the river. Here we could cross the Rio Grande into Mexico, tramp to a town called Mier, and there try to hire a coach. One brother was to come and tell us as soon as the arrangement was made, but all the evening we wearily waited and he never came. Luckily about twenty minutes after we had dropped off, we were awakened. Everything was fixed for a start at four o'clock in the morning. We slept again, our hearts full of thankful joy.

It was not so joyful to rouse up in the darkness, but coffee put us right and we rumbled off in the moonlight quite content. By the time we got to Alamo it was day, and when, after ferrying across, we had walked the three miles into Mier (letting our bags follow in an ox-cart), the sun was already hot. Another deserted desolate place we found this, with scarcely any one about but Insurrecto soldiers. Our first visit was to the " jefe " or commander. He was a genial ruffian, who told us, though he had no English, that he had been one of Colonel Roosevelt's Cow Boys in Cuba. He grinned and shook his head at the notion of finding a coach in Mier. Happily one of his captains came to the rescue. He had one. Our hearts leapt. It was out on his ranch nine miles off. He would send for it and get it into town by noon.

That day we spent in Mier was like an unpleasant dream. We strolled round the abandoned houses, many of which had been used as stables for the troopers' horses. We played cards. We had a couple of meals, made hideous by millions of flies. We sat outside the guard-room with our captain, wondering miserably whether he had really sent for his coach at all. At last about five o'clock it rattled into the Plaza behind

a couple of the poorest mules we had ever seen. Down drooped our spirits once more. But the captain was a man of action.

" Go," he said to a couple of soldiers. " Say to Don Emilio that the ' jefe ' would be glad if he would lend these gentlemen a pair of mules—and if he won't lend them, take them."

In a few minutes they came—we did not inquire whether lent or " taken "—and then we set to work to get our luggage strapped on. A small crowd hindered us with well-meant advice, but in spite of them we got everything stowed, and just as the last of the daylight went, our driver cried " Oola moola " to the animals, whipped them up briskly, and, swaying like a small boat in a choppy sea, we started off.

When you hear of " driving through a country," you think no doubt of a good road like the roads of Europe; of roadside inns; of villages at frequent intervals; of towns in which to pull up at nightfall. If the drive continues through the dark hours, you imagine a countryside dotted with friendly lights from dwellings, single or in groups. Driving through Northern Mexico is not like that at all.

In the hundred and fifty miles which we had still to do when we left Mier in our mule-coach for Monterrey we only passed through three little towns; no villages. We drove one day from five o'clock in the morning until three in the afternoon without meeting a soul. The country is a desert, in autumn brightly green with low bush, and in places even made gay by grass and flowers after heavy rains, but usually grey and sullen. There is very little water, as we learnt sadly. It is hard in a scorching noon to eat canned beans, with biscuits and jam to follow, and have nothing whatever to drink.

As for roads through this wilderness, well, to put it plainly, there are none. There are merely rough trails, sometimes quite difficult to find. They run through marshes, through rivers, down steep "arroyos" (ravines) and up the other side, your coach-pole pointing to Heaven. They set you ploughing through deep sand, or floundering in mud up to the axles of your wheels. They are so narrow that you have to be perpetually on guard against thorny switches tearing hands and face. As for their ruts, I shall not describe them, for no one would believe me. I will only say that for the first half-hour of our journey I expected every minute that our coach would turn over. I cannot even now understand why it did not.

Until that dark night (we started at sunset, and the moon did not rise until after nine) I had never known why some folks are fearful when ships rock at sea. After being pitched and tossed in that coach, I can enter into their feelings exactly. When you have got accustomed to this kind of driving, you take everything as it comes. Your vehicle may suddenly tilt to an angle of forty-five degrees, one wheel in a rut three feet deep, the other pursuing its course upon the level, without alarming you in the least. It may toss you violently by dropping into a hollow, and being jerked out again with a wrench that seems bound to burst it asunder; you pay no heed. But until the conviction is acquired that the coach, flimsy as it looks, will never turn over, the beginner has an anxious time.

We made slow progress. It was hard to pick out the track, and after we had passed a blazing camp-fire of Constitutionalists, the change from glare to blackness blinded us altogether; so we took it in turns to

carry a lantern a little way ahead. We were challenged of course by the campers, "Quien vive?" (Who goes there?) was shouted as we came near. "Gente buena" (Honest folk) we cried in answer. Half-a-dozen kindly rough fellows, with rifles in hand, clustered round us, examined my pass, and gave us a hearty "God-speed-you," as we crawled on our way. After three hours' walking we saw the first light, and hoped it was the "ranchito" (little farm) where we were to beg shelter for a few hours' sleep. But that was still a mile or so ahead.

When we got there our driver had to wake the family up. Their dwelling consisted of two separate huts, each about ten feet square and seven feet high. In one was a fireplace; a few pots and cups and dishes on a shelf proclaimed it the living-room. The other contained a large bed: in and around it at least five people slept. From the living-room a man stretched in a cattle-trough was turned out sulkily yawning; and an unsuccessful attempt made to arouse a little boy. A calfskin was thrown upon the ground; a blanket over that made us imagine the uneven brick floor a shade softer; and we lay down to slumber brokenly for a few hours. At two I wished it were four. At four we rose up, glad to leave our hard couch; made coffee in our pot over the fire; ate some beans; shook hands all round with our hosts (this must never be omitted); and drove off in the chilly darkness at a quarter to five.

Do you ever think, you who are not out of bed till long after daylight, how eagerly the sun may be awaited by toilers or travellers before dawn? Until you have longed for him, watched the first red streaks that tell of his coming, and then luxuriated in his

light and warmth, you cannot fully, with Saint Francis of Assisi, " praise the Lord for our brother, the Sun." In the joy of a new day our spirits rose bravely. We made up our minds we should reach our first stage, a place called Treviño, about midday. But we had not realized the laziness of our mules. They moved like slugs. The driver worked far harder then they did, shouting at them, and cracking his whip, and tugging at the reins all the time.

We gave them a rest, sleeping ourselves the while in the shade of a thorn-tree, and taking care not to lie upon cactus plants. Still they went no better. At last one of us saw a long stout stick lying near the trail. He called to the driver, who stepped down and picked it up. Its effect was marvellous. The mules broke at once into a trot which they kept up, with an occasional reminder of the stick's persuasive quality, until we drove into Treviño between three and four o'clock.

Here at the Insurrectos' headquarters we were received with enthusiasm after my pass had been read. The chiefs in this place were men of education and intelligence. They found time hang heavy, and were glad of any incident to while it away. We chatted; I took their photographs; they gave us sugar-cane to eat, all the hospitality they could offer, they said ruefully. They got no letters or newspapers; in this part civil war has stopped the posts. In their wretched village there were no distractions. What a life for men of culture and active mind! One, who had been governor of a State, told me how he had luckily escaped being killed in the Capital. " I was the man they meant to burn," he said calmly. A spectacled major had been before the revolution a bank manager.

A captain told me he was formerly superintendent of a wax factory.

That night we slept at an American mine-owner's house near Cerallvo, a town which he made by pouring out £10,000 a month in wages. Now his smelter is shut down, the population has dwindled, his enterprise is rewarded by insult and robbery. He had been obliged to provision his house against siege and famine, and was afraid of a visit from the rebels while we were there. They had threatened to search for dynamite, of which he had none; but he feared they would seize his flour and tinned foods.

After Cerallvo the road was worse, rock instead of sand, and loose stones. The jolting made one sore all over. We had better mules now: they kept up a steady trot. But there were times when I should have been glad for them to walk like our first pair. However, this was our last day but one, and in the evening at the "fonda" of a little town called Merin, we eat some excellent roast "caborrito" (young kid), our first fresh meat for several days. So we were cheerful in spite of our aching bones.

Off at half-past four next morning, we soon met another enemy—mud. We had to get out and push the wheels out of deep thick mire. We ruined our boots and trousers. We splashed through swamps, and clambered along barbed-wire fences tearing hands and clothes. But so long as we got through, we minded nothing. Twelve miles out of Monterrey we met our first Federals. They stopped us, but soon let us go. In a suburb we raided a baker's: after living on biscuits and tortillas (maize cakes), bread tastes really good. Just before noon we passed the Federal post on the edge of the City. Three men slumbered outside

the guard-room, a fourth was apparently walking in his sleep. A carriage from the enemy's country was allowed to drive in without being challenged. No effort made to get information from us ! No questions asked as to how we had got through ! We had not to wait twenty-four hours to mark the result of such slackness. At eight o'clock next morning the rebels were in the outskirts of the town.

V

BOMBARDED IN MONTERREY

Is there any pleasure equal to the joy of feeling clean and fresh after a long, fatiguing, dirty ride? If there is I do not know it. In our five days' journey across the wilderness from Matamoros to Monterrey we only had our clothes off once. Imagine the delight with which we bathed and shaved and put on our "other clothes." Picture the effect of a dainty luncheon-table upon men who had been eating canned beans and crackers off the lids of tins, and eating them three times a day! There was a wondrous contentment in our faces as we sat smoking after lunch in a sunny patio full of roses, with a glorious pink creeper smothering the walls.

Two of our party were at home now. The other two of us had no idea of letting Monterrey be our Capua, charming city though it is. Mountains on three sides of it cut jagged patterns on the hot blue sky. Its climate extolled by some of its inhabitants as almost perfect, denounced by others as "the meanest ever," is very hot in summer, but in autumn delicious—cold mornings and blue, cloudless days. The town is attractively perched on a gentle slope overlooking a wide plain. As yet it is in the growing stage, and like a girl who is not yet quite a woman it is rather red about the elbows. It will be a large and fine city. Now it is going through a transition period.

The streets still have a small-town air. One goes about expecting always to find the busy thoroughfares round the next corner, and never finding them. There is one wide boulevard which ought to be impressive but only succeeds in being dusty beyond belief. This was laid out by General Reyes, a powerful man in Mexico, the next in influence to Don Porfirio; who plotted with Felix Diaz against Madero, and was killed. General Reyes did a great deal for Monterrey. He had large views and valuable connections. He helped it into the way of becoming a busy industrial centre. There are three big smelters, a steel-works and a cement-works already; a brewery from which good beer goes all over Mexico; large lumber yards; many smaller concerns destined to grow beyond a doubt.

The enterprise of a Canadian company has given Monterrey good water, electric light and power, gas, drainage, and excellent street-cars. It has a large foreign colony, chiefly Americans and Germans, the most friendly, kindly folk imaginable. Life is lived in a leisurely fashion, with plenty of quiet diversion in the shape of lawn-tennis, bridge, picnics into the mountains, tea-parties on verandahs looking on to gardens filled with roses all the year round. Yet, tempting as this rich, light-hearted city was, the mining engineer was anxious to get to Saltillo and I equally determined to press on to Mexico City. To Saltillo there were no trains, but the Tampico service was running, so I booked for the next morning but one, and went to bed that night with the happy feeling that my way seemed now to lie more plain.

But Mexico is a country where " you never can tell." Early next morning I dreamed that I was beating carpets. I awoke and sat up. The noise of the beating

went on. I hit my head against the wall to see if I were not dreaming still. Then I jumped out and ran to the window. What I heard was the sound of heavy rifle fire, coming from the direction of the suburbs which lie out on the plain, the suburbs through which we had passed "less than twenty-four hours ago," we reminded one another. With the patter of rifle shots there soon mingled the dull boom of artillery and the smart tapping of machine guns. The Constitutionalists were attacking the city, which had hitherto been reckoned secure from their attentions, and their main advance covered the very road by which we had come.

On the evening before the city had been given a warning. At half-past nine all the places of entertainment and drinking bars were closed by the police. But the general disposition was to make light of the danger. Monterrey is a city full of foreign interests. "They will never trouble us" was the common saying among the big foreign colony. Further, it is a place difficult to attack, or, rather, easy to defend. On three sides it is closed in by mountains; the fourth is an open plain which could be swept by artillery fire, and where a small body of troops strongly entrenched could hold a large army unprovided with guns. But the Insurrectos caught the Federals unprepared. There were no strong entrenchments, there was no heavy artillery in position. Worse than that, there were few Federal troops in the city. The headquarters of the district were removed a short time ago to Nuevo Laredo, and so far as I could learn the garrison of Monterrey numbered, when the attack began, less than a thousand, with a few hundred civic volunteers, many of whom had never handled a rifle before.

Yet another element was in the Insurrectos' favour. They knew there were many Carranzistas in the city. I believe they counted upon an armed rising of several thousand men. This conspiracy was checked a few days before the assault, by the arrest and dispatch to Mexico City, via Tampico, of the most active disaffected citizens, many of them prominent men. That step, coupled with a forced loan of £40,000 which was demanded from twenty of the leading business houses, suggested that the Government of General Huerta was awake to possible trouble. At the same time it was announced that troops were being hurried northward. But on the morning when the attack was delivered by General Gonsalez and General Jesus Carranza, brother to the chief of the revolution, at the head of 4,500 men, the situation of the city looked bad. Many prophesied that it would be abandoned to the rebels, after the fashion of Torreon.

As soon as the firing began I went out to look over the positions of the two forces. Walking through the streets, already empty, I was surprised to see so many houses decorated, as if by magic, with foreign flags. Numbers even of Mexicans tried to protect themselves in this way. It was curious to pass a school and hear children chanting their lessons while guns sent echoes rattling through the mountains and rifle bullets made their peculiar noise, like the drawing in of breath between the lips, overhead. From the hill called Obispado, which had been hastily fortified during the night, I could see that the attacking force were already in the outskirts of the city, pressing forward with heavy rifle fire, but apparently without guns. They had some later, but were not using them then. Every

now and then their advance would be checked by a hail of lead from Maxims. Then there would be a quick mounting of horses, a gallop to another position, and a resumption of rifle fire from behind any shelter that could be obtained.

If the Constitutionalists had known how small the garrison was, and if Mexican troops ever fought in any but their own way, the defences could have been rushed. The loss would have been heavy, but the city must have fallen. Mexicans, however, are not in the habit of rushing. Their only method is to get behind something and fire their rifles, seldom with any particular aim. Many I saw did not raise them to their shoulders. Of those who did this, few looked along the barrel. As I passed the Hospital during the fight a dozen men or so were letting off their rifles on the roof, a strange place to choose, but typically Mexican. I could not see one of them aiming. They shot into the air. The same thing was noticed by many others. I am speaking now of the Federals; the Insurrectos' fire was rather more careful. I saw twenty or thirty shots fired from a distance of eighty yards or so at an old Carranzista who had somehow got into the city and was riding, gloriously drunk, down a main thoroughfare. Not one of them hit him. He turned into a side street, where two officers rode up and killed him with their revolvers.

During two days rifle fire was kept up with few intervals. An enormous amount of ammunition must have been used. Yet only a few hundred men in all were hit. That also is typical of Mexican battles. If either side could induce its soldiers to use the bayonet or were enterprising enough to train a few regiments

of Lancers, and if, further, they could break themselves of the habit of sitting down after victories instead of following them up, the civil war could soon be decided. But there is little hope of that.

After a while I went back into the city to see what the outbreak of firing in a new direction might mean. As soon as I got near the centre I was invited to go to the house where I was living, and to stay there. The enemy were in the city now and not far off its heart. "We may be shooting along your street at any moment," it was explained with Mexican politeness. My petition to be allowed to see all I could because I was a newspaper correspondent was firmly denied.

So for a while the population were prisoners. The sunny, empty streets had a Sunday look about them. Not a foot fell. Now and again anxious faces would peep out of partly-opened doors, and groups of scared women would venture to the barred windows on the level of the street. Except for a handful of soldiers here and there the upper city was as a city of the dead. The mountains dreaming in the haze of noon looked down upon the native inhabitants, mostly shaking with terror, sitting in darkened rooms and trying to stop their ears against the perpetual din of war.

In the foreign houses away from the quarters where the combatants came near together, it was different. Much bridge was played to while away the tedious hours. In cool, flowery *patios* men and women chatted and laughed, with children playing round them, as if there were no danger at all. When a bullet rattled on the stones of our open-air courtyard there was a rush to secure it as a trophy. During the afternoon my host was lying down when a bullet

drilled through the woodwork of the door frame and struck the wall a few feet above his head. Unconcernedly he called to us to look at the hole it had made and the litter of plaster on his bed. At times the spatter of lead against the house wall would arouse languid comment, or the sudden discharge of rifles close at hand would provoke a feminine "Oh!" But for the most part the change from ordinary life to this state of suspended animation was accepted with humorous resignation by women as well as men.

One Irish lady, a Mrs. Peart (all honour to her), defied regulations and risked her life by walking down through both Federal and Constitutionalist lines to the house of the British Vice-Consul, Mr. Sanford, which was in the thick of the fight. She found the inhabitants living in the cellar, and carried a note to the American Consul-General asking him to send a carriage to take the women and children away. But it was she herself who next morning rescued them in a Red Cross automobile. Another Irishwoman, a Mrs. Flannery, who with her sister kept a hotel, saved it from destruction by going out on the steps and haranguing a mob of drunken soldiers.

A good deal of looting was done, and each night the sky was reddened by wantonly destructive fires. These were not all the work of the attacking force. One large house belonging to a Carranzista sympathizer was deliberately burnt by the Federals, and I myself saw Federal soldiers coming out of another house owned by a suspect with their arms full of loot. After the first few hours it was possible to get out, so long as one did not go too near the centre of the city. Of course one had to take chances. When a friend and I

came back from a reconnoitring stroll we were greeted by the news that a harmless non-combatant walking along our street had been shot through the stomach. But by listening for the direction of fire and keeping close to the wall one could be fairly safe. The greatest risk was not from the fire of the troops, but from the bullets of cowardly " snipers " at windows or on house-tops. There was so much of this contemptible treachery that an order was issued for the immediate execution of anybody seen on a roof. This was one of General Iberri's measures; to him was due the saving of the city. He held out obstinately until the reinforcements arrived.

About three o'clock on the second afternoon a new bugle note brought even the timid to their doors. Towards the end of a long street a cloud of dust announced a column on the march. In they came, fresh and cheery, for they had detrained only a few miles away. Instantly the pavement was lined by men and boys. Girls ran out, filled with sudden courage, and gave the officers bunches of flowers. Food and cigarettes were pressed upon the men, who responded to the grateful cheers of the inhabitants by loud " Vivas ! " for Mexico, General Huerta, and " El Supremo Gobierno " (the Government). The mood of the city veered instantly round from depression to joy.

Specially heartening was the sight of the cavalry, most of them members of that fine old force, the Rurales, instituted by President Diaz to be what the Royal North-West Mounted Police are in Canada. They had the look of seasoned troops. Their brown Indian faces were resolute and grim. While the infantry went at once into action, they were kept

back until the enemy had been dislodged from their positions. Then, under cover of a tremendous fire, they were sent off to complete the rout. For the time being at any rate Monterrey was saved.

But it was not the same Monterrey as that which we entered three days before. A cloud of gloom and apprehension brooded over the city. High in the sunny blue sky I saw obscene buzzards float, attracted by the dead men and horses lying stiff and hideous in the dusty streets. From numbers of the poles which carry telegraph and telephone wires dangled limp corpses of Carranzistas, hung there as a stern warning to the disloyal. The lower part of the city, where the battle raged, was a scene of piteous desolation. Here the dead were scattered all about, and almost every house had the mark of fire upon it.

Blackened shells of stores and residences stood gaunt in the sunlight. Others which had escaped destruction had been rifled, or damaged by shells. One American had his dining-room wrecked; another showed me a bedroom in ruins. I went with a party from the United States Consulate to see how the Americans living in the zone of greatest danger had fared. White-faced women told us how during forty-eight hours they had trembled for their children's lives. Some begged to be taken into the Consulate in case the attack should be resumed. Some implored the Consul to ask the authorities for a refugee train to Tampico as soon as possible.

For some days no business was done. Only the provision shops re-opened, and not nearly all of them. There was no fresh meat in the place, and no vegetables. The city was under martial law. Every one out after

dark was challenged and obliged to give an account of himself. And all this happened in one of the wealthiest and most progressive cities of the Republic—in a place which, owing to its large foreign colony, was supposed to be immune from attack.

VI

AFTER THE ATTACK

HERE is a letter which I wrote from Monterrey on October 31 :

A week has passed since the battle here. Gradually the city has recovered from those two days of shot and shell. Women are still pale and nervous. Men still walk close to the houses as they go through the streets. The tale of damage has mounted up to a million pounds sterling, which does not include the losses caused by the paralysing of business life and by that feeling of doubt and danger which is so unhealthy for trade. The National Railways alone have suffered to the extent of some £200,000. Sixteen engines and several hundred freight cars were set on fire. Many of the cars were filled with valuable freight. Coal and maize in vast quantities are still smouldering their value away.

The city is full of troops now. They are camped in public buildings, theatres, empty private houses, anywhere. If there had been a larger garrison a week ago the attack might never have been made. In spite of this belated display of force there are still no passenger or freight trains running, neither on the direct line north and south, nor to Tampico. Monterrey depends for most of its foodstuffs and other necessaries upon supplies from outside. These are all cut off. Coal has run short, even for running military and repair trains

on such portions of the line as remain unbroken. Last night the Federal authorities seized without warning 120 tons of gas coal belonging to the Light and Power Company. In a day or two the city will be without gas. Up to yesterday the four of us who drove across country were the only people who had arrived here from Laredo since the line was cut three weeks ago. Last night came the Rev. Edmund Neville, rector of the Anglican Church in Mexico City. He was less lucky than we were, for he joined two Federal generals and took nine days over a journey of 150 miles. During that time he never took his clothes off; slept three nights in the open on the ground with his Prayer-book for pillow and only a cassock to protect him from the cold; and had very little to eat. He was most anxious to get back to his congregation in the capital, so he did not care how he made the journey. But he had no idea how hard it would be. To add to his misfortunes, a wagon turned over as he was crossing a river, and he was thrown into the water. Even then he managed to cling to the hat-box containing his tall hat; but a "Lincoln and Bennett" is poor protection against cold nights.[1]

We have the telegraph line open now to the capital, and a message comes through reporting that General Huerta has once more assured the Diplomatic Corps there that the revolution will soon be over. For the

[1] I am sorry to say that Mr. Neville died a few days afterwards from the effects of exposure and privation. He was well enough to travel with me to Saltillo, and busied himself there with preparations for a service. He held it on Sunday afternoon, November 2, All Souls' Day. Twenty-four hours later he lay dead. His loss was sincerely mourned in Mexico City, where his energetic, cheerful temperament had made every one his friend who knew him, and both widened and deepened the influence of his Church.

sake of the country, and especially for the sake of the many thousands of foreigners either living or possessing interests here, that is a consummation devoutly to be wished. The mass of Mexicans seem to accept civil war as a perfectly natural condition. They would not worry if it went on for ever; they take to fighting as ducks take to water. In the rebel forces I have come across officers who have been engaged in all kinds of civil and even professional employment—engineers, doctors, lawyers, wholesale dealers, retail traders, clerks, book-keepers, accountants, managers of factories. Nobody sees anything incongruous in their exchange of occupation.

Civil war is looked upon, not as a disaster and a crime, but as an ordinary incident in the life of the nation. That is what makes so many despair of Mexico's being able to overcome her troubles by her own unaided efforts. Here is a people of whom five-sixths have no conception of any form of government except personal government by force. Even those who talk about the blessings of freedom, who profess and call themselves ardent Democrats are for killing all who disagree with them. I was speaking in a rebel camp with a distinguished Insurrecto, a man who was formerly Governor of his State. He has agreeable manners, and is to all appearances a "modern"—that is to say, one who sees life from the angle at which it is viewed in countries where civilization is farthest advanced. He believes that the democratic idea is making progress in Mexico, and he told me why he believes so—because a new kind of dynamite bomb has been invented which enables the Constitutionalists to blow up railways more easily and in greater numbers.

"Think of it," he said gleefully; "seven trains destroyed in two weeks." The operation of the ballot-box is far too tame and tedious for enthusiasts like that.

It might be thought that a people which after thirty years of peace rushes headlong into civil war must be profoundly patriotic, deeply attached either to its present institutions or to the cause of reform. In truth very few Mexicans care for the one or the other. For each "jefe" among the Insurrectos who believes that he is fighting for a cause there must be twenty who are simply "on the make."

As for the rank and file, few of them trouble their heads about the motives of the war. They are fighting because it pays them better to fight than to work, or because they have been pressed into the Army on one side or the other. Thousands of criminals have been turned out of the gaols and forced into uniforms. Tens of thousands of pelados (peasants or labourers, literally, "the skinned ones") prefer the roving, loafing life of a Mexican soldier with pay ranging from 2*s.* 10*d.* to 4*s.* a day to slaving for a few shillings a week in the fields. If they do not get their pay regularly they can look forward to opportunities of plunder.

At certain times and in certain places both sides punish looting. A number of thieves have been shot here by the Federals in these last few days, and also, if report says true, a good many innocent poor folk as well. A servant in the house of a friend of mine tells me that he would be afraid to wear new shoes or anything new, or to make any purchase just now. "Every one is suspected," he says, "and there is no

fair trial. Under Porfirio Diaz we lived in security. Now . . ." He finished with an eloquent shrug.

Many officers of the Constitutionalist Army also draw the reins of discipline tight in this respect. But all the same looting and " commandeering," which is little better, go on, and the former often has to be winked at. In one case a town was actually divided into seven districts for systematic sacking. The greediest plunderers are usually non-combatants. The lower orders never miss an opportunity of looting or paying off old scores. A *hacendado* who employs a large number of labourers told me that he had difficulty in getting anything done while an attack was being made upon a town near by. His men said that they were " waiting to go into the city " as soon as it fell.

That is one reason why the revolution is not unpopular. It gives many chances of picking up unearned gains. Further, the rebels make a regular practice of accepting bribes not to injure property. A number of people in Monterrey, both Mexicans and foreigners, paid the attacking force for the safety of their buildings and their goods. Some of them frankly told me so. Even when the leaders order property to be respected, they hold themselves free to take whatever they themselves require. Thus, General Jesus Carranza last week gave to a British farm near Monterrey a certificate of protection. But he sent up to the manager that same evening a demand for ten mules to drag guns which he had captured.

Horses and mules the Insurrectos take wherever they find them. They must have these; they possess no other means of transport. Their object in

destroying railway bridges and tearing up lines is to prevent the Federals from sending troops by train. They have offered to leave the railways alone if the Government would agree not to use them for military purposes. Often they do allow a service to run uninterrupted for some time. As soon as a train of soldiers is sent over the line, it is cut. "Let the Huertistas meet us on equal terms," the Constitutionalists say; "let them move as we do, on horseback. Then the trains shall run unhindered."

They assert also that they always challenge the garrisons of towns to fight in the open, so that the towns need not suffer. I know several instances in which they have done this. The Federal reply is, "If we did so, you would trick us by sending a force to sneak in behind as soon as we moved out." Which might indeed very likely happen. But at the same time it would be hard for the Federals to get their troops, with the exception of a few picked regiments, to fight in the open. One general was extolled to me as a great man. I asked what sign of greatness he had shown. "Why," I was told ingenuously, "when he found himself outnumbered, he did not run away."

General Pancho Villa, the most daring and skilful of the Insurrecto leaders, has hit upon the only plan by which Mexicans can be induced to make active frontal attacks upon the enemy's position. He places in the rear of his force a body of men whom he can trust. They have orders to shoot any man who tries to turn back. Realizing that they had better take their chance of being killed by the enemy than be certainly shot by their own side, the soldiers rush desperately on, and their general's tactics often succeed.

The same leader, whenever he enters a town, puts guards over the drinking shops. Thus he is able to prevent unauthorized looting or destruction of property. Then his requests for money are presented. From Torreon, which is a rich place in the heart of a cotton country, with many banks and business houses, he demanded £300,000. The Monterrey banks took the precaution of sending their securities and most of their cash balances to Tampico. At one of them I tried to change American " bills " for Mexican. The banker said that he did not want American money. He would either have to keep it, which was not very safe, or to post it to the United States, which would be more risky still.

Signs like that show how little confident feeling there is that the Government can put down the Insurrectos. It is handicapped in so many ways. The sale of ammunition by Federal soldiers to agents of the enemy is a regular traffic. Many officers, even generals, are accused of " grafting " little more creditable. One is universally believed to be supplying his men with beer and tobacco at a very handsome profit. Of course such charges must not be readily believed, though the absence of a Commissariat Department, which throws upon officers the victualling of their commands, gives great opportunities for fraud.

A very high personage told me that he knew of one Army contractor who has supplied £200,000 worth of goods, and who always makes out two bills, one for the sum which he is to receive, the other for a much larger amount. The latter is officially receipted; the difference goes into somebody's pocket. That sort of thing, said my informant, is going on all the time.

Then, again, active generals, like Peña, a dashing cavalry leader and the finest all-round soldier in the Mexican Army, are often not allowed to act upon their own initiative. Orders for movements of troops are supposed to come from Mexico City, and, further, local commanders, jealous of each other, squabble among themselves.

Other generals are notoriously incapable and yet retain their commands. The absence of organizing capacity is noticeable on all sides. Even officers reputed to be men of capacity do things in a haphazard, get-there-or-stick style which seems to us like courting disaster. General Teellez, for instance, knowing Monterrey to be in danger, started from Nuevo Laredo for this city on October 21. The distance is 150 miles. He took nine days to cover it, travelling partly by rail, partly across country.

There was no proper transport, no commissariat. He and his staff slept several nights on the ground. After the first day, when they fared sumptuously in their train, they lived on biscuits, sardines, beans, and weak coffee made with any water that could be found. General Teellez is the officer commanding this district. With him was General Maas, nephew of General Huerta, victor at Piedras Negras, and the newly-appointed Governor of the State of Coahuila. It is impossible to imagine two European generals travelling in such conditions, either so slowly or in such disarray.

Furthermore, the present régime has to be on the watch against plots other than those of its avowed enemies, such as the conspiracy of General Felix Diaz and General Mondragon, the men who conspired also against Madero. All these elements of weakness, in

addition to the perpetual need of money, make General Huerta's task a very hard one.

Yet in the triumph of a stable Government lies the only hope of any prolonged peace. I have received much kindness from the Constitutionalist leaders. For many of them I feel sympathy as well as respect. But I cannot see how their victory would give the country rest from disorder. They have no clear idea as to what they would do if they came into power. They have not even decided whom they would " run for President," in the American phrase. There would be an outbreak of feverish plotting for that position, and for others, unless they settled beforehand upon some man whom all would agree to serve.

At the same time all whom they have made objects of attack would be waiting for the chance to destroy them. In a poster on a wall in Sonora I read bitter denunciation of " los malditos cientificos, los malvados clericales, y los corrompidos militares " (the accursed cientificos, the wicked clergy, the corrupt soldiers). No doubt the " cientificos " (a nickname for the Ministers who made Porfirio Diaz unpopular) were a curse to the country. Though they did much to enrich it by encouraging foreign capital, and much to beautify the capital, they were the immediate cause of the first civil war. No doubt there are sinners among the priests. Certainly there is much talk, as I have pointed out, of " grafting " officers. But to rule in spite of politicians, Church, and Army would be hard in any country. In Mexico it is impossible. The standard of defiance would quickly be unfurled again. Revolution would succeed revolution, each one bleeding the land more white.

One looks in imagination along a vista of endless short triumphs and long-drawn-out disorders. That can only be prevented by a strong and just Government. If Mexico fails to evolve such a Government, it cannot hope to settle its own troubles. They will have to be dealt with by some other hand.

VII

THE PITY OF IT!

As I walked the streets of Monterrey and saw the dead lie stark and pitiful after the fight, the same thought came to me which had been provoked in rebel camps, among men of refinement and education who have given up their usual occupations for the savage joy of civil war: "What a waste! What a meaningless folly!"

To give one's life for one's country in a good cause, is the best end that can befall.

> "For how can man die better
> Than facing fearful odds,
> For the ashes of his fathers
> And the temples of his gods?"

Wars there will be so long as there are wrongs, real or imaginary, to be righted; so long as some people have what other people want. Also, while men have red blood in them, enough will be found ready to die in war, and the world will rightly honour them, saying they died well. But this civil war in Mexico is so futile. There are no principles at stake, no national objects to fight for. No cause can be advanced, no problem finally settled by the victory of either side.

It is true that the Constitutionalist leaders say that they are defending the Republican idea, the demo-

cratic, as opposed to the despotic, form of government. But they have no real faith in democracy. The United States officer in command of the frontier detachment at Laredo was visited by a deputation of Insurrectos from across the border. He listened to them politely, then he asked, "But if, as you say, you have an overwhelming majority of the people with you, why do not you take part in the Presidential election, return your candidate, and have him recognized by the United States?" They looked at one another doubtfully. "Ah, Señor," they answered, "we never thought of that."

Some of their leaders have thought of it, but have refused to recognize President Huerta in any way, declaring his Government to be unconstitutional. They will not even try to defeat it by constitutional means. The truth is that they realize, even the most Radical among them, that Mexico cannot govern herself as the United Kingdom and the United States do for a very long time to come. I was talking to a very clever, enthusiastic young captain (by profession an electrical engineer) in one of the towns held by the rebels. He had just been telling me how the division of land among the poor peasantry had been begun in the State of Tamaulipas. A property belonging to General Felix Diaz was seized and parcelled out, and a ceremony was held to celebrate the occasion. It reminded me of similar incidents in the French Revolution.

Yet this young captain, when we discussed possible candidates whom the Constitutionalists might put forward for the Presidency, clenched his fist and bringing it down upon his knee said, "We must have an energetic man. That is what Mexico needs." An

energetic man! And that eloquent gesture with the clenched fist! Democracy was all right in theory, but he knew as well as anybody that in practice it would not work.

Mexico in one respect resembles France before the Revolution. Almost all the land is held by rich men who manage to escape taxes. Porfirio Diaz was called a strong man, yet he was afraid to reform this abuse. He failed lamentably also in permitting the landowners to practise criminal extortion and fraud. The "peons" (peasants) have in many parts been deprived of their holdings, either by being cheated out of them, or by being loaded with chains of debt. Here is an example of the tricks played upon the unlettered Indian. An edict was issued that land in certain parts must be registered by a certain date. Many Indians were kept in ignorance of that order. Unregistered land was put up for sale, and in some cases bought at ridiculously low prices. Protesting, but unable to resist the injustice, the wretched owners were dispossessed. Nor was that all. After losing their property, they often became slaves.

Thousands of peasants are in bondage to their employers—the great "Hacendados." They are obliged to buy at the "Hacienda" store. Credit is easy. In time, the employers have an account against them which they can never hope to pay. Or else they borrow in order to be married. Church fees are heavy, but the Mexican peasant feels "more married" if the knot is tied by a priest, and the women are good Catholics. Or it may be that funds are wanted for a funeral and "wake." Somehow or other the thoughtless *peon* gives his employer a hold over him. His mortgaged land is taken, and

so long as he owes money he cannot go away. Worse still, the debt descends to his children.

The condition of these *peons* is practically that of slaves. Yet slavery is a word which sounds worse than the condition for which it stands. There are harsh " Hacendados," just as there were some Simon Legrees, but as a rule the peasants are decently treated. If they were not, they would not go back at regular intervals to their " haciendas " when they are working in mines. It is said that " if you want to catch a *peon* and pay off a score, all you need do is to go and sit on his ' tierra ' " (that is, the district where he was born). He is certain, sooner or later, to go back to it. This love of the land on which they were raised is one of the strongest passions in Mexican hearts.

The Indians usually cultivate their patches on a profit-sharing basis. Half goes to the owner, half to them. Or else the peasant is given a patch to cultivate for himself while he works on his master's land. The owners put under tillage only a very small part of their enormous properties, which in some cases, as in that of the Terrazas family in Chihuahua, extend over hundreds of miles. The methods of the peasants are shiftless and lazy. They only grow for their immediate needs. I have seen Mexican cotton fields which gave one bale of cotton for three or four acres. If the land were kept clean and water brought to it from a river near by, the yield might be at least double.

Most Mexicans still use the same kind of plough that Abraham ploughed with. With such a climate and such a soil they could grow anything. Yet they often have to import quantities of " frijoles," the

beans which, with maize "tortillas," form the staple of their diet.

The peasant's wants are few. He seldom tastes meat. Coffee is his usual drink. A cigarette is often preferred to food when he is hungry. All that he needs is a few acres with horse, mule, or donkey; perhaps a pig, or a few goats. It was by promising these to all that Madero won his popularity. It was for failing to redeem his rash promise that he lost it.

Land reform is, therefore, a necessity in Mexico. But it is not advocated by the Constitutionalists only. Men of good will and foresight on the other side are equally convinced that it must come. Even Señor Limantour, one of the Ministers who brought about the downfall of Porfirio Diaz, admitted that the huge estates had to be broken up, and also that judicial and municipal abuses must be swept away.

One of the hardships which the poor are beginning to resent is forced labour on public works. In a certain town a new building was required for the local archives. Money was voted for its erection, but the money was not all devoted to that purpose. "Peon" labourers were arrested upon some trifling or trumped-up charge and compelled to dig the foundations. Bricklayers and masons were obliged to build it. Carpenters were pressed into service for the work inside. This system, similar to the *corvée* in Egypt before British rule, was possible only so long as the "peons" knew nothing about other countries. When they heard that in the United States a Mexican with a trade could earn (instead of 1*8d.*) 8*s.* or 10*s.* a day, while even labourers were paid 5*s.* or 6*s.*, they grew discontented.

They saw their brothers and friends return from

the United States wearing shoes and good suits of clothes. From the country near the border, where the revolution is strongest, large numbers went across and became familiar with American ideas. They would no longer submit to being treated as they were before. The rich had been hard upon them; now their turn was coming. The spirit of revenge, of conflict between "the barefoot and the shod," was nursed by the new middle-class, consisting largely of artisans who had taken advantage of President Diaz's schemes. Thus the soil was prepared for the seed which Madero dropped upon it. There were many accounts to be settled up; such as that of the man in the rebel ranks who told me that he took up arms because some agent of General Terrazas callously ran cattle over his little farm and ruined the labour of years.

There are other abuses which make reform necessary; such as the keeping of accused persons in prison for months, and sometimes years, before they are tried; the unequal incidence of taxation; the greed of corrupt officials. But, as I have said, all Mexicans who think are agreed that reforms must come—after peace has been restored.

The way to hasten reform is to make gradually increasing use of the political means which exist. Fighting does not bring it any nearer. The Constitutionalists say that the former course is useless, for the reason that the results of the elections are always decided by the President in power. Up to the present they have been. It is said that no President has ever been legally elected. The most laughable means are adopted to "cook" the result. In Mexico City a "mozo" of a friend of mine went into a polling-place to vote for Felix Diaz.

"We are sorry," said the officials in charge politely; "this is not one of Felix Diaz's places, you cannot vote for him here."

"Where can I find one?"

"We are sorry: we cannot tell you."

"For whom can I vote here?"

"For Huerta and Blanquet."

It sounds like an invention, but such incidents are common enough in Mexico.

Here is another anomaly. The Constitution requires the successful candidate to receive a certain proportion of possible votes. Nothing like this proportion has ever been polled. Madero himself only received some 20,000 from an electorate running into millions. In the October Presidential Election only 7,157 electoral stations sent in returns, out of 14,425.

But illegalities are only tolerated because there is no public opinion in Mexico. The mass of the people think of the Government as a power above them, outside their ken; a power with which they have nothing to do. Even the educated prefer to be lookers-on. They criticize severely, but they will take no part in handling the problems of government.

I had some interesting talk with a very intelligent young Mexican of good family. He was at Harvard University and might pass for an American, whether judged by his appearance or by his ideas. He is well off, but has taken up a profession to keep him occupied.

"You ought to be in politics," I said; "your country needs men like you."

"Some day," he replied vaguely.

It is this refusal of responsibility by the better class of Mexicans which makes revolution appear to be the natural and only method of political protest.

"Educate, educate, educate," should be the Constitutionalists' motto. It will take generations to bring Mexico up to the level of France, England, or the United States. Hasty measures of reform are doomed to failure. The only way to get rid of abuses is for all the better class in the country to work together, and, little by little, alter a system which has fallen behind the country's needs.

All that civil war has done is to make the country poorer, both by raising prices and by diminishing the demand for labour by reason of the many industries which are shut down. Concepcion del Oro may serve as an example of numberless other cases. The closing of the mines has brought a well-to-do settlement to the verge of starvation. The people have literally not enough to eat. In most parts of the Republic the pinch of war is felt by everybody. The shops have been compelled to raise their prices, and the 50 per cent. increase in import duties makes living twice as dear as it used to be. But the Radical-Socialist-Constitutionalist reformer does not stop to think the situation out. He claims that he and his party are the children of light : yet their one impulse is to follow the bad, old backward barbarism of civil war. Their sounding phrases neither influence their conduct nor apply with any truth to the actual situation.

I have compared one aspect of Mexico to-day with that of eighteenth-century France. From another point of view, the country is in much the same stage of development as Russia at the present time. In each there is (1) an absolute government; (2) a population unfit as yet for anything but absolutism. Unfit in Mexico, not only because the vast majority are illiterate, but also because even the educated who take

part in politics regard politics as a means to get something for themselves. Then there is a small class drunk with the heady wine of progress which fancies that the work of centuries can be accomplished in a few years. Francisco Madero was of this fanatical idealist type, and like all fanatics he drew around him ardent disciples. His memory is honoured by numbers of the younger Constitutionalist leaders as that of a saint and martyr. They wear his picture over their hearts. They speak of him with reverent affection, though some of them admit that, as President, he was woefully disappointing.

Like most demagogues, he lacked capacity either for business or politics. He could neither administer the country's affairs, nor could he keep the people quiet by showing them that he meant to redeem his election pledges. He had no idea how to begin.

Personally an honest man, with no need or inclination to be otherwise, he allowed his brothers and other relations to plunder as they pleased. Crowds of them swooped down upon public offices. His own supporters were disgusted by his nepotism and weakness. The feeling of those who had cheered him turned to coldness, and the anxiety of all Mexicans to be on the winning side hastened his downfall. He fell with bewildering rapidity. If he had not been assassinated, he would have left behind the reputation of a man who promised much, performed little, and served his country ill. It was the unfortunate incident of his assassination which provoked, or at all events gave pretext for, the present war.

To such an extent as it is a war of vengeance it is a pitiful futility. To such an extent as it is a war of personal ambition it is a crime. Neither side has

anything to gain by victory. The country has everything to lose by the continuance of unrest. It will take years to put down the lawless spirit which has been reawakened after being put to sleep for so many years under President Diaz and his "Rurales." It will be long before confidence revives. And all this waste, all this barbarism, for no real cause,—to no sane end! The pity of it! The pity of it!

VIII

WHAT SALTILLO TALKS ABOUT

For ten days no train ran from Monterrey in any direction. I began to ask about another mule-coach. Then suddenly late one afternoon it was announced that there would be a train south next morning at four o'clock to Saltillo, San Luis Potosi, and Mexico City. After so many disappointments I was delighted by the prospect of getting on.

Monterrey is a pleasant city. It had provided me with excellent entertainment in the shape of a two days' battle. I had made many friendships and enjoyed the bright autumn weather. There were certainly sad and gruesome memories mixed with the others. I shall not easily forget the wailing of a woman over the body of a Federal officer killed in the fight. It had been carried into a poor house, and I suppose his wife had been sent for. The unhappy lady was almost mad with grief. The door of the house was open and the old couple to whom it belonged sat looking on bewildered while, with her arms about the cold clay, she asked in frantic tones why Heaven had brought this misery upon her, and what would become of her, left without support.

In the Mexican Army there is no regular system of pensions for the widows of those who are killed in action. To the pain of their bereavement is added fear for the future. Still ringing in my ears is her

pitiful lamentation. Still I can see the wretched Carranzistas dangling from the telegraph poles and electric light standards. But my dominant recollections of Monterrey are happy and delightful. Nevertheless I was anxious to press on.

It was a miserable morning when I started just after three for the railway station. A " norte " (north wind) had begun to blow two days before. Thick overcoats had made their appearance (mine was unfortunately left behind with the bulk of my luggage at Laredo). Then rain had set in. But I did not mind it. I was getting on. In the chilly dark we were challenged by a picket, " Quien vive ? " " Mehico " replied my cabman, adding " Paisano " (fellow-countryman), and we drove on.

The station was full of sleeping soldiers and " soldaderas," the wives who follow the army, cooking and washing and mending for their men. They lay so close together that in the dim light one had to step carefully so as not to tread upon them. There was plenty of time, before we started, to look at the train. It was arranged in view of the possibility that it might be (*a*) attacked, or (*b*) blown up. Before the engine came two empty vans. After the engine and express car was a carriage full of soldiers, about seventy men, with a machine gun. Then followed the passenger cars, crowded with people who had been waiting for days to get away.

We did not leave at four, as announced. We left at 5.20. Still, considering the conditions, that was not so bad. Seeing that the train was already close upon a fortnight late, another hour or so made little difference. As we slowly pulled out through the railway yards we saw long lines of burnt-out goods

cars and a huge pile of coal still burning. No attempt had been made to save it, although coal was very scarce in Monterrey.

An hour after our start we could see, in the livid light of dawn, the arid mountain scenery through which we were passing. We could see burned stations and the charred timbers of wooden bridges that had been fired. The steel bridges had been left, showing that the rebel leaders set a limit to destruction. Our pace can only be described as a creep, with frequent and long stops. It was a wretched morning still. On the brow of a descent we stayed for half-an-hour before plunging into a dense white mist, which might hide all kinds of rebel ambushes.

Saltillo (pronounced Solteeyo) owes a delightful climate, crisp and bracing, to its five thousand feet altitude. In sunshine it is gay and picturesque, with its open white cathedral tower; its shady, flowery Alameda; its vista of light-brown one-storeyed houses built of " adobe " (mud brick) straggling up the fort-crowned hill and reminding one of a town in Palestine. But nothing can be more dreary than a sunny country without the sun. I was comforted to find stoves and open fires in the hospitable houses of the foreign colony, which here is mainly British. We agreed, as we sat cosily round them, that it was just such a first of November as one might get at home.

The luxury of the sun next morning was delicious. After marketing with my hostess (who bought her vegetables from a lady with long black shiny hair hanging down her back and a cigarette sticking out at the corner of her mouth), I sat on the Plaza to have my boots cleaned, the invariable practice in Mexico, and let the golden warmth soak into my

bones. A band was playing, all the seats were full, dashing officers and dainty señoritas were promenading under the trees, the boot-blacks, like Murillo's brown urchins with angelic faces, chaffed and squabbled as they blacked.

The only fly in my ointment was being sold a week-old newspaper by a cherub most appropriately named Seraphito, a common fraud in these disturbed times, when often no newspapers arrive for weeks at a time. It was then over a month since the last mail from England had reached Saltillo; in a fortnight they had only had one train in from Mexico City. I expected to continue my journey either at once or in twenty-four hours, but on the notice-board at the station there were chalked against each train the depressing words, "No corre" or "No hay" (Not running. There is none). Fighting was the cause, a sharp little battle down the line. So I was held up again. However, my time was by no means wasted. In a series of very interesting conversations I learnt a great deal about the civil war in Coahuila State.

On board the *Lusitania* as I went out I met a man who manages some oil properties in the Tampico district. I asked him about the revolutionary movement. He compared it airily to the Afridi raids on our Indian frontier. "It is up in the north, you know" (he spoke as if the north were of small consequence); "the bandits do a certain amount of damage now and then; frighten people, and so on; drive off a few cattle; rob villages; all very much exaggerated."

I wish that man could have had my experiences. I wish he could have been with me in Monterrey and in this once-contented, prosperous town of Saltillo.

His eyes would have been opened. What he said to me he said in all sincerity. In his district there was then no trouble to speak of. The people there had small knowledge of what had been going on to the north and west of them. Instead of being exaggerated, the wreck and ruin of Mexico's civil war have not had the tenth part told about them.

Here in Saltillo the rebellion of General Carranza against the provisional Presidency of General Huerta began in February 1913, after the enforced resignation of Madero, followed by the removal of himself and his Vice-President. Carranza was Governor of the State of Coahuila, which in normal times is one of the richest in gold, silver, lead, copper, iron, and coal mines; in cattle, in cotton, in wheat, maize, and other kindly fruits of the soil. All the foreign colony here and many Mexicans are convinced that Carranza was preparing to rebel against Madero. He had supported the Maderista movement, but is said to have been dissatisfied and restless after its success.

I have reported faithfully what General Carranza said to me in Hermosillo. The impression made by his words and his personality was favourable. What I have seen since of his followers, their pillage and destruction, has persuaded me that the best hope for the country lies in their subjugation; but I still believe him to be sincerely anxious for reform. If the charge of vaulting ambition were made against him by irresponsible tongues, I should ignore it. But seeing that men of the highest character and the most prominent position repeat it, it cannot be passed over.

They allege that for months Carranza had been drawing large sums of money from the National Treasury for the purpose of paying troops. It might

be that he foresaw the anti-Madero outbreak and was preparing to support his chief. That view obtains no credence in Saltillo. The belief there is, among the people who knew and watched him, that he would have declared war against Madero, just as General Orosco, another Maderista leader, had done. That no Mexican can be disinterested is the conviction, not only of the foreigners in Mexico, but of the native-born as well. It is a conviction which one is inclined to discount. There must be exceptions. Human nature cannot be so different here from human nature in other countries. But the exceptions are, it seems, discouragingly few in number.

The State of Coahuila, being the birthplace of the Carranza rebellion (the third since 1910), has suffered severely from the operations of war. It has been overrun by both armies, which meant the crippling of agriculture, the disorganization of railways, the loss of an enormous amount of cattle; and which may mean the ruin of an unusually fine crop of cotton. Its chief towns, Saltillo, Torreon, Monclova, and Ciudad Porfirio Diaz, have all been alternately in rebel and in Federal hands.

Torreon fell in October without street fighting; the Federal garrison evacuated the city after rebel victories in its neighbourhood. There were other Federal troops near at hand, and the general who led them will, it is said, be tried for failing to march to the rescue. He is suspected of Carranzista sympathies. But that is " only shutting the stable door," a practice even commoner in Mexico than elsewhere.

The Constitutionalist forces marched into Torreon, then, without opposition. It is a rich city, situated in the fertile cotton-growing district known as the

Laguna. It has good shops; at once these were looted. But as soon as General Villa arrived he put a stop to this unauthorized and irregular pillage. He is a stickler for plundering decently and in order. In polite but peremptory form he presented to the banks and business houses a demand for three million pesos (£300,000), and I am assured on good authority that what he received came very near this sum. Having received it, he soon afterwards left the city, taking the bulk of the money with him, to the discontent of the other rebel leaders. Villa, however, is not a man to be argued with. To Carranza, who claimed part of his booty, he is reported to have replied: "Take your chance of a bullet as I do and you will get your share."

Several Spaniards living in Torreon were murdered, but there was happily nothing to compare with the horrible massacre of the Chinese, to the number of 300, which disgraced the Madero rebellion. The Chinese are disliked because they are mostly employed in cooking and washing. It is said that poor Indian women started the massacre by crying out, "Kill those who take away our work." Further, the Chinese in Torreon are said to have "waxed fat and kicked." They were a prosperous community and had become proud.

Spaniards are also unpopular in Mexico, although some newspapers of a Catholic complexion print news from Spain under the heading, "The Mother Country." They and the Arabs are the small shop-keepers of the country. Their ability in this line is bitterly resented.

The Insurrectos executed as well some members of the local volunteer force known as the "Defensa Social"; others escaped by taking refuge in the

houses of foreigners. There are defence societies in many towns. The bloody vengeance meted out to their members, wherever they are captured, illustrates the savage folly of the revolutionaries. If they were indeed actuated by patriotic motive, they would try to sow as little heritage of hate as possible. By their barbarous acts of revenge and destruction, deplored by their more civilized chiefs, they have revealed the true measure of their minds.

Saltillo has not as yet been so harshly treated as Torreon, but it has had its hours of anxiety and it lives in fear of further attack. At every moment, almost, the visitor is reminded of the lamentable condition to which this flourishing city has been reduced by civil war. Conversation turns upon nothing but dangers and losses past, and upon the apprehension of others to come. Bullet-holes in walls and woodwork are shown to prove the risks to life endured by peaceable inhabitants, British and Americans among the rest, during the severe attack delivered last Easter. Valuables are packed away and furniture arranged so that at a moment's notice upper rooms can be abandoned and quarters taken up on the ground floor. Even baths are filled at night in case the rebels' threat to poison or cut the water supply should be carried out before morning.

Most of the foreigners living here, as elsewhere in Mexico, have broken up their homes and sent their families to England or the United States. I was eagerly asked for news. No letters or newspapers had reached the British residents for several weeks. I heard from one business man of a cotton factory which cost £70,000 being burned because the manager in charge had no money to give the rebels. Another

gloomily spoke of a cotton crop in the Laguna worth £200,000, about which he could get no news since Torreon was still occupied by the Insurrectos and communications were completely cut. A third related how his company had to pay £2,500 to a rebel leader for permission to run, on their own line, a train taking out the women and children from their little mining town. They outwitted him, however, by making up all their engines and rolling stock, and sending them out at night, so that the line was useless to the rebels, the other end of it being under Federal control.

A fourth man, a German this time, who had been manager of coal mines in the northern part of the State, gave me photographs showing how these had been wantonly wrecked. They belonged, by the way, to members of the " Cientifico " Party which destroyed the popularity of President Diaz. This explained the furious attack upon their buildings and machinery.

At every turn of conversation, the war came up. My hostess deplored the scarcity of fresh vegetables. The Chinese who used to grow them had fled, fearing to be murdered like their fellow-countrymen in Torreon. The rainy season was talked about. " Ah ! what a year this would have been for crops, if only. . . ." I inquired about the education given in the large and imposing Normal School of Saltillo. " It used to be good, but in these disturbed times, you know. . . ." I was told about an effort to form a society for preventing the cruelty to animals which is so distressing in Mexico, although it is due mainly to dullness of imagination. " Nothing has been done lately. Impossible in such times as these ! "

Business stands still. To loss and anxiety is added the burden of enforced idleness. Sometimes the

foreigners wish that the rebels' threat of another attack might be carried out, if only to vary the monotony. Up to now foreign property in the town has not been intentionally damaged; nor were the British and Americans made contributors to the "loan" of £10,000 which was forcibly levied upon the city while the Carranzistas controlled it. This was a daring act of brigandage. Two chiefs of humble origin, but determined character, summoned the leading Mexican inhabitants one night and demanded that this sum should immediately be paid over to them. It was pointed out that the banks were shut. "They must be opened." A time limit was set; the trembling Mexicans, several of them old men, were kept in the "Palacio" with a guard over them; and they were told in true brigand style that, if the money were not found, they would be carried off.

A house-to-house collection of coin was hastily made, for the rebel leaders would not accept paper money. At one o'clock in the morning all but £400 of the £10,000 had been raised. This the robbers accepted, and one of them made a graceful speech of thanks, promising that when the revolution triumphed the money should be returned. His irony was little appreciated.

The Insurrectos now profess to stand astonished at their own moderation. They say that should they take Saltillo again they will treat it as they treated Torreon. For some time past the inhabitants have felt fairly secure, because General Peña, the only Federal leader whom the rebels fear, has been there with his command. Now he has been sent further north. There is still a strong garrison, but it is complained of the Federals, officers and men alike, that they prosecute the campaign with little heart.

Their organization is often lamentably at fault. One night there was a piteous scene at the railway station. On the line south (which has been blocked ever since) a train carrying soldiers was dynamited. It was the fourth atrocity of this kind within a few weeks. All had been the work of a force which for many months had been left unattacked in Concepcion del Oro, where the principal mines and smelters of the Mazapil Copper Company are situated.

The method of the fiends in human form who carry on this devilish warfare is to bury a dynamite bomb under the line. At a little distance they have a battery connected up by wire. All they have to do is to hide behind a bush and touch a button.

More than 100 men were killed by this explosion, most of them Federal "Irregulars," poor wretches forced to take up arms. The wounded survivors were brought back to Saltillo by a relief train late at night. No preparation whatever had been made to receive them and attend to their appalling injuries. The excuse offered afterwards was that they were not expected so soon! The only comfort to the dying was the last Sacrament, administered by a brave little French priest, who knelt on a car floor slippery with blood and could scarcely hold his post for nausea. Doctors were sent for. Two refused to answer to the call. Some say they were afraid they would not be paid for their services. Others say they are "Constitutionalists." It was not until three hours had passed that the poor wretches in agony reached the hospital.

Even those who are most bitter against the "bandits" admit that the Government cannot expect its soldiers to fight well if they are so cruelly neglected. The lack of medical attention in the field throws many lives

away which might easily be saved. A poor woman living in Saltillo lost her son simply because there was no one to tie a severed artery. The wound was simple, but he bled to death. That is only one case out of hundreds.

The reply of the Government is that they are very hard pressed even for money with which to pay their soldiers. That is certainly true. If they could have borrowed the millions they hoped for, they would have made more rapid progress against the revolution, and they would be able to treat the men who are fighting their battles more humanely. The demand of the United States for President Huerta's disappearance is based, not upon his inability to prevent impoverishment of Americans and risk to their lives, but upon his supposed complicity (of which no evidence is offered) in the killing of Madero. A sober Englishman, whose name is widely known in Mexico, said to me, "Mr. Wilson and Mr. Bryan accuse the President of being responsible for one death. They are responsible for thousands. But for them the civil war would have ended long ago." Most foreigners in Mexico share that Englishman's view.

IX

WHY TRAINS ARE LATE

LORD TENNYSON wrote a poem which was suggested to him by "waiting for a train at Coventry." I wonder what he would have written if he had had to wait for a train at Saltillo—more than half a week. Something vigorous, I make no doubt. Yet even more violent would have been his language if he had been sent on without delay and been obliged to spend four days on the road, not in Pullman coaches but in freight wagons. That is what would have happened to me if the train which brought me from Monterrey had gone on at once from Saltillo to San Luis and Mexico City. The passengers who arrived in Saltillo on the night of November 4 left the capital on October 31. Three nights they spent in box-cars, that is to say, goods vans, without bedding, dependent for what food they could get upon the meagre supplies of a regiment encamped close by.

Still, that was better than being blown up, which would have been their misfortune if they had gone on. Their train was stopped because a Federal scouting party saw rebels near the line. Naturally they suspected dynamite, nor were they wrong. They found altogether about fifty bombs on or under the rails. The train I hoped to take on November 1 would have struck these just after they had been laid, and would have been blown into the air. So,

after all, instead of grumbling at the suspended service, I ought to have been thanking the authorities for saving me from a sudden and probably painful death. Which I do most fervently now.

Even on November 5, when the general in command permitted a train to start, the danger was not quite over. We had, of course, a "tren explorador"; that is to say, a number of cars filled with soldiers and fitted with Maxims, ran about a quarter of a mile ahead. For a good many miles all was quiet. In the hot sunshine of a brilliant autumn morning the bare mountains sparkled as if their riches of gold, silver and copper had been drawn to the surface. We passed a goatherd standing motionless, an idyllic figure (from a distance); his goats stood out perfectly white against the grey-green ground. In the fields the peasants stopped working to look at the train, an unusual sight. Around Saltillo is rich country, or country which was rich before the civil war. But for the troubles, 1913 would have been for Mexico a year of marvellous prosperity. Such crops as could be gathered were of unusual quality. The rains were specially good. Prices of metals were high too. But seed-time and harvest were interfered with and the mines were idle. Every one suffered save those who were fighting. The Insurrectos are "having the time of their lives."

After a couple of hours' continuous running we pull up at a small station. Here there is another troop train. This is to "explore" for us too. War-stained officers, their uniforms patched and grimy, hold an animated conference. The passengers—there are very few; most people have a superstitious objection to the first train after an interruption—watch and listen.

Are we to be turned back? No, in time the discussion falters. Then the officers disperse—the captain in dirty white trousers tucked into brown leather gaiters which come down over black buttoned boots; the major wearing a blue jersey with "jemimas" on his feet and puttees; the lieutenant, smartest of the three until he turns round and shows that he has been sitting apparently on an ash-heap. They climb into their trains and off we go. Puffing hard, we climb a range of hills. Then we plod through a wide, flat, fertile valley. Suddenly with a jerk we stop. We are near Lulu, the station where less than a fortnight ago a train was dynamited and over a hundred killed. This is a favourite haunt of rebels, anxious to "hold up" trains.

Way over in the bush is a moving cloud of dust. It moves quickly. A troop of horsemen, a big troop. Already two or three score of little Federals have dropped off the train ahead, and made their way into the scrub. Still the horsemen hold their way. Now we can see some of them as they come out into an open patch of grass-land. The sun glitters on their gun-barrels.

Pop, pop, pop! go the Federal rifles, and pip, pip, pip! from further off comes the rebel reply. I feel the affair is unreal. It is hard to keep in mind that any one of those little Federals may be changed suddenly from activity to stillness, may be left lying there with lead in him when we go on. To the Mexicans in the train, though, the fight is real enough. There is a scramble for "safe" places—one man hides behind the drinking-water tank! As if any place in a railway carriage could be safe from Mauser bullets! Still, there are plenty of bullets that do not hit

anything or anybody, especially in Mexico, so some of us stand at the window watching to see if the skirmish is going to develop. It does not. It ends most unsatisfactorily. The rebels are off their horses taking cover among the bushes. The firing slackens and stops. Evidently the sides are too equally matched for the "scrap" to continue. That is so often the way. Each party prefers to fight with an advantage in its favour. By twos and threes the little men come trotting back, hot and dusty. Their engine has to hoot several times for them before the tale is complete. Then we slide on again.

It is because there are so many of these inconclusive engagements, mere reconnoitring skirmishes, that the war continues; and bids fair to continue, if there be no interference, for years to come. The only way for the Federals to gain ground against the rebels is to hunt these small bodies of them down, and either capture or kill them. Wherever they are sighted, they should be pursued. It is Federal slackness which sends up the numbers of the disaffected. Rebellion is seen to be a profitable and not at all a dangerous occupation.

It is the increasing numbers of rebel bands, such as this one between Saltillo and Vanegas, which is making the country unsafe to live in, and which will in a short time (unless they are suppressed) ruin by far the greater number of foreigners who depend for their living upon Mexican property, whether it be mines, ranches, oil-wells, wholesale or retail trading houses, no matter what. Already the opportunities of employment have been reduced to such an extent that many a *peon* has to choose between joining a band of "Revoltosos" and starving. Once he has joined,

he has no desire to go back to work. He earns more and has a far more exciting life. Brigandage is still in the Mexican blood, and possesses an irresistible attraction for the "enterprising," not only among *peons*, but among the new artisan middle class, more particularly so since the latter can pretend to themselves and others that they are fighting for the cause of democratic liberty.

A carpenter or an electrician who has upset his mental digestion by a diet of crude Socialism gathers a few followers, who steal rifles and horses and ride off to some small village where they terrorize the inhabitants and take up their quarters. They declare, if they are asked, that they are "Revolucionarios"; in reality they are bandits. They go round to every one of substance in the neighbourhood. They take whatever they can find in the way of money, clothes, provisions, and liquor, especially liquor. If they are thwarted, they kill.

How many Mexicans have been murdered, how many women have been outraged by these ruffians, there are no means of telling. Such horrors are happening daily. Even the armies of Francisco Villa and Jesus Carranza, which may be called regular armies, have laid to their charge the most barbarous excesses. Isolated commandoes exist for the sole purpose of committing them.

The outlook would be dark enough if they confined themselves to terrorizing their own country people. But from the European point of view the situation is far worse. For a time foreign property was respected; the lives of foreigners were in little danger. Now the larger Insurrecto bodies declare their intention of "taxing" (that is, blackmailing) foreign

concerns. Small, irresponsible bands maltreat and plunder individuals. Many outrages are also perpetrated by *peons* who do not trouble to shelter under the rebel standard. The prestige of the white people, which kept them safe among a population always ready to revert to barbarism, has sadly declined. The arm of the law has weakened, savage assaults, insolent robberies are committed and go unpunished every week.

Even in a state like Jalisco, which is supposed to have been very little disturbed, this sort of thing is liable to occur : An Englishman and his wife named Dering have a ranch only a mile or so beyond the Guadalajara street-car terminus, quite near the city. One night at dinner their dogs began to growl, and immediately an attack was made by men armed with *machetes*, the short, sharp knives which are used for cutting sugar-cane and all sorts of other purposes. One of the servants rushed off to the street-car and summoned help. A troop of horse galloped to the house. Fortunately the brave pair had managed to drive their assailants off, but Mr. Holmes, the helpful, energetic British Consul at Guadalajara, described the scene when he got there as a " shambles." Both Mr. and Mrs. Dering had been cut in many places. Eight deep wounds had to be sewn up.

In the neighbouring state of Michoacan a Canadian named Swayne had his house attacked and burned over his head. He died in the flames, unless a shot had taken effect before. At Coohuyma an Englishman named Laughton and another man, von Thaden, were both shot dead. At the Buenavista Mine one Boris Gorow, an American citizen, was the victim of an unusually horrible outrage. A body of rebels

rode up and demanded arms. These were refused. They fired; their fire was returned. A boy was killed, and the rebels accused Gorow of killing him. Three men who were also at the mine, two called Budd and Bromley, the third a Spaniard, managed to escape. The Spaniard rolled down a gully and hid in a cave. The other two got up a hill and thence saw Gorow done to death on a plateau below, after which the ruffians tore the gold-filled teeth out of his mouth to sell for what they would fetch.

Not far from the town of Aguascalientes a peculiarly atrocious affray illustrated the dangerous spirit which is growing among the labourer class. A Scotsman named Walker, the owner of a quicksilver mine, did not receive, as usual, at the end of one week the pay for his men. The rebels had interrupted the train service; the bank in Mexico City could not send the money. But the *pelados* would not hear reason. They attacked Mr. and Mrs. Walker with *machetes*. They were replied to with revolver-shots. Both husband and wife fired, and fired with good aim. They killed between them seven of their assailants, but not, of course, without suffering badly themselves.

As Mrs. Walker lay on the ground, almost exhausted by pain and loss of blood, a man went towards the kitchen door, where her daughter of fifteen and two smaller children were. She called to him to turn back. When he refused she shot him through the head. He fell across the doorway, and she had to crawl over his body to get into the kitchen. Here she stood up, and on the wall against which she leaned a print of her body was left—in blood. At this moment the chief of police arrived. His only idea was to shoot at Mrs. Walker as she stood. Fortunately the

bullet struck between her feet. The one redeeming feature of the story, so far as Mexicans are concerned, is that when the family were taken into town, the people of Aguascalientes cheered them for their pluck.

It must not, however, be supposed that such outrages are being committed every day or in every part of the country. Now that we are approaching Vanegas, we shall soon be in a district which for the moment is undisturbed. Yet in Vanegas itself, a junction and a little town half-way towards San Luis, there are signs enough of disturbance not far away. The lines here are all cluttered up with troop-trains. This is what they call a "meal station." The train usually reaches here in the middle of the day and stops for the passengers to take their "comida" in the restaurant. We arrive towards six o'clock and there is no food to be had. The hungry troops have eaten the place bare. Luckily I had a lunch-packet with me and saved half for dinner. Otherwise I should go hungry till late at night, as many must do. We wait interminably. The sun lights up the mountains with a barren beauty. They are not friendly, like the mountains of Switzerland and Tyrol. There are no pastures up there, no farmhouses; no warm, human interest softens the savagery of Nature. Dark has come before enough troop-trains are pushed aside to let us pass. Then we run quickly and the train-men put their official caps on, for we are out of the danger zone. If the rebels had caught them with their caps on they would have been shot for helping to run trains. So they were prepared to pretend that they were merely passengers.

Eleven o'clock before we are in San Luis Potosi.

We have been thirteen hours on the road instead of eight. But the time-table does not allow for skirmishes by the way. Now the last obstacle between me and Mexico City is surmounted. From this handsome city, with its well-paved streets, its fine buildings, old and new, its pretty gardens, and streets of good shops—from here to the capital the line has not been disturbed. So, after strife without ceasing for a month all but a day, I am within twelve hours of my goal. I have got back into a region where one does not have to ask humbly, " Please will there be a train to-day? "

After San Luis the country is richer and better-watered. The sun glints on numberless irrigation " dams " or lakes. The glare from a long one running beside the railway blinds the eyes. Cultivation is extensive, but not intensive. The barley and the oats are poor in ear; many crops look not worth cutting, only good to be ploughed in. The maize might be far finer if it were intelligently raised. No fault to find with the cattle, however, except that there might be more herds. Although there is so much fine ranching and dairying country in Mexico, the milk one buys is very often goat's milk. That to many palates is unwelcome, even disgusting. Two amusing stories are told of tourists who tried to avoid it. Neither could speak Spanish. One drew as well as he could a picture of a cow on the breakfast menu and showed it to the waiter, saying " Milk." The waiter looked at it, a smile of understanding lit up his face. He returned five minutes afterwards with a ticket for the next Sunday's bull-fight. The other tourist knew that the Spanish for milk was " leche," but he

couldn't think of the right expression for cow's milk, "leche de vacca." "Traigame leche de—de señora de toro," he plunged. ("Bring me milk of the lady bull.") He was perfectly understood.

It is evident that we are penetrating further south. No longer do we see the blackened shells of burnt-out railway stations, but stations gay with flowers growing in sunny profusion wherever they can find a root-hold. The walls are covered with nasturtium. The red blossoms of the castor-bean plant make the white flowers of a bush something like a rhododendren look virgin-pale by comparison; the pale lilac of clusters from a small tree reminds one of an English early May. Alternating with the flat, fertile valleys, are stretches of rugged mountain scenery. Soon after Querétaro is passed, an old city with history oozing from it and picturesqueness crying out for a painter's brush and palette at every turn, we are in a rocky region of deep gorges, of narrow passes, of streams leaping and foaming beside the line. Then down again into the level country lying outside the barrier of mountains which guards the Valley of Mexico. Through this barrier in a tunnel and we are almost at the capital.

For some time the names of the stations have been Aztec, not Spanish. Instead of La Llave, Carrasco, San Nicolas, we have Huehuetoca, Tlalnepantla, Cuauhtitlan. Outside the Valley of Mexico northwards, the Spaniards found only small tribes of Indians, mostly nomads. They named places as they pleased, did not trouble to learn local dialects. The Aztec names, on the other hand, they kept, impressed by Aztec civilization. Here is Azcapotzalco, for another, showing that we are close to our journey's end. Hotel

touts invade the train, distributing cards and pressing the advantages and the cheapness of the houses they represent. Then Chapultepec, towering quite near us, and a few minutes later the Colonia Station with the usual bustle of arrival at an important point.

X

MEXICO CITY

MEXICO CITY (the Mexicans call it simply "Mehico") is like a pretty woman dressed with charm and taste, but having no conversation, nothing save her looks to recommend her. At first I was delighted. To begin with, the climate is marvellous, and the climate affects the city in many ways.

In general I dislike cities. Their pavements tire my feet. Their smokiness chokes me. Their noise and bustle chafe my nerves. In Mexico I experienced none of these sensations. First, and best of all, there is no smoke pall! Under a clear sky and with perpetual sunshine, it is impossible to feel oppressed. The air—remember the city stands well over 7000 feet high—higher, if I recollect rightly, than St. Moritz—is light, invigorating. The weakly suffer from the altitude; but if your lungs and heart are sound, and if you are reasonably careful about what you eat, drink and avoid, you thoroughly enjoy it.

Next, it is a city with the most beautiful setting imaginable. At a distance of a few miles it is surrounded by mountains, not high enough to be oppressive, as they are in Innsbruck; near enough to give one a perpetually changing kaleidoscope of delight as one watches the effect of sun and cloud upon them from dawn till night. Further, the bounty of Nature has been seconded by the efforts of man.

Under President Diaz, and chiefly by the skill of French-descended Señor Limantour, the Mexican capital was laid out so that it already takes rank, although much remains still unfinished, as one of the finest in the world.

I think, myself, that the Paseo de la Reforma is, without qualification, the finest avenue that can be seen anywhere. It dwarfs Unter den Linden. It makes even the Champs-Elysées seem uninspired. As one drives along it towards the Castle of Chapultepec, which rises at one end on a green hill dripping with flowers, one feels in the thin clear air of nearly eight thousand feet an uplift of the soul. Against the mountain beyond the Castle are silhouetted the fine sculptured figures raised on lofty columns to mark stages in Mexican history. No capital is richer in splendid monuments. The semicircle of white marble columns backing the statue of Juarez and backed in turn by the green shady Alameda (park) is perfect in nobility and grace. There are many buildings, too, of a beauty that can never be forgotten—the Jockey Club, an ancient palace, entirely covered with blue and white tiles; the Venetian Gothic Post Office, wonderful in its way; the National Library with its tiled dome. Architects and sculptors have been inspired by the spaciousness of the landscape, and especially by the two volcanoes, Popocatepetl and Ixtaccihuatl, whose white summits shine with unearthly majesty against the brilliantly blue sky.

All down the Paseo are fine houses, and on either side stretch the Colonias (suburbs), which sprang up when the city itself became full of business houses. In these Colonias every style of architecture runs riot. A grey stone battlemented castle shoulders a modern

villa; a row of neat little "residences" leads to a closely shuttered Spanish "casa," next to which may stand a French chateau, with pink geranium climbing up its walls, or a rambling bungalow almost hidden by purple bougainvillia.

On Sunday evening every one who owns a car or carriage, every one who can afford to take a "coche" for two hours, drives on the Paseo and then in San Francisco Street, where there is a tight jam, only allowing the procession to move on a few steps every now and then. I cannot quite understand the enjoyment of this, but it happens in every town of any pretensions; it is ingrained in the habits of all Mexicans. Afterwards at the garish, noisy restaurants of second-class character they dine, or rather sup, for their habit is to eat a large meal in the middle of the day and light ones both in the morning and at night. You may often see the President in one of these cafés, drowning the cares of office and entertaining himself with his friends. He certainly has courage, this old general with the alert manner and the bright bird-like eyes. The Presidential Guards are a fine regiment. In their grey undress uniform they look very smart; in their parade kit they are magnificent. But, excepting State occasions, they are very seldom seen with the President. He prefers to pass unnoticed, a citizen-President indeed.

Seeing him in a glittering "pasteleria," or at his own particular table in Bach's Restaurant between eight and nine, one is brought back with a jerk to a sense of the contrasts in this gay and charming city. Only a year ago Gustavo Madero, brother to the President, was sitting at one of these tables when a file of soldiers entered, arrested him, and took him

away to be shot. What we call "civilization" is here only a sham-front plastered on.

There is a fine Parliament House (and another still finer a-building) with all the outward and visible signs of democracy. Call-over of members is taken at each sitting. Those who are absent must offer excuses and send their "supplentes" (substitutes). Every member has a substitute, elected at the same time as himself. President and Vice-President are changed every month. Nothing lacks, on paper, to make it appear that Mexico has an advanced system of Parliamentary government. Yet a few months ago four members who were obnoxious to the President "disappeared," no one daring to ask what had become of them; and at the beginning of the session in November 1913, no speech was made in the Chamber of Deputies for ten days. Without a word the members passed everything presented to them. They were like automata. They had nothing to say.

There are handsome Government offices with richly-decorated halls and audience chambers. But, as we pass them a friend who is agent for several leading British firms tells me how a Minister bought certain goods for £9,000 and had the bill made out for £30,000, and how another high official tried to get £80 machines charged up at £1,000 each, so that he could pocket the difference. This is so usual a mode of doing business that the official was astonished when my friend declined. Looking up with delighted eyes at the Post Office, sightly without and a marvel of cleanly convenience within, I recall the warning given me not to post letters there for England. "Registering them is useless. It only calls attention to them. Send them by hand to Vera Cruz and have them

posted on the mail steamer. That is the only safe way."

Here is another contrast. The police of the capital are a fine body. Armed with revolvers as well as truncheons, they keep excellent order. They are polite, helpful, quick to take the stranger's part. Yet the police-court system is so antiquated that no one will stop to assist the victim of a street accident for fear of being arrested as a witness and kept in solitary confinement for many hours. That is the regular proceeding.

Even the physical contrasts are disconcerting. Although the sun is very hot in the day-time, morning and evening are so cold that an overcoat is necessary, as well as heavy winter underclothing. It froze one night; the next day I had a bowl of strawberries and cream for thirty centavos (sixpence)—delicious strawberries too. This was in a popular restaurant much frequented by officers and politicians. It was full and seemed gay. Yet all the talk I heard was of the busy press-gang stealing men off the streets for the army by night; of rifles and provisions stored away in houses and offices "in case . . ."; of the distrust which had sprung up of the bank-notes for ten and twenty shillings which are the usual Mexican currency; of silver pesos hoarded for fear the banks might fail.

These are the contrasts which darken the fair features of Mexico City with a sinister expression. Some of the buildings still await repair which were shattered by the cannonade of February 1913, when the "Maderistas" and the "Felixistas" fought for ten days in the city, with guns planted on every point of vantage and rifle-fire sweeping the principal streets. What happened then might easily happen again,

though next time the foreign colonies will be prepared. The British, at any rate, have enrolled a regiment of defenders, have stored up arms and ammunition, have laid in provisions against a siege. The Germans, I believe, have a similar preparation. In all the country houses I went to I was shown rifles hidden away.

Of minor contrasts there are many, and they are often vastly comical, as, for instance, a short-haired, wild-looking Aztec woman followed through a smart residential quarter by a pet lamb. Within a few yards of palaces there are pestilent, filthy slums. Poked in beside gaudy restaurants are frowsy, smelly "pulque" shops. ("Pulque" is the liquor taken from the huge, spiky-leaved maguey plant: fresh, there is little harm in it, but it ferments into a strongly alcoholic drink.) Strolling along the fashionable streets among a throng of highly-dressed, strongly-scented fashionable people, will be indescribably ragged Indians, not in the least abashed. There is a good deal of genuine "democracy" here in spite of the hollowness of the constitution. There is more courtesy, too, than in America or Europe, less grabbing after and toadying to wealth, more general sharing in the simple pleasures of existence, such as idling, gossiping, lounging, and looking on at the spectacle of life. Therefore Mexico is to the traveller a pleasanter country than the United States—more varied, more picturesque, in the deeper sense more civilized. Americans who live there admit this. They do not like the idea of returning home. I have heard English people say they could never settle down in England after living in Mexico, and no German dreams of going back to Germany. The charm is partly the sunshine, partly the ease of life (it is more easy to make a living

in Mexico than elsewhere); for women, partly the pleasant dreaming idleness in which they can pass a good deal of time without wanting occupation. The beauty of the country comes in too, the pictorial quality of the people; the fact, also, that every foreigner in the country has to justify his existence, and therefore, in all likelihood, be interesting in some way.

It is a country different from other countries, and especially is "Mehico" a city different from any other city. Although there are so many Americans doing business in it, it has happily not become in the least "Americanizado." Its life is active, but not strenuous. Even in these anxious times its gaiety is irrepressible. The very uncertainty of the Mexican situation is turned to humorous account. "What is the latest from the rumour-factory?" has become the usual salutation. Absurd stories are invented and set afloat among the sinister whispers which perturb the credulous. Since the distractions offered are meagre, there is a great deal of club-life, and therefore a great deal of gossip. That explains the rapidity with which these fairy-tales, once started, go the round of the city. The theatres are very poor; there is no music save that of military bands in the Alameda and the plazas. Mexicans and foreigners alike are thrown back upon themselves for entertainment, and they find it largely in their clubs. There is a very comfortable British Club in a charming old "palacio" with sunny balconies around its grey courtyard. There is a handsome French club, two German clubs, a Spanish, an American; and, of course, most fashionable of all, there is the Jockey Club, where

the Mexican aristocracy sit in the doorway before dinner to watch the midday throng in the Avenida de San Francisco.

" Watching " in any Mexican town is an amusement of which the natives never tire. They like to live close to the centre, so as not to miss anything. " Looking out of window " takes up a great deal in a Mexican lady's life. They do not go out much, but they stand on their balconies for hours at a stretch. To the foreigner " watching " soon becomes equally attractive. In no country is the stream of existence so diverting, so varied.

Spend a day with me, strolling and sitting. Let us be " lagartijos," which means literally lizards, but is slang for those who lounge unoccupied in the sun. Starting out early, we have no sun as yet to lounge in. The morning is fresh, even chilly. We are glad of our overcoats. In the streets people are hurrying to their work—to keep themselves warm. The Indians pull their gaudy blankets (sarapes) up round their noses. Lithe, brown bakers' men are trotting about with huge baskets of rolls balanced on their heads. The knife-grinder's musical pan-pipe reminds one of " Punch and Judy." The dustman tinkles his warning bell.

Already the street-corner merchants are setting up their sweetmeat trays. Later, they will be dusting their candied fruits and dangerous-looking pastries, and cakes of almond paste, and keeping the flies off with a whisk; but there are no flies out yet. Early riders, their cheeks aglow, come clattering home to breakfast from the Wood of Chapultepec, a most enagaging park beyond the Castle. Dainty figures,

their heads shrouded by the graceful black mantilla, click their heels demurely on the way back from daily Mass.

Notice how easy it is to find one's way about. At every corner the street-name is printed clear, in striking contrast to the custom of American cities. It is easy to ride about too. Cabs are cheap; one shilling for any drive in town; two shillings an hour anywhere. Taxicabs are cheap as well, but you take your life in your hand every time you use them. By the side of Mexican chauffeurs Jehu would have been reckoned an old lady's coachman. The electric street-cars add to the dangers of the streets, though their swiftness is exceedingly useful, and they run far out into the country. We will take one to the Country Club now that the sun is hot and the streets are losing their animation. In the shade of some trees at a corner a lazy group watches a tiny Indian shuffle his feet while his father or elder brother plays a mouth-organ for him to "dance" to. Now the sunny side of the street is avoided—think of it, in mid-November! Overcoats and blankets have disappeared. You envy the Indians their high-coned, broad-brimmed hats and sketchy costumes.

The car-line runs first through slums, giving glimpses of dark, shuddery interiors, squalid "mixed stores," and "pulque joints," each with a high-sounding, often flowery name. Here is "The Dream of Love," near it "The Men without Fear"; then, oddest of all, I have seen "Las Emociones" (The Emotions), though "The Early Mornings of April" ran it close. I believe "pulque" is capable of supplying all the emotions one could want!

Now we are out of town, amid broad meadows where cattle graze. All around the mountains glitter, and the two snowy-peaked volcanoes peer through their comforters of cloud. A pleasant place, the Country Club; a spacious Spanish house, with golf-links (where are there not golf-links?), lawn-tennis courts, croquet lawns, and so on. We lunch on a cool "stoop," walk round to admire the billiard-table smoothness of the "greens," look at the big ball-room, where there is dancing on Sunday afternoons, and start back.

On the way we will take in the picturesque Indian village called Santa Anita, where dark-skinned youths and maids dance on holidays and sit in flowery arbours and consume large quantities of pulque and beer. It lies by the Viga Canal, one of the prettiest sights in early morning when Indian punts are bringing up flowers and vegetables to the city markets. Here are some now, laden with fragrant hay and slowly poled along under the trees which overhang the water from the canal banks. We look at the gardens, which, it is said, once floated on the waters of Mexico's rich valley, and then hurry on so as to see the city at its gayest on this winter afternoon.

The three parallel main streets, Fifth of May, San Francisco, and Sixteenth of September, are all lively. Pretty ladies in Paris frocks are driving in splendidly-horsed victorias and broughams. The confectioners' shops are crowded. The big "stores" are doing brisk business. Brown, barefooted children are pestering people with lottery tickets or hawking evening papers with pathetic haunting cry. Beggars exhibit their deformities with revolting candour. Smart Mexican

men, young and old, are bowing, waving their hands with the wiggling of the fingers peculiar to this country, talking with strident voice and vigorous gesture. Every one is out to see and be seen.

The sun sinks, and for a few minutes a red glow is reflected upon the eastern sky. Then suddenly it is dark. The clusters of street-lights flash into radiance. The shop windows add to the blaze of light. Electric signs, horrid importation from New York and Chicago, force themselves upon the attention. Offices at closing-time pour forth clerks and typists to swell the throng. When we are tired of the brightness and the chatter, we can stroll along to the dark, quiet alleys of the Alameda, where the white marble of the unfinished National Theatre gleams ghostly through the darkness. Will it ever be finished? Quien sabe? Who can tell? Not a hammer-blow falls now, either there or at the half-built Parliament House.

They tell of a Chinese Envoy who came to represent his country at the centenary of Mexican Independence, just before the revolutions began. He saw the theatre. "Beautiful!" he said, "but what a pity it not finished." He looked at the Parliament House. "Magnificent, but what a pity not finished!" A third building still in construction drew the same regret. Then he was introduced to President Diaz, very old and very deaf. "A wonderful man," he said. "What a pity he finished!"

Yes, it was the "finishing" of Diaz which led to Mexico's troubles to-day, and for three years past. A hundred thousand men killed, a hundred million pounds' worth of property destroyed! How can

"Mehico" take it so calmly, sipping its chocolate, tossing off its "copitas," flirting and gossiping and dressing-up? It must be the exhilarating climate. How could anything greatly disturb one in such sunshine and such air?

XI

THE NEMESIS OF PATERNALISM

I WAS told when I came to Mexico City that I had arrived "just in time." No one talked of anything but "the crisis." Every half-hour a fresh rumour was started, to go its rounds among Mexicans and foreigners alike, then to be forgotten amid the rush of newer lies. There are a number of excellent clubs in the capital. Several of them were good enough to extend their hospitality to me. I heard all the stories that were set going as soon as they were born. In few cases were they deliberately invented. They were the result of exaggeration and misunderstanding. Usually they belonged to the most impossible category: An American warship had been blown up; Mr. Lind had been assassinated; the President had ordered the American Embassy staff to leave, and so on. They would not be worth mention, save for this—they illustrate the state of mind I found in the capital; the nervous, anxious condition of all who had families with them and a livelihood to lose. In almost every office I entered I heard the same tale of "business at a standstill." Almost every conversation ended with the same despairing query: "Can you see any way out of it?"

The "Docena Tragica" (Tragic Ten Days), as they call the period of street fighting, in which the weak and disappointing régime of Madero culminated,

shook the nerves of the people. Long suspense and uncertainty have kept them cruelly on the rack ever since. All blame the Washington Government for their sufferings. The Americans are loudest in their condemnation of what is commonly known among them as "grape juice policy." Grape juice is a non-alcoholic drink reported to be used by President Wilson and Mr. Bryan, who are teetotalers. All say that if General Huerta had been recognized by the United States, he would have been able to suppress the revolution; to save many hundred lives and many million pounds of property, and to restore prosperity by giving the country peace.

Whether this would have happened it is impossible to say. I am inclined to doubt it for this reason, that the very people who express this view also say that the Federal officers are not trying to suppress the revolution. From generals to lieutenants they are, so the story goes, making money out of their commands, and have no wish for peace. That certainly is a monstrous charge to bring against a whole army, but it is hard to escape from the conviction that there is some truth in it. The *Pais* (Fatherland) is an organ of the Catholic Party; one of the best daily newspapers in Mexico. A little while ago it wrote—

"For some time past there has been a thought in the public mind, an observation that affords the clue, at least in part, to our chronic anarchy. Nobody, so far, has given utterance to this thought; but as the necessity is urgent, as the rebellion is spreading and assuming sinister proportions, as it has become absolutely necessary to secure peace, we will denounce the fact, holding it up to the eyes of the Government and the public in all its 'canaillesque' magnitude.

The revolution has been and continues to be a brilliant business proposition, an immense source of profit to many military chiefs. In the time of General Diaz this was already so for some officers, who collected full pay for battalions and regiments when every one knew that the lists were padded with many fictitious names, and that if the officer claimed pay for a hundred, the actual number was, perhaps, seventy; and so, too, in the matter of fodder for horses, etc., there was always something in every deal for the officer. Thus the War Department came to be a good mine, making many poor devils rich. So that when General Diaz thought that he had an army of more than 20,000 men to fight the revolution of 1910, it turned out that he had only 14,000, the remainder existing only on the pay-rolls. The profits of the business have multipled a hundredfold of late, and it would be worth while for the War Department to take note, and devise a prompt and efficacious remedy."

Soon after that article appeared a Federal general was put under arrest. He was confined to barracks upon some charge unformulated; yet I was assured by one who had seen it, that a letter was written by the Minister of War assuring him that he need have no fear as to the upshot of his arrest. In a country like this the rules of probability are of no service. Not only are they of no service; they are misleading. Mexicans themselves assert that there is no such quality as patriotism among them. They include their public men, with few exceptions, in a general indictment for stealing. Foreigners decline to credit the good faith of any single one. On general grounds one must discount such sweeping charges, but it is impossible, in the face of evidence offered, to set

them altogether aside. If civil war drags on now because it is profitable, might it not equally have been prolonged although General Huerta had been recognized by the United States?

It is a hard thing to say, but the more one pries into the records of public men in Mexico the stronger becomes the doubt whether any Government can keep the country quiet unless it be supported, advised, and supervised by some elder brother or brothers, until its evil traditions and practices have been purged away. In the spending departments dishonesty is not the exception, but the rule. The reason why revolutions are started is simply that the leaders' palms itch for the public purse. The way to stop revolution, therefore, is to stop thieving. To use a shop metaphor, only a cash register can put an end to pilfering from the till.

Theft is an unpleasant word, and it is only fair to say that no ignominy attaches to corruption in Mexico, because no one in office is expected to be anything but corrupt. Porfirio Diaz kept order by allowing a few to enrich themselves, and shooting any one who objected or tried to enter the privileged "ring." But the day for that is past, and, in any case, there is no Porfirio Diaz now. The best hope of good administration which would take away the incentive to rebel, lies in making it impossible for peculation to continue. Material ordered for public needs must be paid for at its real price. A stop must be put to the practice of requiring two bills, one showing secretly the sum which the seller receives, the other openly debiting the Treasury with a larger amount.

It is hard to see how financial methods can be cleansed, except by the means which have been

employed in Egypt. Many Mexicans, after their first shock of repugnance, would be inclined to rejoice at some such form of peaceful intervention if the European Powers would take part in it along with the United States. Mexico does not like the Americans; the "Gringoes," as they are usually called, a nickname which dates back to the war of 1846. The American soldiers then had a favourite marching song, "Green grow the leaves of the hawthorn tree." The Mexicans coined from it their term of contemptuous abuse.

Nor are the Americans merely disliked; they are despised. Ignorant Mexicans, who form nineteen-twentieths of the nation, think they could defeat them in war. With the United States alone guiding Mexico along the path of constitutional, and, what is of more importance, honest government, there would certainly be friction and quite possibly fighting. The combined might of the Great Powers would overawe a people which has a great respect for Europe and a wholesome timidity as to what Europe might do. There would be no question of any European country acquiring "a controlling influence" in Latin-America; so the Monroe doctrine need not stand in the way of such a solution. It would be at once a statesmanlike and prudent act of Mr. Wilson, whose proceedings have intensified the hatred in which his countrymen are held, to calm Mexican opinion and to make his own task easier, by permitting other Powers to lend their aid. Everybody's "face would be saved," and there would be real hope of lasting improvement.

The history of the country, during, say, the last seven years has convinced those who have watched closely that, without assistance, it will be long before she can secure her own peace and the safety of foreign

interests within her border; interests which, seeing that nearly all business is controlled by foreigners, are very large. Here in the capital, as elsewhere throughout the Republic, the hardware trade is mainly in German hands; the drapery, wholesale and retail, in French; mining is chiefly carried on by British or American companies; the oilfields are being developed by the same agency. The banks are largely under French management, even the National Bank. Machinery is supplied by Great Britain and the United States. The names of business houses are seldom Mexican names. The National Railways are managed by capable Americans, with Mr. E. N. Brown, a Napoleon among railway men, at their head.

There are, roughly, 100,000 foreign residents, and something like £350,000,000 of foreign capital invested in the country. It cannot be permitted to drift into a state of permanent civil warfare, which, if left to itself, is what it seems likely to do. Not one in a thousand of the population has any idea of what government by the people means. The system cannot, therefore, be " democratic " in our sense of the word. On the other hand, it is impossible, now that a middle class has been evolved and the spirit of " liberty " awakened, to go back to despotism based eventually upon murder.

One hears constantly in Mexico that " these people can be kept in order only by a fearless and pitiless tyrant," and to this is generally added, " like old Porfirio Diaz." That is why foreign opinion in Mexico has been, speaking broadly, unanimously, until lately, in favour of General Huerta. But when the career of President Diaz is examined with an eye not blinded by the glory which the world accorded to him, one is

forced to doubt whether he was really such a " saviour of his country " as for a long time we all supposed. He certainly gave it thirty years of peace. That, from the point of view of the foreigner making his fortune in Mexico, was everything. It was an achievement, too, which revealed a strong character, a resolute will.

But, while it was good for his country to be at peace, while the alternative of " pan ó palos " (earn your living quietly, or look out !) allowed the riches of Mexico to be developed, the " Mucho administración y poco politica " of the Diaz régime kept the people in political swaddling clothes and took no thought for the morrow, when the strong hand should have relaxed its grip. Diaz was like a father who does not realize that his sons and daughters are growing up; who keeps them in subjection; makes all decisions for them and thinks that his duty lies only in giving them a comfortable home. When the guiding and restraining arm of such a father is removed his children are unfit for the battle of life; they are easily deceived; they rush into excesses of every kind. That was exactly what happened to Mexico when the smouldering resentment against " Paternalism " was fanned into flame by the Socialist pamphlets of Ricardo Flores Magon and the eloquence of Madero.

Although it was what might have been expected, it took everybody by surprise. In 1910 Mexico celebrated with pride and splendour the centenary of her liberation from Spain. The sky seemed clear. I recall a chapter in a " standard work " on the country published about that time, which proved by all the rules of logic that nothing could possibly happen to shake the edifice of " national greatness " erected by

Don Porfirio's statesmanship. Now that edifice lies in ruins. The Mexicans have shown by their savagery to one another, by the readiness with which they rushed to arms at the instigation of ambitious men, by the contempt in which the twelve millions of Indians are held by the three million " whites," by the failure of Indians and Spaniards alike to rise to a conception of patriotism, that President Diaz was too easily credited with having " created a nation " out of such stubborn elements.

Diaz was a man in whom there were streaks of unmistakable greatness. He was a great policeman; but a statesman would have built upon a firmer foundation. Then he would not in his age have been deceived by the flatterers and plunderers who governed in his name. The " Cientificos " were able men; not all of them were dishonest. They encouraged foreign enterprise and made the City of Mexico a great capital. But the depredations of a few and the impositions upon the people, of which the old President knew nothing, raised the storm by which Madero was blown violently into office after a few months of revolt.

It was a disaster that power fell into hands so unfit to wield it. Madero, like most Mexicans, was a spendthrift of glowing words. He was neurotic, a faddist, incapable of thinking clearly. A vegetarian and a spiritualist, he held séances, with his wife as medium, to obtain guidance from the mighty dead. In the Castle of Chapultepec a number of shelves in a bookcase still harbour his psychic library. His vagaries made him a laughing-stock. Meeting one day a man who said that he was going home to get his overcoat, Madero replied, " Do not trouble to do that. I will

make you think you are warm," and in the street he began to make hypnotic passes !

His family, rich landowners and manufacturers, were of tougher fibre. They saw their opportunity, and keeping him under their influence, they took it. When his brother Gustavo resigned after eighteen months of office the Treasury was all but empty. He had spent all the income of the country and twelve million pounds beside. Had Madero been a man of even moderate ability he might have led his country safely through the difficult transition from despotism to the beginnings of constitutional government. But he had no talent for affairs of State. His promises of instant land gifts and radical reform were unfulfilled. His family took pains to prevent any one from seeing him alone. He spent hours which should have been devoted to public business, playing dreamily upon the piano.

The bad example he had set was followed. Armed revolution stalked abroad again. When General Felix Diaz, with the support of the wealthy, had rebelled for the second time, Madero became, according to those who saw him, almost insane. In a fit of rage he is said to have shot with his own hand two officers whose advice displeased him. He was, at all events, accessory to murders, though in other moods he was ready to spare the lives even of those whose treason deserved death.

At last, when he had few adherents left, came the " tragic ten days " in Mexico City. The forces of General Felix Diaz and General Reyes fought with the Army in the streets of the capital, and 3000 people, mostly unoffending civilians of the poorer class, were killed. On a Sunday morning the crowded Plaza,

where the palace and cathedral stand, was suddenly swept by rifle and Maxim gun-fire. The Felixistas were then in the city, and General Reyes had come to the Plaza expecting the palace to be surrendered to him. But there was no reason for the butchery of a thousand men, women, and children, who were simply looking on. Whether Madero, whose nerves had by this time given way, actually ordered it or not the guilt must rest partly upon him. He was henceforward set down as impossible, and steps were taken to secure a more responsible Government. This is where General Huerta became a leading figure on the scene.

XII

GENERAL HUERTA

THROUGH the crowded Chamber of Deputies on the afternoon of November 20, 1913, the date of the opening of the new Mexican Congress, there stepped lightly, with hand upraised to acknowledge the cheers which greeted him, a tall, thickly built soldier whose briskness belied his sixty-nine years.

He wore evening dress, as did all the members of Parliament. The only distinction which set him apart from the rest was a broad sash of the Mexican national colours (red, green, and white) across his shirt-front. His dome-like skull gleamed bald under the light. Closely cropped grey hair covered back and sides. His complexion was dark, but it was only when one noticed the hand against the white shirt-cuff that one realized he was not of European blood.

Clearly his sight was very weak; he added to the spectacles he wore another pair before he began to read his Message to the new Congress. Yet, unlike those of most short-sighted people, his eyes were unusually bright. They roved hither and thither like the eyes of a bird, saving a square and dogged face (to which photographs seldom do justice) from the reproach of heaviness.

Such, in outward appearance, is President Victoriano Huerta, the man whose doings have riveted the attention of the world for a year past. If you share the

official American opinion he is a criminal, a dissolute adventurer; in Mexican phrase a "sin verguenza," a man without shame. By his own account he is a patriot who only clings to office because no other Mexican is strong enough to crush the revolution. Up to November 1913, a great many Mexicans, with nearly all the foreigners in Mexico, endorsed that view. After that the tide began to turn against him.

A Mexican who under President Porfirio Diaz was very highly placed said to me: "If Huerta had any European blood in him one would be forced to believe that he was a lineal descendant of Nero and Caligula." While there seemed to be a chance of his restoring peace his less desirable qualities were glossed over. Now that the revolution has gained ground, now that he has heavily increased taxation in order to refill his empty coffers, now that Europe has declined to support him against the United States, his evil manners live in brass. A few murders more or less, a habit of sitting in cafés and restaurants, disregard of the Constitution, a trick of treating his Ministers as if they were office boys—these would easily have been forgiven in a President who really dominated the situation. President Huerta unfortunately does not.

He is, in private, a jovial companion. His humour is not exactly delicate, but in a jolly, bluff old soldier it does not seem out of place. He enjoys chaff and sometimes carries it to extremes. At a British gathering he urged marriage upon a maiden lady, offering her any Insurrecto leader she might fancy. At a dinner attended by many foreign diplomatists he extravagantly eulogized the British race; declared that Shakespeare, Wellington, and Nelson were the greatest men the world had produced; and called Mr. Roosevelt

" the Zapata of the United States," Zapata being a " rebel " leader whose name has become a byword for brigandage and savagery.

He has a kind heart; witness his visit to the Country Club of the capital, when he gave a number of children rides in his motor-car and handed dollars round among them before he left. But from a ruler two qualities are demanded in which he is lacking—dignity and tact. A Frenchman who has very large interests in Mexico went to see him about some proposed harbour works. Scarcely letting his visitor speak, the President delivered a long rambling lecture about the part of the country in which the harbour lies. " En effet," this Frenchman said to me, " c'est un naïf." (In a word, he is a stupid man.)

It is " naïf " of him to say, in moments of convivial frankness, that if war came Mexico would invade the United States. It was " naïf " to make an appointment with Mr. Lind, President Wilson's unofficial envoy, and not to keep it. When the United States suggested that he should take notice of a particularly horrible outrage and hinted that the perpetrators might be found among a certain group of soldiers, it was equally " naïf " of President Huerta to offer to shoot them all without delay! Wanting in tact, too, was his getting rid of a refractory Congress by packing the members who opposed him into tramway-cars and carrying them off to gaol. As I sat in the fine Parliament building, with its imposing white pillars, its grave officials, its rows of green leather arm-chairs and desks, I found it hard to believe that this Chamber, so civilized and constitutional in outward seeming, had been the scene six weeks before of wholesale arrests.

The Mexican Parliament is not, it is true, quite

like European Assemblies. The members smoke, for instance; the liberal supply of spittoons on the floor of the House would, I fear, shock Mr. Asquith and Mr. Bonar Law. It is not the custom either of British M.P.'s to keep firearms in their lockers. When the desks of the arrested deputies were searched most of them were found to contain loaded revolvers. But on the surface there is an air of up-to-date democracy about this Congress and its dwelling which is difficult at first to square with the combined methods of Oliver Cromwell and Lorenzo de Medici as practised by President Huerta.

The explanation is that Mexico never has had more than the forms of constitutional Government, and that President Huerta is a rough-and-ready old fighter who has no respect for form. He much prefers living in a small suburban bungalow to wandering through the vast halls and saloons of his official residence. He would rather sit with a few friends in a café than entertain high society at formal dinner-parties. When he comes across a knot he cuts it. To untie it would take too long. When a few plain words are sufficient to express his meaning he finds circumlocution tedious. A story is told of his giving instructions for the reply that was to be made to Mr. Lind's first Note. "What shall I tell him?" asked a perplexed Foreign Minister. "Tell him to go to the devil," the President is said to have answered; "but put it in diplomatic language," he added soothingly when he saw the look of dismay on the unfortunate Minister's face. The tale may not be literally true, but it is typical of the man. The methods of the barrack-room in the Council Chamber—to that incongruity are attributable both his weakness and his strength.

To discover the true nature of this man, who has become so prominent a figure on the stage of nations, we must look into his history, not only since he succeeded Madero as President after the street battle in Mexico City last spring, but before that. To begin with, he is of pure Indian descent, and he is proud of it. "Yo soy Indio," he declared at dinner given by the British Club, and he went on, in one of his bursts of intimate eloquence: "My people are young compared with your Anglo-Saxon race, but in our veins there are the same red corpuscles as in yours." By keeping in mind the fact that he is Indian, we find the clue to many sides of his character, which in a Mexican of Spanish or even mixed origin would be harder to explain. His ability, undoubtedly remarkable, is closely allied to cunning. His intelligence has strange limitations. While at times he can behave with striking dignity, he allows himself in moments of relaxation to forget his high position. By frequenting cafés, some of them classed as disreputable, he has offended the taste of the cultivated; the more so since in this respect they compare him unfavourably with President Diaz, who was always careful to uphold the best traditions of his office.

It is universally believed in the United States that he is a heavy drinker. Here there is exaggeration. That he drinks a large quantity of alcohol is true. I have been told by one who visited him in the early morning that his breakfast consisted of a beaten-up raw egg, a glass of claret, and a glass of brandy. But the habit is more easily excusable when it has so little effect, either mental or physical, as in General Huerta's case. He is in his sixty-ninth year a man of powerful frame and vigorous constitution. Alcohol seems

to stimulate him, without having the same effect as it would have upon the great majority of men.

Born a poor Indian boy, he might have lived and died in obscurity but for the timely visit to his village of a force of soldiers, commanded by a general. The general needed an amanuensis, and at that time Indians able to read and write were even scarcer than they are to-day. Young Huerta had made good use of such poor schooling as the village afforded. The general employed him, was struck by his brightness, and took him to the capital, where, through the interest of President Juarez, he was admitted to the Military School. This, of course, could not be compared with similar institutions in Europe, but Victoriano Huerto took full advantage of his opportunities, and at the end of the course of studies was declared a credit to the college and a young man marked out for high positions.

Under General Diaz he did good service, but for some reason was neither liked nor trusted by his commander-in-chief, perhaps because Diaz considered him a possible rival. Yet when the old President fled the country, Huerta behaved with stanch loyalty; saw to his safe conduct; even ordered a farewell salute to be fired. As soon as Madero came into office Huerta was placed on half-pay. Now he engaged in business as a contractor for building materials. I have spoken with many people who knew him in this capacity in Monterrey. In his business transactions he was honest and fairly capable, but as regards the payment of his household accounts he was less scrupulous. That was where the Indian character revealed itself. Not even when he became President did he settle the small accounts which he left owing in Monterrey.

The virulence of the Zapata rebellion in Morelos, where the land grievances of the Indians were especially acute, caused his recall to active service. He was quickly successful in dealing with the Zapatista bandits, and would have annihilated them but for Madero's mysterious intervention. Why they were spared to carry on their infamous brigandage—they are still the terror of Morelos to-day—has never been explained. At all events, Huerta was recalled and once more placed on half-pay. He took up business again, and was on the point of becoming a partner in some marble quarries when the failure of other leaders to defeat Orosco's rebellion in the North forced Madero to call upon him for aid.

I have laid stress upon his business enterprises, because they show that Huerta was not, as his enemies declare, a man consumed by ambition for power. Had he been that, he would not have retired so quietly into private life. What he sought was money rather than power. It is avarice, many think, rather than ambition which has made him cling to office with so desperate a grip.

Before he agreed to take command against Orosco he made certain demands for war material. These were at first refused, but he persisted and Madero's Government gave way. His campaign was a triumphant success. There was not much fighting, but Captain Burnside, the United States Military Attaché, who accompanied the Federal forces, came back with a high opinion of Huerta's organizing capacity. Yet a third time Madero dispensed with his services until, as the end of his disastrous Presidency approached, he was compelled to rely upon Huerta once more.

During the fighting in the capital he commanded

the Federal troops, but he saw from the first how hopeless Madero's position was. It has been charged against him that his conduct was "disloyal" to one who had trusted him and loaded him with benefits. As the foregoing relation proves, Madero only used him when it was necessary, and twice flung him aside after he had accomplished his task. Had the issue of events been different he would no doubt have been cold-shouldered again. Huerta saw that the people of Mexico City were now as wildly enthusiastic for General Felix Diaz as they had once been for Madero. Another wave of sentiment had engulfed them. He saw that Madero had become impossible. He was appealed to by Senators, Deputies, foreign residents, and, with especial force, as he himself has told me, by Mr. Henry Lane Wilson, the American Ambassador, to end the carnage in the streets (3,000 had been killed). He met General Felix Diaz at the American Embassy; a few hours later Madero was made a prisoner and forced to resign. Huerta, being Minister of War, and the strongest man in sight, became Provisional President in accordance with the terms of the Mexican Constitution. General Felix Diaz acquiesced in this arrangement upon the understanding that he should be elected President in six months' time.

Huerta's greatest difficulty at this crisis was to know what he could do with Madero. He consulted Mr. Henry Lane Wilson, and at first it was arranged that he should be allowed to leave the country. The difficulty in the way of this was that the Governor of the State of Vera Cruz and the Federal general commanding that district were both Maderistas, and declared that if the late President were sent there to take ship, he would be received with Presidential

honours. It was therefore decided to transfer Madero, with his Vice-President, Pino Suarez, from the Palace to the Penitentiary, there to await trial on charges of treason to the Republic. On the way both prisoners were killed. Some say that they attempted to escape and were shot under the " Ley Fuga," the law which permits flying prisoners to be shot. Others say that they were murdered either by " Felixistas " or by the friends of a Colonel Ruiz, who had been assassinated in the Palace before Madero's fall. By the Government and people of the United States, the guilt is laid at General Huerta's door, although not a particle of evidence in support of that accusation has been produced. He may have known that the attack was to be made; he may have arranged it; but if he did so he acted in direct opposition to his own interests. To assume off-hand that he planned the assassinations is certainly unfair.

From that moment, however, he had to face the determined hostility of the United States. Washington refused to recognize him, partly on the ground that it wished to discourage violent revolutions by political adventurers, an epithet which scarcely applies to one who had office thrust upon him in the manner I have described. He was unable to borrow money for the purpose of defeating the rebellion which broke out a few days after he became President. The Carranzistas overran the north. Zapata and his brutal *peons* scourged Morelos and its neighbour States. Huerta had made it known that his first task must be to give the country peace; after that he would think about reforms in the land system, taxation system, judicial system, " jefe politico " system, which all who think at all admit to be necessary. At first he

seemed to be the very man Mexico needed, and so he might have proved to be with support, though peace without justice would have merely postponed the reckoning. Unsupported, the task was too heavy for him.

Hailed at the outset as the saviour of his country, General Huerta steadily lost ground. He could only see one way out of his difficulties—despotism. Against the advice of his wisest friends, he dissolved Congress and imprisoned a large number of Deputies. They probably deserved it. In some cases there is no doubt that they had been plotting against him. But he acted unwisely, for the act weakened him, just as a similar illegality in the long run weakened Oliver Cromwell. Money troubles became serious. Salaries of public servants, rents of public buildings, fell into arrear. The furrows in the old President's forehead deepened. He showed his weakness by being afraid to have capable men about him. He quarrelled with his Ministers. He had begun with a Cabinet of respectable, and mostly capable, politicians. One by one they were " requested to resign," and their places filled by inferior men. As a Mexican who once played a prominent part put it to me, the President " no longer sought colleagues, but accomplices." He gathered around him a crew of sycophants who encouraged him to think that the United States were " only bluffing," and that even if war came, their Army could not defeat his ragged, ill-trained Indians.

Now he is obsessed by the belief that he is indispensable. He " cooked the elections " so that he might be returned as President, although he had not offered himself. This was merely a ruse, however. His plan was that the new Congress, consisting for

the most part of his relatives and supporters, should declare his election void, but ask him to remain in office until the country was sufficiently pacified for a fresh choice to be made. I am assured that he confided to a friend that no election would be possible for a long time, and that he then counted upon being elected President himself! That was in an expansive mood, however. As a rule he confides in nobody. Even his Ministers are kept in ignorance of what his next move is to be. He summons them suddenly, sometimes in the very early hours of the morning, and tells them what they are to do. If they argue they are dismissed. Señor Garza Aldape advised him to resign, and pointed out that the meeting of Congress would be illegal. He was not only deprived of his office, but packed off at less than twelve hours' notice to France.

His two chief difficulties, procuring men for his Army and money for its campaign against the Revoltosos, he met by desperate remedies. He set a pressgang to work. In the capital and other cities he had thousands of labourers seized in the streets at night and sent off to the front. That made him unpopular with the lower class. The well-to-do he harried by forced loans. No effort was made to restore financial confidence. Paper money fell heavily in exchange value. Silver dollars were hoarded and there arose a most inconvenient scarcity of change. Shops lost custom because they had no small money. Several times I found it impossible to buy things I needed because I had not the exact amount of the purchase-money. The notes of provincial banks became valueless in Mexico City. At last, early in 1914 the Treasury was so empty that default was declared in the interest upon the National Debt. The Customs receipts ear-marked

to provide for the payment of this interest were taken for general purposes. The Finance Minister, sent to France to beg for a loan, met with flat refusal. President Wilson's plan of "starving Huerta out" looked like succeeding.

With an obstinate tyrant on one side and an obstinate moralist on the other, it is no wonder that all the foreigners in Mexico and a good many Mexicans are apprehensive. The situation is difficult and dangerous, curiously like that which preceded the South African War. Then, as now, there was an old President trying all kinds of ruses, fancying he could give battle successfully to a powerful nation, fighting doggedly against the inevitable. President Huerta is an Indian. President Kruger was a Boer. But history will say of them that they were very much alike.

XIII

PRESIDENT WILSON'S PRINCIPLE

I HOPE that my description of President Huerta will have cleared the way for, and will help to make clear, the review, which I must now attempt, of the part played by the United States in the affairs of Mexico since he took ~~took~~ office. But before entering upon this review it is necessary to look for a moment further back.

In any case the attitude of President Wilson and Mr. Bryan would have irritated the Mexican people. But it would not have irritated them so much had there been among them no latent hostility against Americans. That hostility dates from the invasion of Mexico by the United States in 1847. In recent years it has been inflamed by a personal dislike. Americans have gone to Mexico in large numbers. The last census showed that there were 20,000 of them residing in the country. They have made a great deal of money, and, further, they have offended Mexicans, who are a courteous race, by the brusqueness of their manners. Most of them, not content with disregarding, profess open contempt for the formalities of speech which are so important in Mexico. In a country where no labourer will pass in front of another without a polite "Con permiso," and where, even on the telephone, business conversations open with a skirmish of inquiries after the health of each speaker and of their respective

families, the rough-and-ready methods of the United States give offence where none is intended.

In spite of this general dislike of "Gringoes," the relations between President Diaz and the Washington Government were, in the later years of Don Porfirio's reign, cordial. By 1909 they had become so friendly that President Taft paid President Diaz a visit on Mexican soil, and they exchanged speeches declaring that the sympathy between their nations was "mutualy perdurable," their aims and ideals identical, the bonds between them unbreakable. Read in the light of recent happenings, those sentiments can only provoke a cynical smile. Even at the moment they were uttered, the United States were allowing an organized campaign against the Porfirian system to be carried on in American newspapers. Plots against the Mexican Government were being hatched and fostered upon American soil. When a year later Madero's rebellion broke out, it was hailed across the border as a "blow for freedom." Texas lent it not sympathy alone, but active support. Madero was looked upon as a national hero, and, when he fell, a howl of execration went up from the American Press.

The fact that the Americans in Mexico regarded his fall as a deliverance was disregarded. The advice of Mr. Henry Lane Wilson, the American Ambassador to Mexico, was set aside. The other Great Powers recognized General Huerta as *de facto* President, but the United States Government, with popular approval, declined to admit that "a blood-stained adventurer" had any right to the position which he had won by a successful revolt.

It is, of course, necessary to take into account the fact that the United States had an interest in the

Mexican situation which was not identical with those of other Powers. In its character of protector to the Republics of South and Central America, the Washington Government had resolved to discourage revolutions. The method by which it proposed to put an end to them was that of refusing recognition to any ruler not elected by the popular vote. The retort that in most of these Republics there is no such thing as a genuine election carried no weight. At any rate the forms of constitutionalism were to be observed. If the spirit were absent the letter must suffice.

In the case of Mexico, the United States went further. Having recalled their Ambassador, leaving in his place a clever young Chargé d'affaires named O'Shaugnessy (an old Oxford man, by the way), they made a series of demands upon Mexico, chief among which was the proviso that General Huerta should not offer himself as candidate for the Presidency. Here the United States left the path of strict constitutionalism. They said to Mexico, in effect, "Even if the majority desire General Huerta for President, you must not elect him. We do not approve of him." From that moment the personal equation most unfortunately became prominent. Without any evidence the United States accused Huerta of murdering Madero. It is said that President Wilson was strongly influenced in this direction by the appeal which Señora Madero made to him. At all events, the quarrel now became, in effect, a trial of strength between two men.

The people of the United States, for the most part, looked on with amusement. Few of them had any wish to go to war. They had little sympathy with their fellow-countrymen in Mexico whose lives and property were endangered by the civil war. Both

President Wilson and Mr. Bryan have replied to repeated representations from Americans in Mexico that their policy does not cover the protection of American business interests. In August they went so far as to advise all Americans in disturbed areas to leave the country. That advice was endorsed by the mass of the American people, who said, " They went there of their own accord. They took a risk and they must put up with the consequences," a vivid illustration of the weakness of the national spirit in the United States. The most frequently uttered American view was that the two factions in Mexico should be left to fight it out, and that both should be allowed to buy arms freely, so that the end might more quickly come !

Opinion being ill-informed and interest in Mexican affairs slight, the Washington Government proceeded on its way without any check. Even before it withdrew its Ambassador, President Wilson had sent " personal representatives " to report to him upon conditions in Mexico. Apparently they led him to believe that a veiled threat of force would be sufficient to cow President Huerta. In August, therefore, he sent another " personal envoy," Mr. John Lind, to present to the Mexican Government the following programme—

" (*a*) An immediate cessation of fighting throughout Mexico, a definite armistice solemnly entered into and scrupulously observed;

" (*b*) Security given for an early and free election in which all agree to take part;

" (*c*) The consent of General Huerta to bind himself not to be a candidate for election as President of the Republic at this election; and

" (*d*) The agreement of all parties to abide by the

results of the election, and co-operate in the most loyal way in organizing and supporting the new Administration.

"The Government of the United States will be glad to play any part in this settlement or in its carrying out which it can play honourably and consistently with international right. It pledges itself to recognize and in every way possible and proper to assist the Administration chosen and set up in Mexico in the way and on the conditions suggested."

At first there was some doubt whether President Huerta would "recognize" Mr. Lind, who, although he journeyed to Vera Cruz in a battleship, had no official position. His Ministers, however, chief among them Señor Gamboa, an able diplomatist, persuaded him to reply. In a clever letter, written by Señor Gamboa, Mr. Wilson's demands were declared to be humiliating and out of touch with the realities of the situation. Clearly it was futile to suggest an armistice without first making sure that the revolutionaries would agree to it. Equally visionary (though the Mexican Government could not say so) was the touching belief that all difficulties could be cleared up by a "free" election. With no experience of any people but their own, Mr. Wilson and Mr. Bryan persisted in their conviction that the democratic form of government, which succeeds but indifferently well among civilized nations, must be applicable (like a plaster) to a hybrid people, of whom the vast majority were only just emerging from the barbarous stage.

However, the proposal gave General Huerta his opportunity. He announced shortly after the exchange of notes that he intended to hold a presidential election. He had been chosen Provisional President for that

purpose; he regarded it as a sacred duty. Further, he himself would be prevented by the terms of the Constitution from offering himself as a candidate. He fixed the election for October 26.

For the time being Washington was satisfied. President Wilson openly called the world to witness the triumph of his policy. Candidates were selected. Addresses were published. By the Catholic Party Señor Gamboa was nominated. The Liberals adopted Señor Calero. The friends of General Felix Diaz put his name forward, although he was not in the country. In spite of continued rebel successes, the feeling grew that the corner towards peace and order had been turned. A new President, recognized by the United States, would be able to borrow money and put down the revolution. The outlook had become decidedly more cheerful. But it was not to remain so for long.

In the second week in October the horizon became again black and threatening. A thunderbolt fell. It took the form of an arbitrary dissolution of Congress, the imprisonment of more than 100 members, and the assumption by General Huerta of dictatorial powers. He was in a difficult position. The remnant of Madero's House of Deputies had been systematically "obstructing." He had evidence that some of them were corresponding with the rebels. Some who wished him well urged him to be patient, but, soldier-like, he cut the knot, and once more the United States rang with denunciations of "the tyrant, the oppressor." Immediately he was warned that any injury to the imprisoned Deputies would seriously concern the State Department. Mr. Wilson gave out that he was horrified. The relations which had seemed to be improving became more strained than ever.

Very little was now hoped for from the election; the announcement that General Huerta had received the largest number of votes, although not a candidate, caused no surprise. It is not suspected only, it is known that he issued instructions to ensure this result. At the same time a Congress was "elected," full of the President's friends and supporters; so many of them officers that it was suggested the bugle should be adopted in place of the chairman's bell.

To this Congress the United States refused recognition equally with the President. It could not, they declared, have been legally elected, seeing that the previous Assembly had been illegally dismissed. Again they called upon General Huerta to resign and to consent to the annulment of all the recent elections. At one moment he almost decided to give up the struggle. I have been assured by one in whose word I place full confidence that a comical misunderstanding caused him to change his mind. He received from a friend whom he had sent to the United States to "take the temperature" a cablegram which described the international situation as "resolute and firm," meaning that Europe was leaving Washington a free hand. The words "resolute and firm" were interpreted by him as advice. He hardened his heart and would not go. Instead he issued a "note." He had, he said, a presentiment that Congress would declare his election illegal on account of the small number of votes cast: in due course, therefore, there would be a new election; and he was the only man capable of keeping order until this was over. Here was direct defiance. Now the daily rumours grew more and more alarming. Many people, chiefly Americans, left the city. Anxiety was born of the feeling that now the

United States must "do something." They had threatened. Their threat had been disregarded. What would they do?

The question rather was—What could they do? They found themselves in a position in which it was impossible either to go forward or to go back. There was wild talk of war, but it would have been tragically farcical to see such advocates of peace as Mr. Wilson and Mr. Bryan attacking a neighbour country on the ground that they did not approve of its Provisional President. There was talk of a blockade, but for that, equally, justification was lacking. The general feeling in Mexico City, especially after the President's Message to Congress, in which he blandly ignored the United States, was, if I may adopt a metaphor from "poker," that Washington's "bluff had been called" and that it had nothing in its "hand." So far as can be seen at present, then, Mr. Wilson's desire "to triumph as the friend of Mexico" has done good to nobody, excepting possibly the Revolutionaries, whom it has encouraged. To fight for a principle is magnificent, but it is not politics.

Such a plight as that of Mexico can only be mended in one way. That way, often practised by the British in India, is to support the strongest man in sight. When he has restored order, then there can be talk of reforms. The alternative to mending is "ending." For that the United States have no stomach. If they once went into Mexico, they would be obliged to stay there. That would increase their responsibilities, cost them vast sums of money, and estrange the South American Republics. Yet Mr. Wilson's diplomacy has brought the danger of war very near. An incident like the incident of the *Maine* would almost

certainly provoke it. A too peremptory phrase might goad General Huerta into staking his country's future upon a last desperate throw.

Even if war be avoided, that future is heavy with storm clouds. The two factions in Mexico are too nearly equal. They are like chess-players so closely matched that neither can ever call "check-mate." The only hope of a settlement lies in a joint peaceable intervention by the United States and the Powers of Europe. To demands thus presented Mexico would listen. A man of character and capability, not obnoxious to any but "bandits," could be set up as President and firmly supported. The Army could be properly trained with American help. Money would be provided without reluctance to set the country in order. Then there ought to be an International Commission to look after the country's finance and to stop "grafting" in the public service. This would effectually put an end to revolutions. It would remove the motive for them, which is invariably "graft."

XIV

WHERE DON PORFIRIO FAILED

I HAVE mentioned already the summing up of the Mexican situation which comes glibly from the lips of nearly all British and American residents in the country, " What Mexico needs is to be ruled ruthlessly by the sword." I am persuaded that this is a short-sighted view, a view upon which it would be dangerous for any ruler to act. Yet there are excuses for it.

The foreigner, living in nearly all cases a life apart from that of Mexicans, is liable to hasty judgments. His only desire is for quiet which will let him pursue his occupations undisturbed. He looks back with wistful longing to the generation of peace and good order which was President Diaz's gift to the country. He recalls many ruthless acts of punishment, many " removals " of men who seemed likely to give trouble.

He tells with appreciation how, in the early days of railways, damage to the line and attacks upon trains were stopped. In one district a number of the spikes which pin the rails to the ties (or, as we call them, sleepers) had been pulled up, and the ties stolen. Diaz sent instructions for a body of " rurales " (mounted policemen) to ride into the district and shoot the first six men they met !

In a lonely part of the south a train had been robbed by the inhabitants of a certain village. The President

told a young officer to take his company and " put an end to that sort of thing." The young officer had every house searched. Almost all contained stolen property. He then marshalled the villagers, picked out every fortieth man, and had him shot. After this he said : " I am taking my troops away, but if any more train robberies take place we shall come back and shoot every twentieth man. Should it be necessary to return again, every tenth man will be executed." No more trains were attacked.

Whether these particular stories—two out of many —are true does not matter. There is no doubt that such measures were employed. They were necessary. Robbery was the custom of the country. There is a lady living in Mexico whose father and mother sixty years ago travelled from the coast to a town inland in a coach which was pillaged three times on the journey. When all had been stolen except their clothes, their clothes were also taken. Driver and passengers reached their destination stark naked ! It was only by ruthless methods that such ruffianism could be repressed. That is proved by the recurrence of exactly the same kind of outrage since the iron hand was lifted and crime left unavenged.

A saloon-keeper in Torreon, a well-known American character in the city, set out a few months ago for the United States. The railway was cut, so he drove in a mule-coach with one companion, a Mexican. Their money they sewed into their clothes. On the road to Eagle Pass—or rather on the way, for there are no roads in this part of Mexico—they were met by bandits passing as followers of Carranza. These scoundrels seized the mules, stripped the two men, beat the Mexican for denying that his clothes contained money,

and then left them to walk naked in the scorching sun to the nearest railway section-house six miles away.

Beyond all question, brigandage of this nature should be put down by the means which Diaz employed. The Indians or half-breeds who behave in this way, as soon as disorder arises, can understand no other argument than the loaded rifle. The suppression of the bandits who have come to the surface in the three years of revolution, like scum upon a troubled pool, is one of the problems which will face whatever President may be in office when the revolution ends. To that extent the country must be governed by the bullet and the sword.

But it is short-sighted to imagine that no other problem will exist. The Diaz system was in many ways suited to the needs of the age in which it flourished. It certainly kept too long *in statu pupillari* the few who were growing fit gradually to take part in managing their own affairs. It doled out education with a niggard hand. It ignored intellectual elements which it would have been wise to conciliate. But on the other hand it allowed the country's wealth to be discovered and developed. It turned what had been a blood-stained cockpit of warring jealousies and ambitions into the semblance of a nation, united and secure. Those were great achievements.

But even admitting that the Diaz system was at the time the only system possible, it is Utopian to suppose that it can ever come back. To argue that because the mass of the Mexican people are unable to read or write, unable to think outside the circle of their own daily interests, unable to comprehend what self-government means—to argue that on this account no measure of self-government is possible—such a

view is altogether mistaken. In all European countries the representative system began long before the mass of people were fit for it.

Truly it is a misfortune for Mexico that her Constitution was framed in 1857 so far ahead of the stage which she had then reached, so far ahead even of the stage which she has reached to-day. But that Constitution can be altered in the light of fuller knowledge. Most of the present voters are Indians, incapable of voting intelligently. If they vote at all, they vote as their employers direct; or they say naïvely that they would like to vote for the candidate who will win; or they stupidly ask the polling officials (all active politicians) to tell them what to do. If it is considered undesirable to disfranchise them, some graduated system of voting might be introduced. That would make elections more of a reality, and their results, if they were honestly conducted, more representative of the country's intelligent opinion.

If Don Porfirio's sight had not been dimmed by old age at the time when his people began to outgrow their leading-strings, it may be that he would have changed the system himself. Undoubtedly it was his failure to realize their growth which caused his downfall. It is true that at one time he could have crushed the revolution, if needful measures had been taken. But that would only have postponed the explosion. What events led up to the sudden deposition of the ruler whom Europe supposed to be entrenched not only behind strong works of power but also in the hearts of his subjects, has for most people remained a mystery. I have taken the trouble to piece together from the oral narratives of many who took part in them a sketch of the occurrences which preceded his

downfall. I think it will be a help towards understanding the state of Mexico now.

Towards the end of Don Porfirio's reign there were two other men who exercised a great deal of influence in Mexico—Señor Limantour and General Reyes. The former was the extremely clever Minister of Finance. The latter was Governor of the State of Nuevo Leon, dictator of the rapidly-growing city of Monterrey. The idea that he ought to take thought for the morrow of his country had not escaped the old President. He felt at times that it would be a relief to retire; at other times he was troubled by misgivings as to what might happen when he was gone. Señor Limantour seemed to him to be the most fitting successor in sight, so he urged him to come to an agreement with General Reyes. This was done. Reyes was given a seat in the Cabinet. The matter seemed settled. The President heaved a sigh of relief.

But soon the two strong men began, as strong men will, to disagree. The breach between them widened. Limantour could not hope to succeed as President with Reyes against him. It was necessary to look out for somebody else. This time the President chose a certain Señor Ramon Corral, and made him Vice-President. It was an unfortunate choice. Corral was unpopular. His appointment fanned the slowly-spreading flame of discontent.

How had this flame been lighted? By the growth of a middle class—a class between those who owned land in large estates and those who worked for them. Don Porfirio had created this class by such schools as he set up, and by the general development of the country. But he never realized that it was there. He never saw that, as Mr. Root once adroitly put it while

he was directing the foreign policy of the United States, "However comfortable a man may be in bed, he cannot lie in one position always; he needs an occasional change." He never understood how widespread was the dissatisfaction with the dragooning and dishonest methods of many hacendados and most "jefes politicos" (mayors working under the direction of State governments). He never detected the resentment against the many "jobs" by which Ministers and their friends were supposed to be growing rich. Señor Limantour has denied that there were any such "jobs." I can only make answer that, if Don Porfirio's Ministers were honest, they are severely misjudged. The universal opinion in Mexico is they were not.

There was yet another cause for the stirring of popular sentiment against the Diaz régime. For some years a certain Ricardo Florès Magon had been sowing Mexico with Socialist pamphlets, sent at first by post and afterwards by hand from the United States. Magon carried on his campaign against the Government of Mexico first in San Antonio, Texas; then in St. Louis, Missouri; finally in Los Angeles, California, where he was arrested, at the instance of Don Porfirio, charged with breaking the neutrality law by enlisting a force for the invasion of Mexico, and sent to prison.

Like many of his followers whom I have met in rebel camps, he was a sincere fanatic. While he was in prison he was offered an income of £2,500 a year if he would live in Europe and give up inciting his fellow-countrymen to rebel. The offer was refused. He had command of large sums of money; his adherents, scattered all over Mexico, subscribed their farthings weekly to the cause. But he never took personal

advantage of this. He was in such poverty when he was arrested that he had no money for a lawyer. This I had from a very high Mexican official who was charged with the study of his movement.

Misguided as it was, it sowed the land with mines, and when Madero came (he was at first the disciple, though later the enemy of Magon) they all exploded. Don Porfirio had been persuaded by the wealthy classes, by all who held posts under Government, by the foreigners who had prospered under his protection, that he was indispensable. The new middle class sulked and waited for its opportunity. The poor were dazzled by promises of land and an easier life. Madero's success ran like a fire through the country.

There was a moment when the armed rebellion could have been checked, when the only Insurrectos armed and in the field were some 3,000 in Chihuahua. But to check it energy was needed, prompt military action, an immediate increase of the Army, which had been allowed to dwindle. Don Porfirio missed the moment. Señor Limantour, on whom he leaned chiefly for advice, was in France. The Minister of War was old and feeble, but the President could not bring himself to supersede a lifelong friend. In his eighty-first year General Diaz worked night as well as day, trying to direct the campaign in addition to his other duties.

From one who worked with him I have heard how at eleven at night, at midnight, at one in the morning, his wife would urge him to go to bed. At last he would take his clothes off and lie down, but after an hour or two he would be back again, reading telegrams, issuing orders, wearing his strength away.

After long delay Señor Limantour sailed from Europe.

The Porfiristas longed for his return, hoping he would infuse more vigour into the struggle. But in New York he heard that orders were given for American troops to concentrate on the border. The news struck panic into his soul. He had always feared an American invasion of Mexico. It was his *idée fixe*. He could not rid his mind of the conviction that some day the United States would extend to the Isthmus of Panama. He hurried to Mexico City and urged upon the President that it was his duty, as a patriot, to resign. "If we fight among ourselves we shall have the Gringoes upon us," was his argument.

Weary, dazed by the whirl of Fortune's wheel, which had cast him headlong from his seeming security, Don Porfirio wavered. Even then the old proud spirit might have triumphed save for an incident trivial in appearance, but tinged with that bitter irony which makes men the playthings of chance. An aching tooth worried him. One day at a Council he asked his Ministers to excuse him while he had it taken out. The dentist used an unclean instrument. In an hour the President's cheek had swollen to a grotesque size. Fatigue had weakened his blood. Septic poisoning had set in. From that moment he scarcely knew what he was doing. That is the phrase of a friend who was constantly with him. So pitifully closed the reign of Porfirio Diaz, the greatest man Mexico has produced.

It was not only the end of him. It was the end of his system. No one can govern the country again as he did. But, on the other hand, it will never be governed by a President of the Madero type. As soon as the people who had shouted for "Don Panchito" discovered what he was, their ardour cooled. He was a little,

fidgety man, lacking altogether the gift which we call "personality," without any balance of mind or sense of personal dignity. A general who called to see him by appointment was waiting in his study, when the President rushed in, calling to a small dog, and not seeing it, plunged under a sofa to make search. When he had ceased to grovel his visitor saluted. "Who are you, eh? Oh yes, I recollect. Come again to-morrow." That was the greeting which the general received.

King-hearted and a sincere idealist, he might have been beloved and happy in an obscure condition. For any kind of power he was utterly unfit. He fell by reason of his unfulfilled pledges, of the poor impression he made, and of the immense sums that were squandered or stolen from the public purse. The disbanding of his revolutionary forces cost millions. When he took office there was some £7,000,000 in the Treasury, and he borrowed £4,000,000 more. All of that he spent, in addition to the yearly revenues of the country. When General Huerta succeeded the Exchequer balance stood at less than £200,000.

Madero was an accident. It is unlikely that the Mexican people will be deceived again in the same way. But the man who is to rule Mexico successfully must have something of Madero's good will and sympathy, as well as a great deal of Don Porfirio's ruthlessness and strength. The notion that the Mexicans need merely a despot betrays failure to understand either them or human nature. They are not fully grown up yet. But they are not children any more.

XV

OVER THE EDGE

If you imagine Mexico as a whale-backed animal sloping down from the United States border to Central America, you get some idea of its shape and natural features. All down the upper and middle part the back is high. At the sides it gradually slopes away: on one side, to the Atlantic; to the Pacific on the other. This explains why the country has three distinct climates.

Up on the high back are the "cold lands" (tierra fria): not what we should call cold, for the sun burns, even in mid-winter; but never oppressive at night, always fresh and bracing. Then, as the back slopes, come the "temperate lands" (tierra templada), and, after these, along the ocean coasts, the "tierra caliente" (hot lands), where in December the sun blazes with real ferocity, and the heat of summer is unimaginable by those who have not felt it.

Russia is something like Mexico. The Russian "steppes" really are steps; but they ascend and descend gradually. In Mexico there are places where the descent from the cold to the temperate lands is almost like falling off a house. There are "barrancas" or gorges into which you can look down and see tropical vegetation thousands of feet below. One of the most famous is near Guadalajara. In this city there is a daily supply of tropical fruits grown two

thousand feet below it, yet only a few miles away. You look into a crevice of the earth, sheer down for half a mile, and you can see where they grow.

Another road which offers a like surprise is the railroad from Mexico City to Vera Cruz. Here you seem to get to the edge of the high plain and to tumble over. Three quarters of an hour after you have looked your last at the distant mountains which guard the rich valley of Mexico, you are three thousand feet lower down, with a totally different kind of cultivation around you, a much hotter climate, and a woolly feeling in your ears due to the sudden change.

In Mexico City or in Puebla an overcoat is needed after dark, and thick underclothing. In Orizaba and Cordoba I walked about at night feeling too warm even without an overcoat. When I reached Vera Cruz, I went back to the lightest summer garments and felt uncomfortably hot in these. All within a few days !

For a long time after the train leaves the squalid suburbs of Mexico City it runs through endless fields of maguey, the cactus plant with huge spiky leaves, from which " pulque," the peon's curse, is drawn. It is a milky looking liquid taken from the centre tube of the plant. Newly drawn, it is refreshing, and seems to have so little effect that you cannot imagine any one getting drunk upon it. But taken in large quantities, especially when it is a little stale and perhaps " doped," it has a stupefying, and sometimes a maddening effect.

The latter state, though, is usually caused by " tekhuila " (tekeela), a spirit concocted from pulque; or by aguardiente (sugar brandy); or by a drug called " marihuana " (mareewahna). The Indians are fond of all these poisons. Drinking is a national vice. Almost all the peons and a great many of their women

drink whenever they get the chance. The habit can only be ground out of them by the slow machinery of education, and by raising a standard of living so that they will want the money for other things.

For miles and miles the straight rows of pulque plants run away on either side of the line, losing themselves in the distance. Here and there they are broken by white-walled hacienda enclosures. Here the owner's house is, a house in which he seldom lives, with a church and a store for his labourers, and huts for them to live in, often as neatly and precisely planted in rows as the maguey itself. If they do not live within the enclosures, the peons herd together in dusty, dilapidated-looking villages, where nothing but the perpetual sunshine and the clear air can make life endurable, unless, indeed (which is most likely), they lead the unquestioning incurious lives of animals, content with whatever surroundings they happen to be born in.

Through the dust they jog, carrying heavy loads, with that odd shuffling trot which the Mexican Indian can keep up for hours, or else they are harvesting barley from the yellow fields which at last give relief from maguey. So long as they are at work and have enough to eat (enough being a few beans, a few maize cakes, and a little coffee) they are tractable creatures. But their heads are easily affected. Drink makes them savages. Turn on a tap of empty eloquence among them and they are quickly carried off their feet.

They have a certain amount of intelligence, but no hard sense. To expect them to show by their vote an instructed interest in the affairs of their country is as futile as it would be to look for a barking welcome from a china dog.

In Orizaba, at which we arrive after our thrilling

slither down the mountain-side, the peons have been taught to work in cotton and jute factories. They run the looms and look after the spindles and do mechanical jobs in the " shops " with fair intelligence. Mexico produces about five million pounds' worth of manufactured cotton goods in some hundred and sixty factories, situated mostly in Puebla, Orizaba, and Mexico City. She imports about a million and a half pounds' worth, as well as a large quantity of raw cotton, since she only grows half the amount her factories require.

The crop of 1913 was unusually heavy, but since the Laguna district (Cohuila State), where 90 per cent. of it lay, was in the hands of the rebels, there was difficulty and delay in gathering the cotton. The supply at Orizaba was short and the factory manager anxious. They were obliged to run short time already; they knew that if they should be forced to shut down, there would be bad trouble. " So long as we can keep him busy and his stomach full, the ' pelado ' is all right," I was told. " As soon as he begins to feel hungry and has nothing to do, he will break out, and then anything may happen."

The Orizaba Jute Factory (Santa Gertrudis) is a British concern. It employs several hundred people (housing a number of them in " model " cottages), and runs 6,000 spindles, on each of which a two-shilling yearly tax has to be paid. This used to be only one shilling. Another tax recently doubled, which hits all business unpleasantly hard, is that on stamps. Under the old scale the Santa Gertrudis Mill paid every month about £120 for stamps on receipts, invoices, and suchlike papers. Now its monthly expenditure under this head has been raised to £240. The import duty on jute, which comes from India, has also been raised. And,

in addition to Government demands, there are frequent labour agitations for increased wages. In six years wages have been raised 40 per cent. Now they are 70–80 per cent. higher than at any other mill in Mexico.

I saw a foreman in the well-equipped machine shop of the factory, which, like all the other buildings, has a most modern and efficient air, whose earnings come to 14*s*. a day. He is an Indian, but you must not class him as a " peon." He and his like belong to the new artisan middle-class which was born of the Thirty Years' Peace under President Diaz. Their children are clean, well dressed, with shoes and stockings instead of sandals and bare legs. It is they who make any return to Diaz-potism impossible.

The Dundee men who manage the jute factory live in an orange grove, which, considering the fame of their city for marmalade, makes them feel quite at home. Orange trees grow in the plaza of the town too, with roses and all kinds of semi-tropical flowers. As usual, the plaza is the one pleasant spot in the place. A kind of fury of road-mending has seized upon the Orizabans. Almost every street is blocked, either by repairs or by an overflow of the market which litters the roadway, here with heaps of vegetables, there with embarrassing displays of ladies' underwear.

I have rashly hired an ancient " coach " which tosses on the cobbles like a fishing-smack in a cross-Channel sea. Clearly, though, I gain a certain consideration by riding in it. The sad-eyed, ragged Indians, standing or squatting along the kerbs, salute me. Brisker shop-men lean out of their doorways to wiggle respectful fingers. Who knows? I might be the new military governor, or a revolutionary " cabecilla " (little chief).

It is just as well for Mexicans in these days to salute everybody and keep on the safe side.

I am drawn into the market-house by the glorious colour of the fruit stalls, heaped high with luscious spheres and cones. I am driven forth again by the smell of the meat stalls which, if I lived here, would certainly make me a vegetarian. As I come quickly out and climb back into my " coche," a Mexican Mary is having trouble on the pavement with her " little lamb." In this case the pet is a full-grown sheep with a fine pair of horns. It has got Mary down and is butting her for all it is worth !

A queer, indolent, slipshod city is Orizaba. Prosperous and large, but without any ambition. There is a brewery here which advertises all over Mexico, and brews excellent beer. I pictured the place, before I went there, as a kind of Mexican Milwaukee, very trim, and with a German atmosphere of order about it.

Nothing could be further from the reality. The only fine thing about Orizaba is its situation, mountains in the background and a huge snow-peaked volcano towering above.

The winter climate is mild and dry, but there are rains for a long period, and their effect is detestable. The humid air is good for cotton factories, but not for human beings. In the first hour of disappointment I was tempted to call Orizaba uncivilized. That, however, would be unfair, for it has " kinemas," and several drug stores. You have probably noticed that the first requirement of civilization is a " cantina," or drink-shop; the next, a drug store. Evidently " il faut souffrir pour etre civilisé." It is only barbarians who can live without headache tablets and indigestion cures.

Orizaba, too, possesses a rickety horse street-car, which will take you from hotel to railway station at four in the morning, if you join (as I did) the night train from the capital to Vera Cruz. Furthermore, at that shivery hour you will find a decent little restaurant open at the station and hot coffee ready for you with sticky, sugary rolls of " pan dulce " (sweet bread). If true civilization means taking thought for the needs of others, then I am not sure, when I recollect early morning starts from English railway stations, that Orizaba is not more civilized in reality than a good many places at home.

Cordoba, a lazy, mediæval Spanish relic, lies only about twenty miles further towards the coast than Orizaba, but those twenty miles make a great difference to the vegetation. It becomes tropical. Sugar-cane, bananas, pineapples, all grow well. Between the two cities lies the chief coffee-growing district of Mexico. When the plants are in blossom, one might think there had been a fall of snow. Then come the brown berries, and the busy picking of them by chattering Indians, and the heaping-up of them in the " asoleadero," a sunny part of the verandah, where they are put to dry. This is the season when all day long the sound of scraping and rattling continues, as men keep on turning the beans over and over with wooden hoes. Then they are packed in bags and sent away, so that the owner of the " finca " may receive the reward of his toil.

If we did not otherwise know that we were in the tropics, we could tell by the vastly increased size of everything growing. I have never been surprised at people who dwell in tropical lands taking themselves and life less seriously than do the dwellers in cold climates.

The latter so clearly dominate Nature. The former are dwarfed by her. Insignificant, they move among her giant works. Death waits for them round every corner, whether in the shape of wild beast, poisonous insect, hurricane, earthquake, or feverish swamp. How can they think themselves of any importance in the scheme of life?

Here, as we draw nearer to the coast, one seems to be looking at grass and bushes and trees through a magnifying glass. One's eyes appear to have developed suddenly the power of a microscope. Everything is on a huge scale. It is no doubt this tropical influence which makes prices in Vera Cruz so high. The " cargadores " (porters) expect, and demand, twice as much here as they get anywhere else. The hotels are piratical. Fourteen shillings I was charged for a room in an annex, a bare room, not a large room, a room with nothing to recommend it save a little balcony looking on the Plaza, and even that was a doubtful advantage, for late folks talked under the Portales until long past midnight and the clatter of traffic began soon after five a.m.

What would Vera Cruz be without the Portales, the Arcades, which are streets around the Plaza arched over so that they form open-air restaurants and cafes? It is hot enough to be glad of the open air in December. White linen suits are worn all the year round. One is thankful if the night breeze be cool enough to refresh one. It is only cold when a " norther " blows, which is not often. Then you find suddenly that you want thick underclothes, and a flannel shirt, and a tweed suit, and a heavy overcoat, and with all these you feel cold still. The rapid change from sweltering heat, from a sun which even in winter begins to be fierce at

nine o'clock in the morning, to grey skies and bitter Polar gale, unmans one.

But when there is no " norther," what can be more pleasant than to sit under the Portales and watch the tide of Vera Cruzan life flow by? In the early hours the parakeets chatter musically in the thick tree-tops of the Plaza, and sooner or later everybody who is anybody comes by. On band evenings, what could be gayer? Groups of pretty girls walk round and round, their arms disposed, with intent to tantalize, about each other's slim waists. Every table is full. Waiters are busy serving chocolate, ice-cream, " copitas " of brandy, wholesome Mexican beer. The music is gay, the bandsmen play as if they enjoyed playing.

That is the recollection of Vera Cruz which I treasure. By day it is not an engaging place. The lower kind of people have mostly an ill look. The streets away from the Plaza are featureless. It has improved since the " zopilotes " (carrion crows) were its only scavengers, and drains ran, open to the sky in all their foulness, though the town. It is clean now, and for such as are careful, healthy, but it does not tempt one to linger, except of an evening when, under a blue velvet sky with silvery pin-holes, you sit or stroll with infinite contentment, watching, listening, living, savouring one compensation of existence in this tropical zone.

So I saw the Plaza of Vera Cruz on my last evening in Mexico. The band was crashing out " Lohengrin," and crooning the familiar " Geisha " airs.

I leaned from my balcony, to hear snatches of light-hearted talk, ripples of laughter. I walked round the bandstand, and saw there were many sailors in the crowd from the foreign warships in the harbour. Did the Mexicans resent this? Not in the very least.

The English and American and German bluejackets were looked at with curiosity, but certainly without dislike.

"Politics!" They shrug their shoulders. "The fighting." It is so far off. It is a Mexican habit not to meet trouble halfway. Did not the deserted towns, the torn-up railways, the mines silent, the fields unsown that I had seen—did not these trouble them at all? The dead in the streets, the night skies reddened by burning, the shootings and hangings and torturings—had they forgotten all these? Truly yes. They gave them never a thought. No visitor from another planet plunged into Vera Cruz that evening could have guessed that it was the chief port of a country very close to bankruptcy, torn by civil war.

XVI

AN OPERA BOUFFE ARMY

In Vera Cruz as well as in the capital the press-gang had been busy, seizing men off the streets to be soldiers, so that the Army might be brought up to something like its nominal strength. It is because he is obliged to resort to such a method of recruiting that General Huerta has failed to make his position good. He showed his unfitness to govern by not realizing that he could do nothing without a real army. It would have paid him to let the Revolutionists alone for six months while he trained a certain number of troops with the help of American or European instructors and sergeants. Then he could have wiped out rebel forces in one or two engagements, and the rest would have melted away. Let me give two examples of what happens now.

On a Sunday at the beginning of November—to be accurate, the second of the month—I was watching General Velasco's brigade entrain at Saltillo for Torreon. I asked the general if he meant to start that day. No, not that day. Very shortly. Perhaps to-morrow. It made no difference that the troops were in their cars and vans. They are accustomed to live in trains. Their wives are taken along, too, to act as Army Service Corps. They would never be in any hurry to start. They enjoy the lazy side of soldiering, but they dislike fighting as much as they dislike work.

Torreon, the prosperous centre of the cotton-growing

district, was taken by the revolutionaries in September. After denying for a week that it had fallen, the War Office admitted the truth, but said that it would be retaken in a few days. For a month or so nothing happened. Then it was announced that " a blow would be struck." General Velasco would start at once and the rebels would be driven out of Torreon. The Government had been urged to act vigorously, because in the cotton district a record crop was in need of being picked. They responded by putting a new tax upon cotton " to meet the cost of the warlike operations," and by doing—nothing !

For six weeks after I saw General Velasco's brigade in its five trains, Torreon remained in the hands of the rebels. The forces which were to retake it advanced and retreated, chasséed and set to partners, marched this way and marched that. General Velasco was frequently reported to be, not with his command, but in Saltillo. Not until the 10th of December was Torreon retaken, and then only because the rebels had drawn off and left the garrison very weak.

Equally mysterious the case of General Rubio Navarette, who left the capital early in November with a force that was to drive the rebels away from the country which lies between Monterrey and Tampico. The newspapers wrote as if he had but to take the field and the enemies of order would disperse in confusion at once. The first event after General Navarette's arrival was the capture by the rebels of Victoria, capital of the State of Tamaulipas. For ten days this was denied by the War Office, which issued statements every evening implying that General Navarette was driving the enemy before him. He had saved Victoria. He had cleared the railway line. He had won battle

after battle. Then the War Office suddenly dropped the subject. It was admitted that Victoria had fallen and that the rebels were in complete control of the Monterrey-Tampico line. And one day an inconspicuous paragraph stated that General Navarette was back in Monterrey!

These two cases are typical, and they explain why the Government makes no headway against the Revolution. The fault is not with the common soldiers. If they were trained and led they would do well. They are good material, tough and hardy, small and sinewy like the Japanese (whom many Indians resemble closely in feature also), able to bear fatigue and privation and the pain of wounds with the patient insensibility of animals. But they are not trained at all, and they are led very badly.

I have mentioned before the absence of any fire discipline. Large numbers of the men do not even raise their rifles to the shoulder. They fire from the hip —into the air. They scarcely ever charge. They are never put through tactical exercises. Some of the regiments which are kept in the capital, such as the 29th, upon which the Government confidently leans, have a few non-commissioned officers who understand their duties. Among the company officers there are some who know that everything is wrong. They do their best with their own men, but what are they among so many who neither know nor care?

The Mexican idea of making a soldier is to cram him into a uniform, give him a rifle, and let him fight as best he can. Even if the men were willing to serve, this plan would be disastrous, seeing that most of them are Indians from the fields, very low in the intellectual scale. But when we consider that soldiering is looked

down upon as disgraceful, that the Federal ranks are recruited by the press-gang, and that many criminals are turned out of prison into the Army, we see at once what a tragic farce the civil war in Mexico is.

After the evacuation of Torreon by the Federals General Munguia was tried by a court of inquiry. The intention was to shoot him. This was his defence : " How could I meet the rebels in the open? " he asked; " they fight in loose formation. I was obliged to keep my troops together. If I did not they would melt away. Desertion is the idea uppermost in almost every soldier's mind. Again, how could I order my officers to lead their men to the attack? I knew their men would shoot them down as soon as they got the chance."

The best generals would find it hard to do anything with such an Army as this until they had disciplined it and discovered a certain number of men whom they could trust. Mexican generals have unfortunately very little talent for war, and they make, as a rule, no attempt to " lick their men into shape." Officers in command are to our minds incredibly slack. At a small battle in the State of Morelos the Federals by use of machine-guns forced the rebels to retire. The nature of the country made it easy for their retreat to be cut off. But the Federal colonel looked at his watch. " It is time for dinner," he said, and told his bugler to sound the " Cease fire." The rebels leisurely went away.

That kind of incident, which happens daily, helps to keep current the belief that Federal officers do not wish to bring the war to an end. They do not take soldiering seriously. At some gun-trials near the capital the general's daughter came forward to fire a charge; then his wife was urged to show her courage, then his son

must do likewise! It was more like an afternoon tea-party than a serious piece of military business. Naturally when guns go into action they are handled very often without any effect. At Tuxpam, in the oil district, a barge load of women and children left suddenly one afternoon for a safer spot. As the barge went down the river the Federal artillery opened fire across it. Shells could be seen exploding over Federal positions. If the gunners did any harm at all, it was to their own side.

If President Diaz had kept the Army up to a safe standard in numbers and equipment there would have been no Madero revolution. He allowed it to dwindle to about 12,000 men. He also allowed officers to grow far too old in their commands, and he made no attempt to build up a sound military organization. The College of Chapultepec, where officers are supposed to be trained, has often been compared to West Point, Sandhurst, and St. Cyr. The comparison is ridiculous. There is some good teaching, and the college has turned out some clever young soldiers; but it is far below the American or European level. Now there are many officers who have not been through Chapultepec, many who have been promoted from the ranks, many who have volunteered as "cadets" and after a short time been gladly commissioned as lieutenants. Instead of seeing subalterns with grey whiskers and decrepit captains tottering in their walk one now finds boys as majors and colonels of thirty. Even amongst the aged generals one young man of thirty-three has forced his way. Yet this influx of youth has changed the Army very little. In the course of a campaign it is difficult to build up organization, and unfortunately there was no framework to start with.

The Mexican Army has no Army Service Corps, no medical department to speak of. It carries no camp equipment, no supplies. Watch a field force break camp at dawn. First there go pattering off a horde of women laden with pots and pans, blankets, sometimes babies. These are the *soldaderas*, the camp followers, the commissariat of the force. That they move as quickly as they do is a miracle. Whatever the day's march may be, they are always on the camping ground before the men arrive. They rig up shelters, they cook *tortillas* and *frijoles* (maize cakes and beans), they make coffee. You see them mending their husbands' coats, washing their shirts, roughly tending flesh wounds. Without these *soldaderas* the Army could not move. While President Huerta was seizing hundreds of men by night in Mexico City and other cities in order to swell his forces to a hundred thousand, he also had women " pressed " to go with the new soldiers and take care of them. *Criadas* (maid-servants) were positively afraid to be out after dark.

This extraordinary system accounts for the immobility of the Federal troops. Compared with the rebels they are leaden-footed. They cling to the railways and to the box-cars, in which they live with some comfort. Man for man, so far as I have seen, the Revoltosos are better men, and they are all mounted. The way to deal with them would be to send out flying columns: to keep them moving, which they would dislike exceedingly; and to execute sweeping movements over a large area until they were " rounded up " into a place where they could be effectively shelled. Nothing of this kind is attempted. The endeavour of each side is in most cases to avoid the other. A train full of soldiers went out of Tampico to reconnoitre. It

sighted a train full of rebels. Each train went back!

The stratagems of an active general like Villa, who is the best soldier the rebels have, are resented. He is not considered to be "playing the game." In a club one day a Mexican complained to me of the trick by which Juarez was taken as "shameful." Villa seized the railway, piled his men into trains, forced the telegraph operators to announce these as freight trains, and turned his troops out in the city before the authorities had any suspicion that they were on the way. "Shameful!" my Mexican acquaintance declared. Another day I asked a Mexican war correspondent who had been present at a small fight whether the Federal loss was heavy. "Very," he said, and then in horrified tone added, "they killed a colonel."

Against such an army as this any United States expeditionary force would have in pitched battles an unpleasantly easy task. I have seen something of the cavalry training, which is very like mounted infantry training, of the United States Army; it is very good indeed. I believe the War Department at Washington reckons that 200,000 men would be required for a Mexican expedition. That would be for the policing of the country. The probable loss of men is estimated at 25,000, and the cost of a campaign at £400,000 a day. By far the greater part of such a force as this would be members of the National Guard and volunteers, who would have to be put through some training before they could take the field. The Regular Army numbers 66,000—30 regiments of infantry and 15 of cavalry. Of these 11 infantry regiments and two of cavalry are in the Philippines. There seems to be little doubt that, if the President called for men, enough would

answer, and there is no doubt at all that they would have no difficulty in winning battles and capturing towns.

The difficulty would lie in suppressing guerilla warfare among the mountains, in the jungles, wherever the country offered good cover for "sniping" and sudden attacks upon small detachments. It would be necessary to put in force a measure like the Crimes Act in Land League Ireland, which would make it a serious and, if necessary, a capital offence to possess arms. This would mean that the United States would have to govern Mexico for an indefinite period. It would mean annexation; and that the United States do not desire or intend to annex Mexico has been authoritatively declared. Where, then, is the remedy? The only hope lies in the creation of a Mexican Army capable of keeping order. If no Mexican ruler is equal to this task, then some one else must do. That some one should clearly be the United States.

XVII

CHAPALA AND GUADALAJARA

THERE are as yet in Mexico few places which offer themselves ready-made to the holiday-maker. For certain kinds of holiday no country could be better. If you enjoy riding away from civilization, over mountains, across vast plains, sleeping rough and faring like a pioneer, you can take your fill of such pleasure, and come back sun-browned, hardy, your body lean and lithe from hard exertion, your eyes with that mystic gleam in them which tells of looking into the face of Nature and roving through the vast empty spaces of the world. If you shoot, if you fish, if you botanize, if you study dead races, Mexico is a rich field for you. But of " pleasure resorts " there are few.

Cuernavaca is the only one which approaches the American or European conception. Here there are expensive, cosmopolitan hotels, there is a social round of small gaieties, there are many pleasant easy excursions to be made. Only a few hours from the capital by train or motor, it is perched on a ridge overlooking a magnificent view. Further, a romantic charm is lent to it by the beautiful Borda Garden, laid out by a wealthy Frenchman in the eighteenth century on a steep hillside behind the town, and much beloved by Maximilian and Carlotta, the unhappy young Emperor and Empress whose short and lurid reign added a scarlet blot to the stained pages of Mexican history.

Their coach is in the museum of Mexico City; a famous painting by Manet recalls for a few the young monarch's execution; their ghosts walk in the Borda Garden : but to the world they are a forgotten episode. Most of the fifteen millions in Mexico have never even heard their names.

Maximilian was imposed upon Mexico by France, or rather by Napoleon the Third, at a time when the state of the country was such as it is to-day. Napoleon's idea was that " the founding of a regular government " would keep out the United States and create a market for French commerce. He sent an army across the Atlantic, occupied Puebla and Mexico City, and induced the Mexican Clericals, then calling themselves the Conservative Party, to offer the crown to the Archduke Maximilian of Austria. The new Emperor and the beautiful Empress Carlotta arrived in 1864. For a while they strove by studied extravagance to appeal to the garish instincts of their adopted race. But Mexico would have none of them. Under Benito Juarez, whose statue stands in every Mexican city, a revolution gained rapid force. Napoleon refused to help his nominee, although the Empress pleaded piteously with him. By the summer of 1867 all was over. Maximilian had been captured and shot, Carlotta was a fugitive, a Republic was proclaimed once more. The pitiful couple left no mark upon the country save faint, fragrant memories, such as those at Cuernavaca, of their love of beautiful things.

Further off from the capital than Cuernavaca, about twelve hours' journey, lies Lake Chapala, which will in time become a playground rivalling the Swiss and the Italian lakes. For the whole of its seventy miles' length—it is about twenty broad—this inland sea;

" El Mar Chapalico," is guarded by mountains and forests. As yet there are few places on its shores which set themselves to attract visitors. Chapala Village has a few simple inns. Ribera Castellanos is the best point at which to stay, for here there is a modern hotel, very prettily situated and very comfortable. I had some delightful experiences at Ribera. Not the least delightful was the walk I took through an orange and grape-fruit orchard, not only admiring the trees hung thickly with their golden lamps, but picking and eating as I went. The sun was hot, and I had had a long, dusty drive. Nothing could have given a parched throat more delicious relief.

Long and dusty as the drive was in a swaying " coché," I enjoyed it immensely. It was Sunday morning, and the Indians were coming along the road to Mass and market in the little town of Ocotlan. The men were all in white. Their red " sarapes " (blankets) either hung neatly folded over their left shoulders or, if they were mounted, served as saddle-cloths. Earlier they had used their " sarapes " as overcoats. I started soon after seven, and all the figures I saw were muffled up to the eyes, only some twelve inches of loose white trouser appearing below the red.

Pleasant people they were along the high-road, smiling back if you smiled at them, lifting their hands to their huge-brimmed, high-coned hats with a natural, easy grace as they murmured, " Buenas dias " to my driver and me. Many horsemen had their wives either behind them, pillion-fashion, or in front, as the Sabine women were carried by their Roman abductors. Those who walked were mostly " huarachi " (sandal) wearers, and I admired their sense (though perhaps it was necessity !). A good many went barefoot. Here

and there by the roadside groups of women and children sat resting in harmonious poses of unstudied picturesqueness. The women's costume was a long cotton veil, drawn over the head and reaching to the feet, just such a covering as the women of the Bible wore—Hagar in the Wilderness or Ruth at the Well.

In Octolan the stores were full as I passed through. The fruit stalls on one side of the narrow street gleamed with piled-up oranges. On the other side the shady "Portales" (a covered arcade) were filled with gossiping peons. On the pretty little plaza sat or strolled among the orange-trees small farmers in tight grey short jackets and riding-trousers, something like the breeches which are called in India "jodhpur"; dandies with silver spurs or hats heavily embroidered with gold lace; "rancheros" and "rurales," smart young officers and laughing, chattering girls.

The town left behind, I came in sight of gleaming water, and soon Lake Chapala, surrounded by its misty mountains, was full in view. It has been compared with the Italian Lakes, but the only one of which it reminded me was Garda. There is a nobility, a wild grandeur about it which trim Como cannot match. There is good fishing in the lake, and the fish are good eating. There is also quite wonderful wildfowl shooting. Herons, egrets, and pelicans are indigenous. Millions of duck and geese, of widgeon, teal, and pintails spend the winter here—or it would be more correct to say spend here the months which are wintry in other climes. On Lake Chapala it is summer always. I bathed and found the water really warm. I was out in a motor-launch until dark fell: there was not a touch of chilliness in the air. Nights and early mornings are fresh. You want a blanket to sleep under all the

year round. But the temperatures vary very little between July and January, and days without sunshine are scarcely known.

On the well-irrigated hacienda, which grows the grape-fruit, there flourish also wheat and maize. Strawberries ripen every day of the year. Of course it is an American, not a Mexican, property, an example of what can be done with the land when enterprise is applied to it. You may well ask how wheat and oranges can grow together. The explanation is that this lake region is 5,000 feet high. That accounts for the dry and equable climate, for the invigorating tang in the air.

Only fifty miles away lies the city of Guadalajara (the "j" pronounced as "h"), which is also famous for its blue skies, its perpetual sunshine, and its bracing mountain air. Next to the capital it has the finest appearance, the best shops, the most flourishing commerce of all the cities of the Republic. Mr. Holmes, the popular British Vice-Consul, was kind enough to go with me through the principal large stores. Six drapery shops of a good class are all French. Here, as elsewhere, the hardware trade is German. I was surprised at the character of the stocks until I heard that Guadalajara boasts of eighty peso-millionaires, that is, men worth £100,000 or more. This accounts for the number of fine houses in the "colonias," as well as for the rich carpets and good furniture and expensive china and glass in the stores.

I saw some examples of Mexican cabinet-making skill. The talent shown for copying was remarkable. Furniture made here from German and Austrian designs could only be distinguished by close examination from the real thing. British goods are not much

in evidence; they can be discovered if they are looked for, but there might be many more " lines " of them. I heard here the same stories of British commercial stupidity as I have heard in so many countries where markets are developing.

From a firm at Ipswich two agricultural machines were ordered. These gave complete satisfaction, and it was suggested to the firm that, if they sent out some catalogues, they would be sure to receive further orders. They replied that they would be happy to send catalogues, at the price of two-and-sixpence apiece ! Even more " penny wise and pound foolish " was the niggardliness of a British firm of engineers who tendered for the carrying out of a large public work. They found that they could save a few pence on the postage of their blue-prints if they were to reduce them in size. They cut them down, therefore, mutilating their diagrams, saved their pennies, and had their tender contemptuously thrown aside.

Guadalajara used to be so prosperous that it had for a long time very little revolution. On the big estates an almost patriarchal system prevails, feudalism in its better aspect. In the town there was plenty of work. In the mines the *peons* were content. Now the labourer finds work scarce. Industry languishes, with three parts of the country given over to civil war. Many mines are shut down. What can the unemployed " pelado " do but join the " bandidos " ? He steals a horse, borrows a rifle with no intention of returning it, and belongs to a roving band of marauders.

The increase of these bands and the advance of an organized rebel force from the west make Guadalajara nervous, though you would not think it from the gaiety of the streets. Yet every one is asking quietly for

news, " Que hay de nuevo ? " Even the pretty misses who walk under the Portales, looking at you with frank, open, honest eyes, have tremors of apprehension when they hear of the Revoltosos' abominable crimes.

The women here are of a most attractive type. Many have brown or fair hair instead of shiny black. They are in appearance far more " white " than Mexican (that distinction is usually drawn), and the reason is that this State of Jalisco was colonized by Andalusians, the aristocracy of Spain. The good stock has always been kept up, though it is now far more noticeable among women than men. Many of these handsome girls, who have been to school abroad, will not marry Mexicans. Some Englishmen and a good many Germans have profited by this to make rich marriages, and, I am told, usually happy marriages as well.

The difference between European and Mexican young men is well understood by mothers, one of whom said to a handsome English friend of mine, quite a young man and unmarried, " I don't mind my daughters going to the Country Club under your charge, señor; I know they are perfectly safe with you." A pretty place this Country Club, with a dozen tennis courts of rolled earth, and a riot of flowering creepers and bushes —in November.

The mention of marriage reminds me that while I was in Guadalajara a very fashionable wedding was celebrated; the invitations bade the guests first to the Cathedral, then to a " lunch-sooper." I could not discover exactly what this meal was; it had a Gargantuan sound. Probably it meant a go-as-you-please entertainment lasting from midday until late at night. At one " wedding breakfast " to which a friend of

mine went the fare consisted chiefly of champagne and sausages. This same friend once sent a very fine cut-crystal flower bowl as a wedding present. When he went to call on the newly married couple, he could not find it. At last he saw it on the floor. Its purpose had been mistaken. It was being used as a spittoon.

The Cathedral is rather odd than beautiful. Inside, the decoration is all white and gold, which strikes a theatrical rather than a devotional note. Outside, every style of architecture is represented. Two huge Byzantine towers dominate a group of buildings, some of which are Gothic, some Moorish, some Doric, some Corinthian. The effect is not so bad as it sounds. Chief treasure of the Cathedral is Murillo's "Assumption of the Virgin," a good example of the Spanish master's florid sentimentalism. I have only one quarrel with the excellent guide to Mexico written by Mr. T. Philip Terry, a guide on Baedeker lines, but very much more human than Baedeker, to which every visitor to Mexico becomes affectionately attached. I cannot understand his passion for the paintings of Murillo.

Some day, if ever the revolution ceases, Guadalajara will grow rapidly into a great city. Its population is already 135,000, though, as a witty Frenchman put it to me, "only ten thousand count." I asked him to explain.

"Why," he said, "you cannot count people who neither sit on chairs nor sleep in beds, and who would not know what to do with a knife and fork."

That is how the bulk of the Indians live. But in time they will learn, as the Indians of the north have learned, to want boots and furniture; brass bedsteads and bicycles; gramophones to grind out Harry Lauder,

as I heard one doing the other day in a village "cantina," a group of half-naked peons standing round with puzzled faces, but enjoying it all the same!

By that time the Southern Pacific Railway will have finished its line from Sonora to Jalisco, and will perhaps be continuing it to Mexico City, along the shore of Lake Chapala. Then there will be pleasure towns on the edge of the water, instead of the tiny villages with fishing-boats drawn up on white sandy beaches and just a handful of cottages clustered round a white-washed little church. Those who want to enjoy the finest climate in the world, before the world at large gets to know about it, had better make haste.

XVIII

THE CHURCH AND THE CATHOLIC PARTY

SINCE Guadalajara is one of the chief centres of clerical influence in Mexico, something may appropriately be said here about the Catholic Party. But first a word of warning against the notion that in Mexico the "party system" really obtains. The party system belongs to the machinery of what we call constitutional government, and to expect genuine constitutional government in Mexico is fatuous.

According to President Wilson (I quote from a lecture which he gave at Columbia University in 1908), the ideal of any such system must be "a definite understanding; if need be, a formal pact, between those who submit to it and those who are to conduct it, with a view to making Government an instrument of the general welfare rather than an arbitrary, self-willed master doing what it pleases."

An excellent definition, and one which makes it clear that no such system is yet possible in Mexico. For the mind of that country is still in that stage in which Government appears to be a force operating from above.

For example, certain of their pleasures, such as robbing and killing, are known to be "wrong," that is, dangerous, so long as they are swiftly and severely punished. The moment the arm of the law weakens, country districts are infested by bandits. The police-

man, well mounted, armed with carbine and revolver, was, under Diaz, the safeguard of social security. Now that the character of the *Rurales* has altered for the worse, and that the finest of them have been drawn into the Army, Mexico is no longer a safe land to live in, either for foreigners or for its own people. Pillage and murder stalk abroad again, unchecked by the strong hand of authority. That furnishes a vivid illustration of the very long distance which the Mexicans have to travel before they can in any real sense of democracy begin to govern themselves after the fashion of England or the United States.

What deceives the superficial observer is the existence of the forms of constitutionalism. There are all the trappings and the suits of party government—elections, a Parliament, a Council of Ministers, a written Constitution with 128 articles, all breathing the most advanced liberal sentiments. But these are shams. There is nothing which " passeth show " behind them. How could it be otherwise in a country where out of 15,000,000 inhabitants there are 11,000,000 unable to read or write, and as many as 2,000,000 of remote Indians who do not even understand Spanish, the official language of their race?

The same lack of reality comes to light when one examines into the political parties of Mexico. One finds that they have next to no influence, and their proposals little bearing upon actual conditions. They formulate vague generalities, and are satisfied. The only era in which Mexican politicians were divided by a clear and definite issue was that in which the Liberals attacked and the Clericals defended Church privilege and Church property. That struggle was ended by the common sense of President Diaz, who allowed the

anti-Church laws to remain, but did not enforce them. Religious bodies are still precluded from holding property or giving education. Priests are forbidden to wear distinctive dress in public. Church bells are not allowed to be rung. Yet all these prohibitions are evaded. If an indiscreet or over-zealous inspector should visit a convent, the nuns hide themselves or put off their habits. Bells are struck instead of being swung. In their readiness to accept appearances the Mexicans betray their Asiatic descent.

But although the Church has little to-day to complain of, she still seeks to keep up her influence in politics. The only party which has anything like a definite programme or a widespread organization is the Catholic Party. There is no reason to doubt, I think, that if the latest Presidential elections had been free and fair the Catholic Party's candidate, Señor Gamboa, would have been elected. The Catholic Church has the allegiance of 90 per cent. of Mexico's population. It has no competitor. Its influence, if it were permitted to exercise it, would be immense. In thousands of villages what the priest orders is law. I know of one town in Jalisco, a very churchy state, where out of 816 votes cast 800 were given to the Catholic candidate. That will undoubtedly happen in many parts of the country if ever elections are conducted as President Wilson wishes them to be. Would he and the people of the United States feel any satisfaction in knowing that they had substituted a clerical despotism for a military despotism? Of the two the former is usually the worse.

The leaders of the Catholic Party have assured me that their aims are not clerical. They have avoided calling themselves Conservatives for fear of being con-

fused with the old Conservatives, who really were "Clericals." In their published programme there is nothing to which objection could be raised, even by Benito Juarez, the President who curbed the Church's power. Furthermore, the present head of the Church in Mexico, Archbishop José Mora y del Rio, is a man of open-minded and statesmanlike views. He was appointed by the Vatican through the direct intervention of President Diaz; his influence has been cast on the side of wise toleration. It is significant that he was a close friend of the head of the American Methodist Church in Mexico, and that when the latter left the leading Catholic newspaper, *El Pais*, deplored his departure and highly commended his work. But not even a liberal Catholic Party, not even a Primate like Dr. Mora y del Rio, could hold the clerical element back if ever the Church became the supreme power in politics. That she certainly would become if elections were conducted squarely and if the voting system, which would then allow the ignorant and priest-ridden peon to "swing" the country, were left as it is to-day.

Nothing is said by the Catholic Party's programme about a change in voting qualifications. That can easily be understood. It is the Catholic Party which stands to profit by priestly exploitation of the peon. What does seem strange is that the Liberal Party, which has everything to lose by the continuance of present methods, should not advocate electoral reform. Yet it would be stranger in effect if the so-called Liberal Party should advocate anything. To speak accurately, one should say "Liberal Parties," since there are more than twenty competing groups, each of which claims the title. They have neither leaders nor principles in common. They make no effective appeal for support.

It is hard to know what a Liberal in Mexico really is. Even General Huerta calls himself one. So does General Felix Diaz, who is still waiting in Havana for "the call of his country;" I saw him there, mildly hopeful, persuaded that his strength lay in sitting still. But of all the "Felixistas" he is, I fancy, almost the only one left. His irresolution has both irritated and alienated his friends. They see that those people were right who said that in this pleasant, portly gentleman there was not the stuff of which greatness is made. Under his uncle he was a useful as well as an ornamental Chief of Police. But those who fail to take the current when it serves must lose their ventures.

It is a pity, for he could have won the support of the most solid elements in the country. Added to his popularity with the masses (mainly due to his name), this would have put him in a very strong position. Then, with the aid of the best men available for Ministers and Governors of States, and with a determination to rule justly as well as firmly, he might have given Mexico peace. But character was lacking; the golden opportunity slipped by. That is the more unfortunate since there are so few Mexicans in sight who are qualified, either by ability or by being widely known, to take the helm of State.

In the Catholic Party there are a number of men whose talent is above the average and who in sincerity of purpose also rank high. But there is none who stands out with the mark of a leader upon him. Most of the chiefs of the party are large landowners, and they take, as is natural, the landowner's point of view. They say nothing about the injustice of exempting the huge estates from taxation. They would no doubt oppose even a tax upon uncultivated land, which would

help to break up these properties. Their ideal of government for Mexico is an enlightened paternalism, which, could it but be realized, and did it wisely share its power with the new middle class, would ideally meet the case. But in that qualification "enlightened" the difficulty lies.

The Catholics make light of the view that land-hunger is at the root of Mexico's troubles. They admit that in certain districts, notably Morelos, and to a lesser extent in the northern States, the Indians have a grievance which ought to be righted. Their lands have been unjustly filched from them. They will never be quiet until they get plots of their own. But so far as the country generally is concerned the Catholic leaders say that the land question has little to do with the unrest.

They maintain that the real cause of the trouble lies in the farcical character of the elections (which, as I have explained, keeps them out of office), and in the corruption which exists among the *jefes politicos*. These officials are appointed by the Governors of states; they are in small places supreme: even in big places they are sometimes powerful in defiance of municipalities. They are paid very little, and they compensate themselves by oppression. A common method of augmenting their income is to have a man seized and put in gaol, either on a trumped-up charge or for some trifling offence such as drunkenness or brawling. Word is conveyed to him and to his friends that a certain sum is necessary to procure his release. There is no one to appeal to. Magistrates and judges are in subjection to the political authority (the Catholic Party propose to make them irremovable, as they are in England and as all honest Americans think they

should be in the United States). There is nothing for it but to pay. The *jefe politico* system, say the Catholic leaders, must be cleansed of its abominations before the *peon* can feel secure. This, they consider, weighs far more heavily with him than a wish for a small holding.

"If you gave him land," said one of the most prominent Catholic Party chiefs when we were discussing this, "he would only sell it and then complain that the buyer had robbed him of it." In which there is, as all who have studied the *peon* will testify, a large element of truth. But this must be recollected, too—that the *jefes politicos* manage the elections and secure the victory of the candidate whom they are instructed by the President through the Governors of states to return. Therefore they stand in the Catholic Party's way. Since honest elections would enormously benefit that party, "Honest elections" is their chief cry.

Yet being, as they are, so largely an agricultural party, the Catholics have naturally something to say in their programme about the land. They are opposed strongly, as landlords, to the Radical-Socialist preachings of the "Constitutionalistas" in favour of a general division of property. But they are, on the other hand, firm advocates of agricultural co-operation. In several southern states there obtains a system by which the landowner provides the cultivator with a holding of from eight to twelve or even twenty acres, supplies him with seed, lends him a plough, with sometimes more elaborate machinery, and receives in return half the produce. That system does not make for advance in agriculture, for many landlords, having quite enough to live upon comfortably in Mexico City or in Paris, leave their tenants to follow the methods of the Bible patriarchs; but it seems otherwise to be reasonable

enough, unless you agree with the Constitutionalists that the landlord has no right to any property at all. It works fairly well in Jalisco, where society is still arranged on patriarchal, or feudal, principles. Here and in the neighbouring states of Michoacan, Querétaro, and Guanajuato there has been as yet little serious trouble. The relation between many owners and cultivators of the soil is one of friendliness and mutual respect.

Even the rebels are ready to admit that. On the *hacienda* of a well-known member of the Amor family a party of Insurrectos were about to burn and ravage. The *peons* in a body asked them to forbear, showed them the church and school which the landlord had built, and so impressed them that no damage whatever was done. Such landlords, and there are not a few of them, are ready at all times to help their tenants.

It is by their wish and with the intention of supporting the small-holder that the Catholic Party programme demands land credit banks, and lays stress upon the necessity of improving agricultural education. At present this leaves much to desire. There is a big building in the capital supposed to be a central agricultural college. It is really a home for any friends of officials who may be in want of a salary, and it is of no use whatever to the farmer—so many practical agriculturists have assured me. Those who are trying to improve Mexican methods of cultivation and to introduce new crops have been driven to seek help from the United States Agricultural Department at Washington. The more progressive *hacendados* have to spend considerable sums in making experiments themselves.

Another Catholic proposal is that the 32,000 Church

schools scattered over the country shall receive a State grant. That is, of course, looked upon by some people as "the thin edge of the wedge." But Education is such a large theme that I must leave it for another chapter. Enough has been said here to show that the Catholic Party have, even though their professsions be vague and wordy, some sound and progressive aims. If they could keep themselves free from Clericalism they might serve their country well.

XIX

EDUCATION

EDUCATION is the modern cure-all. It is worshipped as a fetish. It is murmured as an incantation. Its real nature, even the real meaning of the word, is in danger of being obscured. To draw out the best that we have in us, so that we may find our proper level in life—that is an ideal most worthy. To imagine that by a certain absorption of book-learning all may be made equal—that is moonshine. President Diaz was too shrewd to be taken in by any hocus-pocus of the latter kind, but he did allow himself to use "the need for education" as a comforting Mesopotamianic phrase. He, or some one for him, framed fervent sentences about it. It was "the foundation of our prosperity, the basis of our very existence, our foremost interest," *et patati et patata.* "I have," said Don Porfirio, "created a public school for boys and another for girls in every community in the Republic." Moreover, he signed with his own hand certificates attesting that little Pedro or little Josepha had passed certain standards. To what these standards amounted he did not too closely inquire. There were the schools, free to all, school books free also. There was the entry in the accounts of every State. "Instrucción Pública," even though the figure against it was often ludicrously small. After all, Don Porfirio was a

great Policeman, not a great Statesman, so it was to his credit that he did anything in this direction at all.

On paper the Mexican system is excellent. Glowing accounts of it have been written by British and American travellers, who accepted in a humble spirit whatever plausible politicians in Mexico City liked to tell them. It is excellent that there should be schools in every community. But what if the system sometimes works out like this? What if the community gets its grant, and the grant goes into somebody's pocket, and the school is only opened for ten days or so in a year at the season when the inspector's visit is announced? No surprise visits in Mexico; nothing so "underhanded" as that! And suppose that, in schools which are open all the year, the teaching is unskilled and unintelligent; that there is far too much shouting of lessons in unison and next to no individual development: that, instead of inculcating "scholarship, industry, and patriotism," as the old President claimed, these schools do little to dissipate ignorance, idleness, and incivism? Religious teaching in the State schools is forbidden, and the 32,000 Church schools are refused grants. They are on definite Catholic lines, of course; for the rest they are neither better nor worse than the others. President Diaz thought that religion would be imparted at home, but the homes of Mexico City seem to neglect it if a recent Minister of Education was right in describing the schools of the capital as "manufactories of Zapatistas" —Zapata being a notorious brigand who has gathered around him desperadoes without pity or shame. There was in that gibe exaggeration due to impatience, but there is a kernel of truth in it, just as there is some

foundation for the charge that the American Methodist schools turn their pupils into revolutionists.

The condition of Mexico is so deplorable that any one who is taught to think at all must think changes necessary, and the easiest line of argument is that any change must be better than none. It might be contended with greater force that any school is better than no school. But most of those in Mexico, whether judged by results or by the methods practised in those which I visited, leave much to desire. The best are in the north, where the influence of the United States is at work. Often the buildings are handsome and convenient. There are normal schools for teachers, though it is mostly the blind who lead the blind in them. Of schools above the elementary level there are few, and those few are so poor in character that almost all parents of the "educated class" send their children either to the United States or to Europe. Beaumont, near Windsor, and Stonyhurst in Lancashire, have many Mexican "old boys."

The quality lacking in Mexican schools, as in Mexican life generally, is a sense of reality. The children are quick at learning, receptive, intelligent; but neither their minds nor their characters are solidified. They change lamentably as they develop in body. Intellectually they are shallow; their judgments are flighty, their opinions ill informed. If the boys played games and worked off their animal energy, they would grow into men of tougher fibre. Their instability of character might in time be overcome. They have as yet little determination or perseverance. However, they have made a beginning with borrowed games. I saw a team of Mexican young men playing baseball against Americans. They began vigorously and for

two-thirds of the game they led. Then they suddenly went to pieces. The Americans played resolutely to make up the ground they had lost, and before their "grit" the Mexicans crumbled away. I saw a football match too. This was arranged on the lines of a bull-fight. A lady was chosen to preside; the captains of the elevens led them up to her and asked if they might begin! They showed some knowledge of the game though.

Very few Mexican boys take any regular exercise or undergo any character training. That is why, when they go to work, they periodically fall slack and have to be shaken up. On the surface they are still clever. They talk well; this is the gift of the race—or perhaps "curse" would be the more suitable word. But their talk does not lead to action. They have no firm grasp of realities; they are contented with shams. At Vera Cruz when I was embarking a German was in trouble with the Customs. He was ordered to fill up various forms of declaration, and he had to write out on several sheets of foolscap a complete list of the samples his cases contained. When he took this in to be checked, he found that the official in charge was an acquaintance. "That is all right," the Mexican said, and signed the documents without even looking at them. Formal and fussy as they often are, Mexicans have no real desire that all things shall be done decently and in order. In a train which was taking troops to the front members of the "Sanitary Corps" were prominent. It would be impossible to imagine anything more horrible than the sanitary arrangements, even for the officers. Add to this that seventy officers, ranking from generals to subalterns, ate and slept in one compartment which was never cleaned, never swept out even, and of which

all the windows were shut at night! Yet the army is proud of its "Sanitary Corps." With Asiatic simplicity they prize the letter which killeth. They know nothing of the spirit which giveth life. How can one expect officers who have been so ill-educated that they are content to travel in such indescribable squalor to cherish a keen sense of personal honour? A friend of mine secured a pass for himself and his horse on a military train. The lieutenant in charge of it refused to take the horse. My friend was puzzled. There seemed to be no ground for the refusal. At last he offered the young man a ten-peso (£1) note. It was at once accepted and the animal allowed to be entrained.

Legal education is, I believe, good. Medical education, on the other hand, is poor. Here are two cases of Englishmen who have suffered severely at the hands of Mexican doctors. One who was very ill was assured that his trouble was indigestion. He died from nothing else than lack of care. The other had a gangrened wound and went into a hospital, where they set about preparing to cut off his arm. Fortunately he was rescued in time, taken to a German doctor, and cured without any surgery at all. Foreigners in Mexico can multiply experiences like this an hundredfold. The last days of Don Porfirio's Presidency were clouded by suffering which a dentist caused him, who had used an unclean instrument in his mouth. Mexicans, in spite of some notable exceptions, are not good business men either. The best proof of this is that almost all the business of the country, great and small alike, is done by foreigners. Cashing a draft in a Mexican bank is a weary process. Clerks and cashiers confer. There is much running about. When at last the bearer is held to have proved his identity the delivery of the

money involves another long delay. This is due, like military slackness, the deficiencies of professional men, and the scandalous lives of too many priests, to the absence of any sound basis in education. There are many able men in the country of pure Spanish stock, but the real Mexican can seldom think rapidly or reason logically. He has no decision of character, no settled views.

It is the absence of a sound basis in education which makes the real Mexicans like children; bright up to a point, pleasant mannered, easy to get on with, kindly, unassuming, and apparently European; but without understanding of the apparatus of civilization which they have borrowed ready-made, and utterly unable to appreciate the European point of view. Those who deal with them successfully treat them as children; many have told me the secret. Let me offer one amusing instance. A certain United States Consul (who is not, as some in the north are, a partisan of the revolution) had news brought to him that a train had run over and killed a Mexican. Now in such cases the Mexican practice is to arrest all concerned, and to keep them in solitary confinement, *incommunicado*, for seventy-two hours. Frequently witnesses are treated in the same way, which explains why people in Mexico, when they see a street accident, hastily pass by on the other side. The Consul knew that the crew of the train, who were Americans, would be at once taken to gaol unless he saved them. He also knew that it would be useless to protest, for the Mexicans would have law on their side. So he decided upon a stratagem. He went to the local judge before whom the matter would come, and talked for some time upon general subjects. Then he brought the conversation round to this law. " Sup-

pose," he said, " a train knocked a man down, you would not in that case, I imagine, commit the driver and fireman and conductor to prison until you had inquired into the cause of the accident ? " " Oh, no," replied the magistrate politely. When, a little later, he was informed of what had occurred, he could not go back upon what he had said. The train-crew were released.

One could only characterize as childish the callousness of a general who roared with laughter when his men rolled about in agony after eating rat-poison from a shop which they were looting, in mistake for some potted meat. Nor was the other general less childish who said that the Americans would never fight because they were of British, German, Dutch, Russian, Scandinavian origin (so he had " read in a book ") and hated each other worse than they could hate any one else ! Through all classes this same strain of simplicity runs. One finds it reflected in the newspapers. Only a credulous people could put up with them. The one journal in the capital which has any sense of responsibility is a journal published in English, the *Mexican Herald*. *El Imparcial*, the Government organ, distinguished itself on the day after Parliament had been dissolved and 110 members thrown into prison, by referring to these events in a paragraph of eleven lines. In every case of a Federal disaster the newspapers have kept back the news for at least a week. They print the most ridiculous stories and then forget all about them. *El Pais*, the Catholic mouthpiece, is the best, but all are such as could be tolerated only by a race without any solid instruction.

To seek in their pages any comment upon the events which they chronicle is, as a rule, useless. The most

disgraceful perversions of justice go unrebuked. I mentioned in an earlier chapter a Constitutionalist officer who spoke of himself as "the man they wanted to burn." His name is Fuentes; and he was once Governor of the State of Aguascalientes. As a known revolutionary, he was arrested and, in March 1913, was confined in the Mexico City Penitentiary. On the night of March 25 the Governor of the Federal District, a nephew of General Huerta, went to the Penitentiary and demanded that Señor Fuentes and two other men of position who had been Governors of States should be delivered up to him. As he was clearly intoxicated, the official in charge declined to deliver them up. Enrique Zepeda—this was the Governor's name—then went to another prison known as Belem, got possession of a prisoner named Gabriel Hernandez, had him shot, and then burned his body, some say before the man was dead. Zepeda was brought to trial. This could not be avoided. But on November 4, 1913, he was acquitted on the ground of "irresponsibility," which was the Court's polite way of saying that he was drunk. This monstrous result, which in any civilized country would have loosed a torrent of denunciation, was reported without remark.

When the newspapers do publish "leading articles" their comments are usually couched in the language of bombast and hyperbole. This is, of course, partly due to the Spanish idiom which inclines to roundabout and gaseous methods of speech. It is a lazy language at best. Only a race determined to save themselves trouble would have commuted "filius" into "hijo," pronounced "eecho," ch as in "loch"; "mulier" into "mujer" (moocher); "fideles" into "fieles"; and "periculosus" into "peligroso." But the Mexican

goes even further than the Spaniard. He refuses to roll the double "l." Instead of "Cabahlyo" for "caballo" (horse) he says "cah-by-yoh." He does not lisp his "c's" and "z's," like the Spaniard of the north, but pronounces them as we do, and, except for his indolence with regard to the double "l," the educated Mexican speaks Spanish purely, and his speech falls very pleasantly upon the ear.

Such news as one can find in Mexican journals is made irritating to read by the habit, carried to excess, of beginning articles on one page and continuing them after a few lines upon another, or upon others. One morning I found the heading to an interview with a bull-fighter scattered throughout a "leading journal." Bull-fighters are so popular—they occupy the public mind far more than football-players in Great Britain or baseball-players in the United States—that I suppose the editor felt it was wise to pepper such important matter all over his pages. Newspapers of this character neither inform their readers accurately nor teach them to think. They miss altogether that educational influence which makes the Press valuable. Instead of weaning the nation from its childishness, they make it, by their sycophancy, their unreality, their crying of peace where there is no peace, more childish still.

XX

THE OIL RIVALRY MYTH

Out of every ten Americans who spoke to me about Mexico as I went through the United States, nine at least said : " I suppose the trouble is all due to these rival oil companies down there." That suggestion has been spread abroad, whether purposely or ignorantly, by newspapers and periodicals all over the country. How it originated I cannot find out. But of this I am satisfied—that there is no truth in it.

Usually the struggle is said to be between " Pearson's and the Standard Oil." It pleases the American business imagination to think of oil companies fomenting and financing revolutions. The idea of a fight for concessions between British and American capitalists lends to the war news an added thrill. As for evidence, that is never asked for. Nobody inquires whether the Standard Oil Companies have any large interests in the Mexican Oilfields. No one looks up the concessions that have been granted, to see if they are of any value. The vague general belief that " Standard Oil " supported Madero, and Lord Cowdray keeps General Huerta in funds, is based, so far as I have been able to discover, upon nothing stronger than loose gossip.

I have talked to the leading men in the oil industry, and I am convinced that they have none of them gone

out of their way to back up either side. I travelled on a certain journey with the manager of the American company which is supposed to be working for the Constitutionalists, and I knew (although he did not himself say anything of it) that he was nervous about being captured by them. That fact did not square with the supposition. Neither did the sum of money paid by a certain British Company to the rebel General Aguilar prove that they were supporting the revolution. It was extorted from them under threat of damage to the oil wells. They knew that the Huerta Government might object, as it objected to the payment by a copper company at Concepcion del Oro of several thousand pounds to the rebels of that district. They certainly had no desire to finance the Insurrecto cause. They paid because they were obliged to, and they felt, I have no doubt, equally aggrieved with the rebels for robbing them, and with General Huerta because he did not protect them from being robbed.

It is true that the leading men of the oil industry held, in common with almost every foreigner inhabiting Mexico, that the recognition of Huerta by the United States ten months ago would have been best for the peace of the country and for the benefit of all who have property or business there. But no one, I believe, entered into any compact with him. If Pearsons' were, as people in the United States say, " behind him," they would not have allowed him to impose upon the oil industry a heavy war tax. If he were, as is so often suggested, " in their pocket," he would not have permitted his Foreign Minister, Señor Moheno, to draw up a scheme (which no one takes seriously) for nationalizing the oilfields by

arbitrarily buying out the present owners of wells.

It is only since the beginning of this century that the wealth of Mexico in petroleum has been discovered. How vast it may be is not yet known. The country where oil is known to be workable extends for a distance of about 100 miles along the coast of the Mexican Gulf—from the south of Tuxpam to north of Tampico, probably a good deal further south and north than the points which bound the area already prospected. Stretching back from the Gulf, too, there are lands which yield richly, although, as yet, their development has hardly begun.

Of the Mexican wells which are actually producing in large quantities, there are two which give phenomenal results. One, belonging to the Huasteca Company, has been yielding 25,000 barrels a day for nearly four years. That is said to be a record; no other well, I have been told, has continued to produce so large a quantity so steadily and for so long. The Mexican Eagle Company have a well of even greater capacity. For two years it has been filling more than 26,000 barrels a day. It was opportunely discovered, soon after the first fortunate "strike" of the Eagle had unluckily caught fire and burnt itself out.

Many who are qualified by experience to give opinions, say that these oilfields will prove to be the richest the world has yet seen. They base their view upon the fact that vast amounts continue to be thrown up over such long periods, and that, instead of becoming weaker, the wells actually improve as time goes by. Already after very few years' work, the quantity produced is close upon 100,000 barrels a day, distributed in these proportions—

Huasteca Company	40,000
Eagle Company . . .	36,000
Mexican Petroleum Company .	3,000
East Coast Oil Company . .	4,000
Oilfields of Mexico . . .	500
Other Companies	15,000

At the rate of one peso (2*s.*) a barrel, that appears to represent a large return. But, when we consider that some £25,000,000 have been invested in these Mexican oilfields, and that since 1901 rather less than 70,000,000 barrels have been produced, the complexion of the matter changes. In twelve years the return to those who have invested has been only ten per cent—not ten per cent. a year, but ten per cent. for the whole period. So far only a very few of the companies interested have paid dividends, and, seeing that oil is always a risky investment, the conditions under which they work are none too favourable. The pioneers have to contend with many serious obstacles. All their material has to be imported, and it still takes from four to six months to get machinery from Europe or the United States. The camps are so situated that they must supply, not only provisions and stores of every kind, but their own transport (usually motor-launches) and their own postal service. The companies have to make roads, to build railways, to own or hire steamships, to lay pipe-lines. To drill a well in the United States costs about £1,600. In Mexico the cost is three times as great. A pump which can be bought for £1,000 in New York, costs £3,000 at Tampico or Tuxpam.

These are the centres of the oil industry. Both towns are river-ports, several miles from the sea.

Already Tampico has begun to " boom," and if ever £600,000 are spent upon giving Tuxpam a good harbour, that place, which has at present only some 12,000 inhabitants, scattered among the seven hills on which, after a famous precedent, it is built, would become an active competitor. It would then have two advantages over Tampico. It is nearer to the capital, and it has very rich country behind it. In the valley watered by its broad river flourish coffee, sugar, rubber, maize (of which three crops can be raised in the year), and vanilla. It has yielded large quantities of " chicle," which is made into the chewing-gum that is consumed in such enormous quantities in the United States and Canada. Now the trees from which the " chicle " exudes are being cut down, but in their stead are rising plantations of papaya, from which pepsin, the popular remedy for indigestion, is made. Strange are the forces of civilization which snatch from the wild places of the earth the sweetmeat which keeps the jaws of New York office-boys and typists in perpetual movement, and the drug that soothes stomachs worn out by the nerve strain and the excesses of our feverish modern life.

As for Tampico, it is, as I have said, Mexico's " boom city." It has " boomed " even through the civil war, which seems as great a miracle as if a tree should put forth leaf and blossom in a season of frost and snow. Yet if a tree were warmly rooted and fed below ground by a nourishing stream of fertilizer, even that miracle might be seen. So it is with Tampico. The stream that feeds it is a torrent of oil. Its roots are set deep in the development of the petroleum industry. We are entering now upon the Oil Age. The world cannot get enough of this valuable fuel which has lain hid

through all the ages until now. In every likely region holes are being punched through the earth's surface in the hope to find it. To-day the United States produces more oil than any other country. Russia comes second. When the Mexican oilfields are yielding to their full extent they will, it is believed, take Russia's place. Then Tampico will be a flourishing city, one of the great oil ports of the world.

A few years back it was a small town, unimportant, unheard of. It did a small trade in fruit : the valley in which it lies is well watered and fertile. But it was just a hot, dusty, slow-coach of a place ; and so, for all that Mexicans did or tried to do, it would have remained. British and American enterprise have already transformed it. The streets, where formerly a stranger was a curiosity, are bustling and thronged. White women and children, the women nearly all bare-headed, stroll up and down them quite at home. White men in white clothes (even in mid-winter) pass to and from their offices. English and German are heard at every turn. Tall office buildings are dwarfing the squat houses. A big hotel is a-building. Land is going up in price. Speculators are spying it out and mapping the probable directions in which the city will grow. Plans are being laid for big stores to open. All the elements of a " boom " are here.

Already there are pleasant homes of foreigners. A colony is being made some three miles out, where trees and gardens and shady verandahs will temper the ferocity of the sun. Sometimes the British and Americans who are building houses here wonder whether they will ever live in them. Over Tampico broods the shadow of a sword. It was attacked in December 1913. The assault then beaten off is sure to be renewed.

The outlook is cloudy and threatening. Near by the "bandidos" have been very busy, and no "ranchero" is safe. While I was at Tampico the able and active British Vice-Consul, Mr. H. W. Wilson, introduced me to an old American named McCrocklin. He owns a ranch near a place called Micos, between Tampico and St. Luis Potosi. He has worked hard on it for many years. His horses and cattle and his plantations are a credit to him. A few weeks ago a gang of "rebels" had ridden up to his house. They had demanded £100 (1,000 pesos). He said he had not so much money in his safe, and he showed them the inside of the safe to prove his word. All he could offer them was between £60 and £70. They said it was not enough. A rope was produced and a noose tied round his neck. Old McCrocklin said to his manager, an Englishman named Clark (I talked with them both), "Take witness I die like a man." They were marched out to a tree. The other end of the rope was thrown over a branch and jerked so that the old man could only touch the ground with his toes. Then he made a last appeal. "I am seventy-four," he said. "I can only live a few years longer. Let me finish my life naturally." After some discussion it was agreed that he should go free if he would agree to fetch £300 from his bank in Tampico. Accordingly he and Clark went to Tampico, and there the Consuls advised them not to go back. Mr. Wilson positively forbade Clark to take his wife into the Micos district again. Clark himself insisted upon returning to look after his employer's cattle. He only just escaped the same body of thieves, who worked off their disappointment by wrecking the farm, robbing the *peons*, and seizing their women.

That is an example of what would happen in Tampico itself if anarchy came. There are bad Indians and Mexicans in large numbers in and about the town. One night, when I left a bridge party, my host and two other men were going to sit up all night. They had heard alarming rumours of a rising among the "pelados." It was not their first vigil of the kind either. The natives have a lowering, savage look. That is partly why Tampico makes at first upon the visitor a detestable impression. Partly, also, it is because that new hotel is so badly needed. Those which exist are Mexican. I say no more. Happily, through the kindness of a "friend in need," I found comfortable sleeping quarters in the Club. Meals, even breakfast, have to be shared in primitive restaurants with millions of flies. The place reminded me of a mining camp. Even the rose bushes of the Plaza looked forlorn and out of keeping, blooming in a desert of dirty, unkempt roadways, sidewalks littered with rubbish, empty spaces thick in dust.

Yet the view from the higher part of the town is delightful. You look across wide sheets of water, green meadows, wooded hillsides, all glittering in the tropical sunshine, all quivering in a sheeny haze. Towards the sea, some few miles down the river, stretch miles of railway sidings and quays. On the hills there has broken out an eruption of oil-tanks, looking like gigantic mushrooms. In the river are many vessels, greedy for oil.

From the Pearson wells there are pipe-lines which carry the oil both to Tampico and to Tuxpam. At the latter place it can be poured into the holds of vessels nearly a mile from the shore. Three mooring berths have been built, and six pipes are led out to

them; through these the fluid rushes into the tanks at the rate of 1,000 barrels an hour. Some day vessels will call here, and at similar places, to "oil" just as they now "coal." The process will be quicker as well as cleaner. Our men-of-war can be made more comfortable for those who have to live in them, and this is important; for it is already become difficult to induce bluejackets to renew their engagements. This Pearson enterprise at Tuxpam is thus very interesting as a "pointer" towards the future development of shipping, naval and mercantile both.

Much of the Pearson oil goes also to Coatzacoalcos (Quatzaqualcus), another Gulf port. Not far from here is Minititlan, where the Eagle Company has a very large and well-equipped refinery. Another is being built between Tampico and the sea. For storing oil the Company has, near its famous Petrero well, a huge tank holding two and a half million barrels (about 350,000 tons). This at the time of my visit was being patrolled night and day by armed guards. Between blackmailing rebels and a Government which is screwing up taxation, the oil companies are hard pressed. The import in the production of oil has been raised from 5*d*. to 1*s*. 6*d*. a ton, and the stamp-tax has been doubled, making it now 2½*d*. a barrel. There is also a local tax of 1*s*. a ton to cover improvements in the Tampico river.

Further, the owners of oil lands, in their short-sighted greed, are inclined to join with the Federal and the State authorities in crippling the goose which lays the golden eggs. The usual payment to landowners is ten per cent., but there is a decided tendency to try and secure more. If the Mexican Government, instead of talking wildly about buying up the oilfields, for

which they would require a loan of fifty millions sterling, would put petroleum upon the same footing as metals, that would be welcomed as a really wise reform. This would mean a certain fixed royalty, part to go to the Government and part to the owner. Such a change would benefit the oil companies and the Mexican people both. It would also end the ridiculous rumours which attribute all Mexico's troubles to concession-hunters.

In a case of this kind the best plan is to ask each concern what it believes its rival has been doing. In Mexico the two chief oil companies are the Eagle and the Waters-Pierce. The latter was once connected with Standard Oil, but the tie which bound them has been severed, and they have been for some time on bad terms. So much for the Standard Oil myth! I inquired of the Eagle Company whether they believed the story of the Waters-Pierce people being committed to the party of so-called "reform." I asked the manager of the Waters-Pierce if he thought the Pearson interests had "supported" General Huerta. In each case the answer was an emphatic "No."

There is not a jot or tittle of proof that any oil company ever gave money to either side. A Committee of the United States Senate inquired into the vague charges murmured about and reported that they could discover nothing but hearsay evidence. The most persistent rumour alleges that Madero received a large sum of money from the Waters-Pierce Company, which was trying to drive Pearson's out of Mexico. I know, too, that old President Diaz said on his way to Europe that it was an "oil revolution" which had driven him out. But even if Madero was "nobbled" in this way, I do not believe that any oil company has supported

either side since then. Nor is there any reason why they should have done so. Examine the Eagle " concession," and what does it amount to? It gives no monopoly, but grants freedom from all taxation except the stamp tax. Yet the Eagle Company are paying at exactly the same rate as every one else. The concession also gives leave to exploit Government lands in four States: but so far the production of the Eagle Company is obtained entirely from lands which it either leases or owns. It would be scarcely worth while to finance either a Government or a revolution for the sake of a " concession " like that.

XXI

THE ISTHMUS OF TEHUANTEPEC

THERE is one town in Mexico which would repay a visit from the advocates of " Votes for Women." It is called Tehuantepec and lies on the isthmus of that name.

Here dwells a race of Indians among whom the women are, both in physique and in intelligence, vastly superior to the men. All the business is in the capable hands of the superbly-built, handsome matrons of the tribe. They will not allow a man to sell anything in the market-place. Even the meat-stalls are in charge of women, who carve up carcasses and slap the " prime cuts " on the counter with all the jovial assurance of the male butcher. If you buy coffee or bananas off a Tehuana plantation it is with a woman that you will treat, and she will drive a shrewd bargain with you.

As soon as you come into the district you find the women far more noticeable than the men. The latter are small and insignificant. They seem to have nothing to do but smoke cigarettes. The women do that too, but they go about with an air of being occupied. They walk with an exquisite pictorial grace, and always as if they were going somewhere on important business. They are not very dark Indians, and their features are refined as well as intelligent, so

much so that one can easily imagine such faces on European women of a high class. Of no other Indians can that be said.

I travelled on the Tehuantepec Railway (built by Lord Cowdray's firm between the Atlantic and the Pacific) with several of very striking appearance. One oldish woman with grey hair and a resolute jaw-line might have passed easily for a political hostess in London, the sort of political hostess who pushes a weak husband into the Cabinet by sheer force of determination. She wore, as most of them do, a short red and black jacket of the Zouave type. Her skirt was simply a sheet of red cotton with a thin white line in it, draped tightly round her and kept up by having its end tucked in at the waist. Her feet were innocent of boots or shoes, but, on the other hand, her hair was beautifully braided. The usual mode of hairdressing is to carry a braid all round the head so as to display its shape. And nearly all theTehuantepec women put flowers in their hair. At first the contrast between heads so neat, so elaborate even, and the sketchy costume below is disconcerting. It is rather as if a man should wear a top hat and a bathing suit.

However, in such heat as scorches down upon the isthmus that combination might not be amiss. One soon realizes that the head needs protection and the body as much freedom as possible. Many women wear simply a loose cotton tunic and a skirt of the kind I have described, with a good deal of light brown waist showing in between the two. To this on Sundays they add incongruously a very large frilled and "gauffered" linen and lace cap, something like the caps which Dutch women wear in the islands of the

Zuyder Zee, only more decorative, and capable of being worn in a dozen different ways.

In the pillared market hall, open at the sides, they sit and chatter gaily in sweet-toned voices all day long. Their wares, mostly fruit or vegetables or grains, are spread out before them in painted bowls. Around them play their naked children, all mixed up with dogs and pigs. I was astonished at first to see children of between two and three years old being " nursed," but this is quite usual. Sometimes the little creatures are suckled till they are four years old. By that time they have learned to smoke, and they say down here it is not uncommon for a child to leave its mother's breast and immediately light an " after-dinner " cigar ! I cannot say that I ever saw this myself.

Like certain other tribes of Indians, these people keep themselves very clean. They are as particular about their daily bath as a New Yorker. One evening I saw numbers of them in the river, rolling over and over in their enjoyment of the cool water. It had been a sweltering day and I envied them. Although the sun had dropped behind the mountains, leaving them in deep purply-grey shadow, the air was still hot. Any exertion made one instantly sticky. Yet here the heat is dry and therefore more supportable than that of the Atlantic side of the isthmus, where heavy rains produce a tropical jungle.

At first, when the train plunges into this, the greenness and shadiness of it are refreshing. The luxuriance of the growth pleases the eye. The flash and squawk of parrakeets; the flutter of blue butterflies nine inches across; the vivid blossoms, pink and crimson and scarlet, mauve and purple and blue; the trails of

creeper which hang down and the muffling giant convolvulus which climbs up to smother all it can, are all new and attractive. But gradually Nature in this prolific mood repels one. Sinister suggestions of danger and death creep into the mind.

At Salina Cruz, the port which Lord Cowdray created on the Pacific, I felt the same distrust. The ocean was deliciously blue, reflecting a cloudless sky. The waves broke on a clean, sandy beach with a most inviting translucence. But a voice in my ears said, " Sharks," and when I heard of hurricanes from the north which blow for a month at a time, when I was told casually that earthquakes happen " on an average once a week," when I felt the burning heat of the December sun, I thanked Heaven for our grey English seas and skies. " In medio tutissimus ibis " is truer of climates than of anything else.

One of the " sights " of Salina Cruz is the pelicans fishing in the harbour. They flop on to the water with ungainly spread of their great wings, but their huge beaks generally pierce the fish they have aimed at. Often seagulls hover round them, trying to steal their prey. They make a dart for the fish as soon as the pelican brings it up. He may have to keep it under water for a long time to escape their thieving grasp. I shall always remember Salina Cruz by those pelicans and by the scent of an armful of tuberoses which a woman brought into the train at dusk. That strong, heady perfume seemed to symbolize the masterful women of Tehuantepec. It brings to memory their noble brows, their deep-set eyes, their perfect contours unconfined by corsets, their swaying, rhythmical step.

I shall remember, too, a " book-agent " I met there, an American of course. He was selling a book on the steam-engine, and he surprised me by saying that the native railway-workers were buying it " like hot cakes." The price of it was ten pesos, a sovereign. He had sold so many that he had to telegraph for a fresh supply to be sent. " Then they are really anxious to learn, these Indians? " I asked him. " Some of them are," he said, " and the rest want the book so as not to be out of the hunt." He knew the Mexican Indian pretty well, I fancy, for he had made arrangements to have the payment for the book deducted from their wages. Without that precaution he might in many cases have whistled for his money. The railway managers know them too. All who work for the railway are paid what is due to them every night, so that they may not be tempted by receiving a week's money in one sum, for them a large sum, to gamble or drink it away.

The Tehuana men can work well, if they are well handled. Ten miles from Salina Cruz on the journey from Puerto Mexico (also known as Coatzacoalcos), the Atlantic terminus of the line, our engine broke an axle. A break-down gang was summoned and under the guidance of two very capable Americans they did a very heavy piece of work cleverly and quickly. I call them Tehuanas, but in fact few of the males in this part are of true Tehuana stock. That is the explanation of the difference between them and the women. The Tehuana men were nearly all killed off in the guerrilla warfare which they kept up for many years against the Government. They were a cruel race, given to hideous barbarities. When

they captured the brother of Porfirio Diaz they cut off the soles of his feet and forced him to walk through cactus. It were hard to imagine a more devilish torture.

Yet the cruelty was not all on their part. Even now appalling pains are inflicted—in the name of justice. A complaint was made recently that some rolls of wire-netting had been stolen, and a certain man was named as having been probably concerned with others in stealing it. In order to induce him to confess and betray his fellow-thieves he was first put against a wall and threatened with shooting; then a rope was tied round the most tender part of his body. And, the other end being thrown over the branch of a tree, he was hauled up, suffering agony of which the very thought sickens one. The man who lodged the complaint was horrified. He was a Mexican, but he had been at school and college in the United States.

In the forests of the Isthmus there is, as in all the hot country States of Mexico, an inexhaustible wealth of timber, especially of the finer woods, mahogany, rosewood, and others used for furniture and dye-making. In one lumber property, not far from the railroad, cutting could go on at the rate of 100,000 feet a day for sixty years. The Pan-American line which runs from Gamboa through the State of Chiapas to the Guatemalan frontier taps a rich forest region, and also a country where banana and pineapple plantations are yielding marvellous crops. North of this line there is an immense territory waiting to be opened up. Oil is said to be here as well as every tropical product. As yet there are no railways between the Tehuantepec line and the State of Yucatan.

The Yucatecans have grown rich of late by growing henequen or sisal hemp, a plant of the cactus tribe which is used for the manufacture of ships' cables and "binder twine," that is, the twine with which the harvesting machines bind the sheaves as they are reaped. Grown on a large scale, this sisal grass can be turned into the greeny-yellow thread which the rope and twine makers need at a cost of 14*s*. per hundred kilograms. The selling price of that quantity is over 50*s*. The number of bales exported yearly has risen from 97,000 (worth £175,000) in 1880 to 750,000, worth two and a half million pounds. A more ingenious method of pulping the hemp might result in the by-production of alcohol and paper. But the Yucatecans are not famous for energy or enterprise—except in getting the most work out of the unfortunate Maya Indians, whom they have enslaved, at the smallest possible cost.

Another railway which branches off the Tehuantepec line is the Vera Cruz and Isthmus. This runs through a land of moist, enervating heat where rolling meadows of vast extent alternate with stretches of jungle. Here numbers of Americans had settled, in spite of the climate, to grow sugar-cane and bananas. Many of these settlers have fled, terrified by stories of murder and outrage. Only six miles from the Isthmus railway a farmer named Wood was found tied up to a tree, his hands above his head and his body slit open. Another American named Meyer, farming near the Pan-American line, was also killed, his hands being first cut off. As many as a hundred American farmers on the Isthmus have abandoned their holdings, and gone back penniless to the United States. Yet there

has been no serious revolutionary trouble in this district. Such crimes are committed by persons who have got out of hand by reason of the weakening of authority and the lawless spirit which is rampant again after being prisoned for thirty years.

XXII

"MEXICAN RAILS"

MEXICO owes her railways, as she owes almost everything except her magnificent climate and rich soil, to foreign enterprise. Had she been left to herself, the riches would not have been drawn from the soil, railways would not have been required. Thanks to British and American capital, she has already a system which makes communication easy between all principal points, and as soon as order triumphs over the Mexicans' inborn preference for turmoil, foreign companies are ready to extend it. Regions rich in oil, in minerals, in timber, in tropical products, will be opened up. The wealth of the country will increase. Its resources will begin to be worked systematically, instead of being merely picked at, as they have been up to now.

I have been warned sometimes against believing that Mexico is a rich country. One man (brother to a prominent Scottish M.P.), who has lived there for nineteen years, assured me that it only seemed to be rich "because 2 per cent. of the population were living on the other 98 per cent.," and because the latter were in a state resembling slavery. "If they ever got their fair share," he said, "that would scarcely be enough to go round." But that, I think, was a view coloured by indignation against the few who own huge estates and by sympathy for the many who—

" tread life's stage
With weary feet and scantest wage,
And ne'er a leaf for laurel."

As an antidote to this, reflect that Mexico can bring forth every kind of crop, every kind of fruit. Think of her immense areas suitable for cattle-raising, and of further vast spaces which only await irrigation to become fertile. Consider that her gold and silver and copper production could probably be doubled, and that her oilfields have only been exploited for a few years. Only let the Big Stick of firm government be used energetically, only let the country become safe again to live in, and fortune will return with both hands full. Then will begin a new period of railway development. The existing lines will recover their prosperity. Many new ones will be laid.

Travelling by rail in Mexico may be a perpetual entertainment or it may be torture. It must be torture to people who dislike (1) noise, (2) tobacco smoke, (3) dust, (4) heat, (5) the company of people who do not belong to their own particular class and caste. If you are one of those who only consent to travel by train on condition of being allowed to shut yourself up by yourself in a first-class English compartment or in a Pullman " drawing-room," then you had better keep away from Mexico, or if you insist on going there, only take trains which carry Pullman coaches along with them.

If, on the other hand, the human comedy delights you, if you can cheerfully bear a little discomfort for the sake of varied and picturesque experiences, come with me and we will take a trip, not in a fast train upon one of the great highways (where we should travel by Pullman), but over a line where stoppages

are frequent and local passenger traffic heavy, where we can see all classes of travelling Mexicans, from the patriarchal "hacendado," or landowner, down to the "peons" who have scraped together just enough to enjoy what is, next to getting drunk, their favourite diversion, a ride in the "Ferrocarril."

To-day there is a "fiesta" at a town some thirty miles away. A famous relic is to be exposed. There will be a fair, with gambling booths. Vile liquor will be sold cheaply. The church will be suffocating at mass time, and afterwards the day will be one long carouse. That is why, half-an-hour before the train is due to start, the ticket office is a seething, sweltering jam of men and women, all chattering, all pushing, all frantically afraid of being left behind.

This is a common scene at Mexican railway stations. We ought to have taken our tickets beforehand. Never mind; we can pay in the train if it comes to the worst. Meanwhile there is plenty to look at. As the Indians come out with their tickets, counting their change several times over with puzzled lines across their brown foreheads, you can see that they are of many types. There is a slant-eyed Mongol, there a high-cheek-boned North American, there an Aztec face. You see, too, that whenever their costume exceeds bare coverings (which is not often) their taste runs to finery. They are of all ages. Old people like that couple over there: grandfather wears a huge grey sugarloaf hat and big iron-rimmed spectacles; granny holds a glistening gaily coloured shield over her bare head to keep off the sun. Men in the prime of life with silver buttons and tassels on their tight breeches of Jodhpur cut. Buxom women, with brown babies slung on their backs or placidly taking breakfast as

Nature meant them to. Girls, slim or plump, with large, liquid eyes and the supple, swimming carriage of bodies which have never known constraint. Children in swarms, solemn little morsels, with infinitely attractive features and grubby, warm palms that will soon rest in yours confidingly, if you take the trouble to make friends.

Pattering and clattering and chattering, the brown folk pack themselves into the second-class (there are only two classes)—long, airy coaches with seats down each side and a bench, on which passengers sit back to back, in the middle. The first-class are like unto them except that they have a gangway down the middle with double seats on either side of it, covered either with leather or with rush-work for the sake of coolness, and with movable backs. If the train were not full we could secure a section, that is, two seats facing each other, to ourselves, but this is impossible to-day. The first thing that we notice as we climb into the already crowded carriage is the strong smell of soap. To that you must grow accustomed in Mexico. Men and women there both like strong scents. The ladies use a powder which stands out on their faces like frozen snow on the side of a house and which wafts a penetrating perfume. I have heard an American woman say that, after being kissed by any of her Mexican friends, she is always in fear of lead poisoning!

Recovering from this we have our attention attracted by the oddity of the luggage they have with them. They carry innumerable packages, which look as if they were on the point of coming undone. One woman has a pailful of clothes, another carries, in addition to her parcels, a birdcage filled with boots, a string of pomegranates, and a large earthenware jar. The

pomegranates have been acquired on the journey. The Mexican when he travels must be for ever buying. He will buy fruit, flowers, sweetmeats of positively lethal appearance, toys, walking-sticks, sugar-cane, opals, tortoises, drinks of pulque, cheeses, crabs, fish "just out of the sea." At a little place called Boca del Rio, in the State of Vera Cruz, a man tried to sell me a small live pig! That reminded me of a fellow-traveller I once had in the Caucasus, who bought at a station near Tiflis a live lamb.

Selling at the Mexican railway stations is a lucrative occupation for thousands of women and girls. "Tamales, tamalitos," is a cry constantly heard; if you are bold you will certainly buy, once at any rate, some of these "savoury messes" of meat and Indian corn and hot seasoning of green or red peppers, which are handed up to the window in a maize-stalk wrapping. It is never safe to walk along under the windows of a train, since spitting is a national habit. At stations where eatables are sold it is especially undesirable. You are more than likely to be hit by a bone or a tamale wrapper cast out by some careless diner. The dogs know this; there are always troops of skinny, furtive curs foraging about in the dust in hope of a meal.

Even between the stations the childlike desire of the passengers to be spending their money is catered for. The "newsagent" in the train sells not only magazines and books, but oranges, sweets, bananas, bottled beer and sweet pink lemonade. I have actually seen men buy pear drops at eight o'clock in the morning. Should there be nothing new to buy, the passengers look out for anything they can snap up along the line. I remember a stop between stations

in Sonora being enlivened by a raid upon a quince orchard. We all got over a wire and picked as many as we wanted. Some adventurers went further afield and found peaches, but they were like cobble-stones. I wonder if the owner of the quinces ever knew.

Mexican trains start and stop very much less violently than trains in the United States and Canada. The engine-drivers of these latter countries show their independent spirit and their contempt for the passengers by a series of hideous jolts and jerks at every halt and every renewal of the journey. Another difference which men appreciate is that tobacco may be smoked in the carriages and not only in a lavatory along with glistening tin basins. Many American trains do not provide accommodation for smokers at all, and very often they sternly refuse to let you drink a glass of beer or wine with your meal in the dining-car or in railway restaurants. Mexicans would not submit to any such curtailment of personal liberty. In our train there is no dining-car, but we have twenty minutes allowed us to take our lunch at a "meal station." In the restaurant all is ready. We are served with excellent soup, omelettes, dishes of stewed mutton and grilled steak, sweet potatoes and salad, a sugary cake, oranges, and coffee, all for two shillings. The Indians eat at little tables set close alongside the train for shade—and a fine subject this would make for a painter who delighted in colour and strong sunlight.

Meanwhile our engine is coaling by means of a basket, which one man fills and then upsets into the tender, rather a lengthy process, which stretches our twenty minutes to forty. The inhabitants of the place are, no doubt, grateful. The daily passing of the train is their one excitement. They stand or

lean against walls, perfectly still, and stare, such of them as have nothing to sell, without any expression whatever. You wonder what they are thinking about? It is highly improbable that they are thinking at all.

As the day wears on the dust becomes a burden hard to bear. Outside the landscape sizzles in the heat. All the windows are open. The carriage is filled with a thick golden haze. Dust seems to be regarded by these people as a normal element to breathe in. I envy the old women who cover themselves up with their black veils. I feel particularly sorry for the nurse, with long tails of glistening hair down her back and a chequered "rebozo," or shawl, which makes her look like Highland Mary. To attend to a squally baby under such conditions must be torture.

Yet when sunset streaks the sky with gold and crimson one forgets every discomfort. After the day's heat comes a delicious coolness. We buy a cake each of excellent bread and stay our hunger. The desire for tea is cheated by oranges bursting with sweet juice. A gentle wind fans us. The sticky feeling which has oppressed us all afternoon ceases. I shall never forget coming suddenly to the sea at the end of such a day. The sound of the waves was sweetest music. The measureless blue and the palms waving on the beach filled my soul with content. Then the blue velvet cloak of night was drawn around us, and the fireflies flecked it with gold spangles, and the moon came up, a sickle of bright glory. Those are the hours which touch travel upon Mexico's 16,000 miles of railway with an ineffable, unforgettable joy.

Of these 16,000 miles the National Railways own about half. The nationalization was planned and very skilfully put through by Señor Limantour, the

French Finance Minister, who was to have been Don Porfirio's successor. Of the £46,000,000 of stock the Mexican Government owns just over half, 50·3 to be exact, against 49·7 in private hands. That gives the Government control of voting power; it also guarantees the Four per Cent. General Mortgage Bonds. But it does not work the National Railways as a branch of Government. The foreign bankers who provided the money for Señor Limantour's operation made it a condition that this should not be attempted. They knew the Mexican character with its ability " to resist everything except temptation," its unfitness to manage anything upon progressive lines. Consequently the direction remained in American hands. At first the train-crews were also American. That has now been changed. Engine-drivers, firemen, conductors, auditors (ticket examiners) and brakemen are, on the National lines, almost all Mexican, and they have been drilled into doing their work pretty well. The American railwaymen hastened their own dismissal. It is commonly said that many conductors and auditors made fortunes by dishonest dealing. Between Guanajuato and the capital no regular travellers used tickets. They tipped the conductors instead !

There is no dishonesty now, although the Mexicans are paid less than the Americans used to be. They are too carefully watched. At first the native servants of the road received from one to three shillings a day. Now their pay ranges from two to ten and even twelve shillings. Railway employment has largely helped to create that middle class which is the real disturber in Mexico.

The lines which were merged into the Nationa,

Railways were: (*a*) the old National, (*b*) the old Mexican Central, (*c*) the Mexican International. Afterwards the Pan-American and the Vera Cruz-to-Isthmus Companies were bought out, while the Interoceanic line was leased. The important systems outside the National are—

1. The Mexican Railway built with British capital in 1873 and known for many years as "The Queen's Own"; this runs from the capital to Vera Cruz, a journey of about eleven hours, which can be made comfortably in a sleeping-car at night, but which it is well worth making at least once in the daytime for the sake of the wonderful views when the line drops from the Tierra Fria to the Tierra Templada, and again from this semi-tropical zone to the "hot land" of the Gulf Coast (see Chapter XV).

2. The Southern Pacific of Mexico, closely connected with the United States Southern Pacific. This begins at Nogales, on the frontier of Sonora, runs through Hermosillo to Guaymas (264 miles), and thence to Tepic (667 miles). From Tepic it is to be continued to Orendain, whence it will run over the National line to Guadalajara. Possibly it may be extended in time to Mexico City, by way of Lake Chapala.

3. The Mexican North-Western, one of the F. S. Pearson interests (not to be confused with Lord Cowdray's firm), starts from El Paso (Texas), or, rather, from Juarez, which is just across the Rio Grande, and runs as far as the city of Chihuahua, with ramifications into mining and timber districts. This company, with its 472 miles of track, has suffered proportionately more than any other from the revolutions of the last three years (see Chapter III).

4. The Isthmus of Tehuantepec Railway, built by

Lord Cowdray for the Mexican Government and leased to him for operation upon a profit-sharing basis. At each end a new port has been created. Salina Cruz on the Pacific is a marvel of perfectly-equipped basins, quays, and warehouses where a few years ago was only foam-flecked sand. At Coatzacoalcos, on the Gulf of Mexico, there is a river, forming a natural harbour; here also machinery has been installed which shifts cargo with the utmost speed. This railway owns more rolling stock to the mile than any other. Over its 184 miles run 1,900 cars. Its passenger traffic is small, but a large trade in all kinds of merchandise is carried on by means of it between Europe, the Atlantic seaboard, the Pacific coast of the United States and Canada, Honolulu, Hawaii, and the Far East. Enormous quantities of sugar are brought from Hawaii, and Salina Cruz holds the record for rapidity in unloading this cargo, 7,500 tons, in nineteen hours. Speed is, of course, more necessary here than in most ports. No time must be lost in transhipment. In eleven days, not long ago, 12,500 tons of sugar were unloaded from a ship, and 8,500 tons of general merchandise were put into her. A German skipper at Coatzacoalcos told me they unloaded there more quickly than at Havre. Even when the Panama Canal is opened the Tehuantepec route will still be used; it will in all probability be used more than it is now. The trade between east and west will increase, and this means of dispatch will have advantages over Panama in that the Isthmus is more conveniently placed than the Canal for ocean traffic, and that the charges across the former are not so high as the Canal tolls will be (see also Chapter XXI).

The most interesting of the new railways already

planned and authorized are the coast lines which will run from Tampico north to Matamoros and south to Tuxpam and Vera Cruz. The interest of these is heightened by the fact that they pass through the oil regions, which are going to hold the world's attention for a great many years to come. There will also be a short line from Tampico to Mexico City, and possibly one from Tuxpam as well. A still shorter line, but one with excellent prospects, is the Tampico-Panuco, which will connect up a promising oil district with the oil capital. These, with the exception of the last mentioned, will be built by the National Lines. British capital is to construct a railway starting from Santa Lucrecia (where the Vera Cruz and Isthmus joins the Tehuantepec Line), running through the State of Tabasco and Campeche, tapping some of the richest tropical country in the world, and connecting up with the railway system of Yucatan. From the Pacific harbour of Acapulco to Sihuatanejo further west another line is planned, and the idea is to connect this with Balsas, the terminus of a line which runs due south from Mexico City through that most delightful of pleasure towns, Cuernavaca.

The standard of railway management in Mexico is high. With civil war going on, one cannot expect either the same comfort or the same punctuality as one would demand in times of peace. But considering that the National Lines have suffered actual damage to the value of £2,500,000, and that their services have constantly to be suspended because the track has been dynamited or bridges burned away, every one connected with them, from Mr. E. N. Brown and Mr. Hudson (president and vice-president) downwards, deserves credit for the plucky fight that has been

made to give any service at all. Added to other difficulties has been that of keeping the engines supplied with fuel. The Mexican railways use oil instead of coal, which makes travelling infinitely more pleasant. There is no dirt from the locomotive, no grits to torture the eyes, no foul smoke, no smell. Oil is cheaper, too, which perhaps helps to account for the lowness of fares. First-class works out at 1¼*d.* a mile, second-class at ⅜*d.* The bulk of the second-class passengers are *peons*, who are as fond of travelling by train as the natives of India. They will often take their whole family quite a long distance and then walk back. Religious *fiestas* give them plenty of excuses for excursions. The railways make £30,000 a year out of the December pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, near the capital.

The success of the Mexican National Railways is not an argument in favour of nationalization, for they are worked by a private company still. But it is worth while noting that the Mexican Railway Laws are considered by experts to be "almost perfect." Señor Limantour is not reputed to have been a politician of the highest wisdom, but he certainly had a conception of government as a science. He had a complete study made of the railway legislation of various countries before deciding what to do. In 1900 the Mexican Congress passed the law which was the result of such study, and this has served usefully ever since. The Railway Commission appointed as adviser to the Ministry of Communications works in perfect harmony with the managers. The latter cannot get quite all they want, but they admit that the Commissioners are always reasonable. Nine in number, they are appointed in this way: five by the Government,

two by the railways, one by the Boards of Trade (Chambers of Commerce), and one by the agricultural societies. Thus all interests are considered, and when the Mexicans cease from behaving like wild animals, the railways will be the chief agent in the development of their country along the most promising lines.

Every one knows how much the Canadian Pacific Railway did for the Dominion. It is quite likely that the railways of Mexico may do as much for her. Here is a land which could support sixty instead of sixteen millions of people. Here are 500,000 square miles ready to bring forth their increase as soon as they are tilled. The best hope of improving the *peon* is by giving him an example of industry and energy and common sense. The railways can help to do this by bringing in settlers of more vigorous blood. They are depressed at present, but they will some day be as valuable as any railways in the world.

XXIII

THE CHARACTER OF THE MEXICAN

I. The Indian

There is one key, and one only, to an understanding of the Mexican Indian. That key is to realize that understand him fully one never can. This is not a paradox. It is a plain statement of fact. To Europeans (of course I include Americans in that term) the Mexican mind is a mystery; just as much a mystery as the Chinese mind. All Asiatics are a puzzle to us. They do not reason as we do. Their standards are different. Their minds are divided into compartments, it appears. Whether the Indians who peopled Mexico before the Spaniards came were descended from Asiatic immigrants, or whether Asia was invaded in the twilight of the world by races from the American continent, no one can yet tell. But clearly the Mexicans are "Asiatic" in the sense that they and the peoples of Asia had common ancestry.

One might be forced to this conclusion by the prevalence in Mexico of the Chinese and Japanese and Burmese types of face. When I saw the Twenty-ninth Regiment, the most trusted of all, on parade in Mexico City, I cried out—and a British officer who was with me felt at the same instant the same impulse of speech—"They might be Japanese." Beetle-browed, with bright eyes set in expressionless faces;

stocky, short of stature, firmly set upon their feet, they proclaimed an unmistakable relationship. It is not often that one sees so many of the same type together, but in almost all parts of the country one notices frequently *peons* who might be Orientals. A Tehuantepec woman smoking a cigar could pass easily for "the Burmese girl a-sitting" on the road to Mandalay. Watch labourers in linen drawers trotting about their tasks with a sullen alacrity: you could fancy yourself in China or Japan. Nor is it only among the lower class that Oriental features are common. General Huerta, himself a pure Indian, might, if he were dressed in Mandarin's robes, be mistaken for a genuine wearer of the Yellow Jacket.

And this cousinship with the Far East, which is suggested by facial resemblance, becomes doubly certain when Mexican mental characteristics are studied. Those who have been longest in the country are those who say they know the people least. They are a people full of contradictions. For example, nearly every Briton or American in Mexico says flatly that all Mexicans are dishonest. "Wouldn't trust any of them. Crooked all the time." Yet I have found that nearly every Briton and American has found one Mexican at least whom he can trust implicitly. In offices, on ranches, on farms, there are natives to whom everything is confided, and most of them are faithful to their charge. A ranchero from Texas who had been assuring me that every Mexican was a born liar and thief, remarked casually later on that, when he went away, he put everything in charge of "old Trinidad," who looked, after his interests as well as he could himself. An Englishman who solemnly warned me against ever trusting a Mexican,

pointed out to me next day a young man in his employment, in whose keeping, he said, he would gladly and confidently leave all he possessed in the world.

These trusted Mexicans are generally pure Indians. They may not be able to write or read. They may keep their master's accounts by tying knots in a piece of string. They may be both ignorant and incurious of all that lies beyond the range of their daily experience. But, partly because they are attached to their masters, partly because they believe that any delinquency is certain to be found out by "white magic," they prove themselves good and faithful servants. "Leave their land and their women alone, treat them decently and above all justly, keep drink away from them, don't excite them by putting into their heads ideas for which they are not ready, then the Indians are as good creatures as you will find anywhere." That is what a man told me who has lived among them and employed them for a great many years.

Drink is their curse. Pulque, mescal, a fiery spirit distilled from a cactus root; aguardiente, the brandy that burns; tekhuila (tekeela), which is fermented pulque—men and women alike are eager for all these poisons. They madden themselves also with a drug called marihuana. This has strange and terrible effects. It appears to make those who swallow it do whatever is uppermost in their thoughts. At El Paso a *peon* came across the International Bridge firing a rifle at all and sundry. Much talk against the Americans and a dose of marihuana had decided him to invade the United States by himself. The bridge-keeper quickly put a bullet into the poor wretch.

Like all primitive races the Indians lack self-control in gambling as well as in the use of intoxicants. At

every *fiesta* crowds gather round games of chance at which the " bank " is bound to win. I made a round of gambling saloons in Guadalajara one night. It seemed impossible that any people could consent so cheerfully to be fleeced. One green table had on its partitions pictures of animals instead of numbers. When the stakes had been placed, the proprietor looked to see which animal had been most lightly backed, fired with an air-gun at one of a set of little doors in a cupboard at the end of the room, and the animal he wanted came out ! Small wonder that such an ingenious folk are peculiarly susceptible to the influence of inflated language. They are in all essentials children, subject to the most sudden changes, capricious, unstable, very easily moved.

Yet pleasant children, too ! In their native condition they are courteous, fond of animals, fond of flowers. A smile goes further in Mexico than in any country I know. They respond quickly to kindness, even to common politeness. In the street one day I picked up a hammer which had been dropped by two masons working inside a window a little way from the ground. They overwhelmed me with the most gracious smiles and expressions of thanks. Yet those same men would have cheerfully killed me, and even tortured me in the most hideous fashion, if an anti-foreign riot had started, as many thought it would at that time.

In the same way, though they like petting animals, they do not look after them. Dogs and cats have to pick up their own living, and are most of them miserably thin. An acquaintance of mine in a small town had six puppies on his hands, and told an Indian woman they were to be drowned. She was genuinely grieved

and asked if he would give them to her. "What, all?" "Yes, all," though she had two dogs already. He sent the puppies to her. Five died from sheer neglect. Another man complained to me that his Indian neighbour's mules, which were never fed, ate his family's washing. It appears to be the general belief in Mexico that mules can exist on a diet of rocks and tin cans.

Nor is it only neglect from which animals suffer. They are often horribly ill-treated, not from cruelty, but from lack of sympathetic imagination. Mexicans are not disgusted by the sight of the gored horses in bull-fighting, their national pastime. Cock-fighting is practised openly. They work horses and donkeys with the most horrible sores upon them. The way they carry fowls and animals to market is often revolting. Yet, if they were rated for inhumanity, they would be astonished and aggrieved.

The same limitation of mental grasp is betrayed by their having very little sense of time or distance, and by their inattention to anything which does not personally concern them. I asked a country boy who was guiding me the names of several birds we saw. He could not tell me one of them. At another place a dam was being built; a *peon* living close by knew nothing whatever about it. As in all such cases, his answer was a humble "How could I know, señor?" Yet he knew a great deal about the habits of the wild-fowl we were after. Like animals, he and his kind are often quick and clever over the processes which win them their food.

Like animals too, they only do work enough to supply their simplest needs. They are paid very little, that is true. But they need not be pitied on that score. Their dwellings are of "adobe" (mud)

brick, or of bamboo, mere huts about fourteen feet by twelve; the roof covered with wooden shingles or roughly rush-thatched; the floor of earth. Their possessions are a stove, a few pots and pans, a pestle and mortar, a rolling-pin and a platter for the making of *tortillas*. They need little money for life in these conditions, and few of them show any desire for change. If they are paid more, they work less. The only way to get more out of them is to multiply their needs, induce them to save up for gramophones and sewing-machines, set the fashion among them of wearing clothes, boots, watches; persuade them to sleep in beds, sit on chairs, eat off plates and live in houses instead of " pigging it " in hovels. That is the process glibly called civilization : no doubt it will be applied in course of years.

Whether it will improve the Indian is another question. Many who know him think it will be his ruin. At present many tribes command respect by their fine physique and noble bearing. The Aztecs of the Valley of Mexico, ground down into national degradation by Spanish tyranny, have a shrinking air of melancholy remembrance. But that is exceptional. Most of the Indians on their own *tierras*, to which they are deeply attached, and which, however far they wander, draw them back from time to time, are people in whom there is much to like and to admire.

Transplant them into towns, give them the idea that they are " as good as any one else," inflame them with abuse of the rich or the foreigner, smear a little miscalled " education " upon them, and they quickly deteriorate. Though their religion is little different from the idolatry which their ancestors practised, it must have some restraining, stimulating effect. See

them kneeling with widely outstretched arms before the Blessed Sacrament, or toiling on their knees up a stony steep to a place of pilgrimage, and it is impossible to doubt this. Take religion away, which "education," as a rule, effectually does, and supply nothing in its place; the result can be foreseen.

A few raise themselves in the scale of labour and to a higher standard of living. They are often clever artisans, mechanics, masons, carpenters, electricians, and so on. Their children wear shoes and stockings, may be sent to some third-rate school in the United States, grow up into the middle class. But of the mass of town Indians it may be said that their last state is worse in every way than that from which they were taken. It is no use supposing that Indians can be developed *en masse* into Europeans by being "educated"; still less can they be expected for many years to come either to understand or to make use of a constitution on European lines.

II. The Mexican Proper

Between the mass of Indian *peons* in Mexico and the few aristocrats who still claim pure Spanish descent come the half-castes. If at this time of day any persuasion were needed, they would persuade one that the mingling of races is a crime. They have inherited the vices of both Spaniard and Indian without any of their virtues. They have neither the Spaniard's dignity nor the Indian's simplicity. They are proud without having anything to be proud of; punctilious over trifles, but casual in matters of moment; cowards both physical and moral, in spite of their braggadocio; mean and crafty and "crooked" beyond belief. "A

Mexican would always rather earn fifty cents by a trick than a dollar by honest work." That sums them up not unfairly.

They practise fraud in the smallest as well as in the largest affairs. Honest Ministers and Government officials are exceptional. At Vera Cruz lately a small steamer was purchased for military use. The price was 55,000 pesos (£5,500). The bill was made out for more than twice as much. A certain foreigner in Mexico City had a claim against the Government for £2,800. He could not get paid. At last he offered to give £1,000 of it to a very high official. He received his money at once. Such dishonesty runs all through, down to the railway passengers, who travel without tickets and tell pitiful stories to kind-hearted conductors, while they have money in their pockets all the time.

Another trick is to offer a conductor a large note for a small fare, and when he cannot change it to say airily, "Next time." One American conductor on whom this had been played more than once by the same man punished him in the end. He wrapped up in a newspaper all the copper coins he took, until he had enough to change a 25-peso (£2 10s.) note. When, as he expected, the note was offered, he took it and gave the astonished Mexican the newspaper parcel.

The manager of a factory near Orizaba told me it was hopeless to try and stop pilfering by the workers, and almost hopeless to seek for Mexican cashiers at once competent and honest. When they do not steal, they are usually muddle-headed. One hotel in which I stayed had made the experiment of engaging a Mexican to keep the books. The accounts he presented

caused an uproar. He had them all muddled up. He was discharged, and the whole work had to be done over again.

Of their personal dignity the Mexicans are very jealous—before witnesses; but even the highly-placed may be talked to with the utmost frankness in private. In the presence of others they must be addressed as if they were beyond the reach of suspicion and deserved the highest consideration. A labourer will never forget or forgive being rated before his fellows. The way to reprimand him without filling his mind with murderous thoughts is to do it chaffingly. Good humour is very necessary in handling them, and a cynical tolerance. That is why Englishmen succeed better than Americans, as a rule. The American is inclined to be impatient, to expect too much, to lose his temper. He often neglects the small courtesies to which in Mexico so much importance is attached.

These are apt, it is true, to be annoying. A servant will not fail to inquire in the morning, "How did you pass the night?" The most casual introduction is followed by a murmured flow of honorific phrases. Even telephone conversations open with a mutual twitter of politeness which to Anglo-Saxon ears sounds like foolish waste of time. A friend of mine, exasperated by hearing one of his clerks invariably inquire over the wire after the health of each member of a family before he got to business, suggested to him that he might confine himself to what he really wanted to say. "I am as well educated as you are," retorted the boy (meaning "better educated") and flung out of the office. In order to get communication quickly it is advisable always to address the telephone girl as "señorita," and to ask her if she will "do you the

favour" to put you through. Facile to say that all this lip-service "means nothing." But it certainly makes Mexico a pleasant country for the stranger, and in any case it always eases life to fall in with the habits of people whose guest you happen to be.

Neither Spaniards nor Indians lack courage. They can die bravely. At Monterrey I saw *peon* soldiers walk calmly across a fire-swept square. They knew, no doubt, what bad shots the men on the other side were, but still, when bullets are zipping through the air, it is not easy to be unconcerned. A finer quality of courage than that was displayed by a group of boys of good Spanish families in Monterrey, who were captured by Orosco and shot because they would not cry "Viva Carranza" and abjure their cause. It was not lack of imagination but sheer grit which made them brave. The *mestizo*, on the other hand, is usually afraid. In a train one day a few rebels came through demanding that revolvers should be given up; they needed them. The Mexicans who wore them could not unbuckle the cases from their hips fast enough. A short, square American railway-man sat among them. "Have you a pistol, señor?" he was asked. "Yes," he said grimly, "and if you want it, you'll have to take it." The rebels looked at him, and left him alone.

Even in large bodies Mexicans are easy to overawe. In the city of Guadalajara there was a revolutionary outbreak which assumed an anti-foreign complexion. There were no local grievances to speak of, so the agitators stirred the people up with lurid accounts of the killing of a Mexican in Texas. A crowd soon came together, and went about threatening foreigners' houses. Around one they became violent, so the

householder fired into them from his roof. One man was killed. The crowd melted away. The trouble was over.

There was a ludicrous example of the want of pluck both among citizenfolk and among the rebels at a town in Michoacan. One day a small band of Revoltosos armed with machetes (knives) held up the place, " borrowed " £500 from the leading people, and carried off all the fire-arms they could collect. Shortly after this four Americans arrived and found the townspeople terribly perturbed. The rebels were threatening another visit, demanding another £500. The town was a town of over a thousand inhabitants. There must have been in it at least 150 able-bodied men, and the " Bandidos," as they called the enemy, numbered less than thirty. Yet it never occurred to the able-bodied townsmen to resist. The Americans were more enterprising. They had a message sent out to say that a large number of " Gringoes " had come into the place and were determined to fight. The messenger was told to add on his own account that the Gringoes were looking forward to the battle. The town was not troubled any more.

Along with this unreadiness to risk their skins goes a bombastic exaggeration of dangers. From a place called Wadley in the State of San Luis Potosi there rode out one day a body of Rurales (military police) to hunt out a rebel commando. They took no precautions, sent ahead no scouts. Suddenly they were fired on at very close range from the roadside and several were killed. There were only a few rebels, but the Rurales galloped back and told how they had fought desperately against tremendous odds !

Worse than cowardly was the behaviour of another

troop of Rurales sent to guard a mine in the State of Jalisco. When a band of Insurrectos came in sight, an Englishman named Harrison, who was in charge of the property, asked them whether they would stay and fight, or run. They said they would run. Mr. Harrison therefore met the rebels when they arrived, and was making terms with them when the Rurales opened fire from a hill above and killed four men. Never was man nearer death than the Englishman in that hour. Fortunately he was known to some of the rebels, who vouched for him, saying that he could not be involved in such treachery. His life was therefore spared. The Rurales were chased into the woods, several were killed, the rest were deprived of their rifles and ammunition, and even of their clothes. Then they sent in a report saying they had defeated the rebels severely; and that report appeared in the newspapers. So is the country deceived.

The nerves even of Mexican officers are apt to give way. At Nuevo Laredo one night, while I was there, a Major who had been in action and had lost about forty men, was so shaken that when he got back to barracks he changed into civilian clothes, walked down to the Rio Grande, waded across in the darkness and disappeared into the United States. It is cowardice which makes the mass of Mexicans refuse to take sides. They are afraid of stepping down upon the wrong one. Among no people is there more windy talk of patriotism. Judging by the number of statues to be seen everywhere, there must have been more " patriots " to the square mile in Mexico than in any other country of the world. Yet example and precept are alike barren. If the *hacendados* had supplied themselves with arms and ammunition and taught

their *peons* to use them, as, for example, the El Oro mining companies, the Necaxa Electric Power Works, and other foreign employers have done, they would not now be wailing their heavy losses, and the civil war might be over. Mexicans themselves admit regretfully that "there is no patriotism among us." They forget that this virtue, like charity, should "begin at home."

The Oriental nature of the Mexican appears in his treatment of women. They are regarded as ministers to his comfort and his pleasure, and they seem contented enough. They go out very little. In the plazas on Sunday evening, and in many towns on a week night as well, they walk round and round, or sit in the lamplight, listening to the band (which, as a rule, is good, for to this extent the Mexicans are a musical people). Their toilettes are made with elaborate care, and sometimes with taste. Their hair is dressed to perfection. In a small town with no other evidence of wealth, this is surprising. But if you could follow them home, you would find that many of them lived in conditions not far removed from squalor. The Mexican woman usually spends the earlier part of the day—the whole day if she does not go out or receive visitors—in a slovenly wrapper.

In well-to-do families the girls are usually without any occupation. They sit about for hours, unemployed, not wanting employment. Their thoughts run, and their talk pivots, upon Men. Marriage is their one idea. After marriage they cease to trouble about their appearance. They age quickly and grow stout. How far off they remain from the habits of American and European women may be judged by their mourning customs. For at least six months, usually for a year

after her husband's death, a widow is not seen in the streets. For twelve months she wears heavy crape, then for another year lighter black, then for a further period black and white.

Many women still keep up the practice of driving in closed carriages, which in the glorious Mexican climate must be torture. They would not think it seemly to take the air in what American slang calls "low-necked" vehicles. "Backward," indeed, the Mexican woman must seem to Europe and the United States. Yet she has the qualities of her defects (if defects they be). She is a good wife, a mother loving and beloved by all her children. It is to her that the intensity of Mexican family life is mainly due. The father rules in appearance as an autocrat of unchallenged authority. The mother is frequently the power behind the throne; or, if it be truly a tyranny, she softens the yoke and gives Home a tender magnetism which never fails.

Gradually influences from outside are modifying the life of the Mexican upper and middle classes. The ascendancy of Señor Limantour, who was in essence a Frenchman, did a great deal to break down the feeling that "what was good enough for my father ought to be good enough for me." He made familiar the European idea that everything should be done decently and in order, that spaciousness should be aimed at, and seemliness without and within. In the capital he had his way. At all events the outside of the platter shines. Slowly other cities are following the lead. Much prejudice still persists, though, in favour of dirt and darkness and confusion. The Government telegraph office in Monterrey, a dark little dog-hole up a stair, is disgraceful, and the market

of that prosperous city deserves a worse epithet. One night I passed there and saw hundreds of rats scampering fearless, attracted by the refuse. A petition for meat-covers was signed by many foreigners, but the Mayor would have none of " this new-fangled fussiness."

Yet one can see a bright side even to the Mexican's unwillingness to adopt the standards which civilization imposes. In more civilized countries there is a pretty clear line of separation between classes. In Mexico the relations between all sorts and conditions of men are far more human than in the United States or in England. A cabman has no hesitation in asking his fare for a cigarette, if he wants one. I have seen a train " auditor " (who corresponds roughly to an English " guard ") sit down by an officer in a railway carriage, and neither think anything of it. There is scarcely any snobbery in Mexico; that is one reason for its being such a pleasant land to travel through. The same is true of Russia; an additional argument in favour of the suggestion I have already made—that these two countries are—beneath a thin crust of modernity—in much the same stage of development—the stage through which Britain passed during the Wars of the Roses, five and a half centuries ago.

XXIV

THE MEXICAN AT HOME

ANGLO-SAXON peoples have a gift for home-making which is denied to the rest of the world. It is especially denied to such as dwell in perpetual hot sunshine. These do not need homes as Anglo-Saxons do, in chilly England, for example, with its seven months of long, dark evenings. Yet to Anglo-Saxons in a hot country the climate makes no difference. They must have homes, sunshine or no sunshine. They have certain definite ideas of comfort which they insist upon carrying into effect, and by their own standards they judge all other people's houses. That is why they pronounce, and why I pronounce, Mexican homes comfortless. To our eyes they are stiff and cold and uninhabitable. But it is quite possible that Mexicans might not like ours.

The first requisite for being comfortable in any home is a certain untidiness. No Mexican house is untidy—I speak now of what would in England be called "gentlemen's houses." The Indians live mostly in wooden "shacks" or flimsy huts which they make themselves. Let me quote a description from *Viva Mexico*, one of the best books ever written about this or any other country—

"A small inclosure of bamboo, fourteen feet by twelve perhaps, the steep, pointed roof covered with rough hand-made shingles of a soft wood that soon

rots and leaks. The bamboo, being no more than a lattice, affords but slight protection from a slanting rain and none whatever from the wind; the dirt floor, therefore, is damp everywhere, and near the walls, muddy. At one end is a 'brasero,' not the neat, tiled affair for charcoal, with holes on top and draughts in the side, that one sees in towns, but a kind of box made of logs, raised from the ground on rough legs and filled with hard earth. A small fire of green wood smoulders in the centre of this, filling the room from time to time with blinding smoke, and around it are three or four jars of coarse brown pottery, and a thin round platter of unglazed earthenware on which are baked the 'tortillas.' Near by is a black stone with a slight concavity on its upper surface and a primitive rolling-pin of the same substance resting upon it. On the floor in the corner are some frayed 'petates,' thin mats woven of palm or rushes. This is all, and this is home. At night the family huddles together for warmth with nothing but the 'petates' between them and the damp ground. They sleep in their clothes and try to cover themselves with their well-worn 'sarapes' (blankets)."

That conveys, I think, an exaggerated impression of discomfort. In a cold or damp climate such a dwelling would be utter misery. The climate of Mexico is during the greater part of the year hot and dry. On the high table-lands the nights, it is true, are chilly; but I have slept in huts with only a light rain-coat around me and not felt the need of any other covering. The Indians, like all other peoples in a state of nature, adapt their houses to their conditions of existence.

So do Mexicans who belong to the comfortable

class. You can see by the look of a Mexican home that they spend a great part of their lives in the open air. In the salon the chairs with their backs to the wall look like a well-drilled regiment. The furniture is usually under covers; it is arranged with a precision which gives one an icy feeling round the heart. On the walls will probably be pictures. Let us not speak of them, but, like Virgil and Dante, "glance and pass by." Very unconventional householders may have some photographs showing, and even a few books, not, of course, lying about, but in a case or on a shelf. The ornaments are, in their horrid ugliness, like an echo of our worst Victorian period. I cannot swear that I have seen wax flowers under glass, but they are just what one would look round for. The rooms do not seem to be lived in. How could one live in them? One would petrify. They are like "show rooms" in some "great house" through which a glibly respectable parrot-housekeeper leads parties of gaping tourist-visitors.

The explanation is, I think, that Mexican men do not live much inside their houses, and that the ladies spend their time looking out of window, almost their only recreation. If they have balconies, they stand on them, chattering and giggling like pretty school misses, "quizzing" all who pass by. The windows on the street level are heavily barred. Behind the bars one often catches, as one passes, the gleam of lustrous, dark eyes, the perfume of thickly piled-up dark hair; or else one hears soft whispering voices and, turning, sees as it were a cageful of charming girls. Outside these barred windows the lovers of these girls come to court them, in the Spanish phrase, "to play bear," which means hanging about for hours,

on the chance of getting a smile, a whisper, a hand to kiss. It strikes Europeans as a mode of love-making which makes the man look ridiculous, but it is general in Mexico, except among the wealthiest class, whose young men and young women have better opportunities for getting to know one another. In this class, too, one meets people whose homes are more in the comfortable American style, people who have been educated in the United States or in England. But the mass of well-to-do Mexicans, even some of the very richest, live in rooms such as I have described.

Mexican clubs are the same. No lounging chairs, no tables littered with magazines. The rooms, all plush and mirrors, remind one of those gloomy parlours where the dentist keeps you waiting in company with *Punch's Almanack* a year old. You marvel that any one could bear to sit in them, and then you find that they don't. There is a bar and a bar-saloon. That is where the members are to be found, some playing dominoes sedately, some drinking noisily in groups. There is generally a ball-room, too, and here the club entertains. Always there are certain rooms in which on certain occasions ladies are welcomed. The Mexican notion of club-life is strangely unlike ours! In all the cities, however, there are pleasant, hospitable foreign clubs after the Anglo-Saxon's own heart, oases of comfort and good fellowship to which in memory the traveller returns again and again with feelings of gratitude for their restful, kindly shelter.

Yet there is one unfailing charm about Mexican houses. That is the charm of flowers. All Mexicans love flowers. Their homes usually present to the street bare, unlovely walls, but very often you get a glimpse of a patio where the sunlight flickers on

green leaves and vivid blossoms. Always you may count upon such an interior even if you cannot see it. These peeps into gay garden-courtyards are what I remember when I think of Mexican streets. It is the custom to build houses round a green plot open to the sky. Sometimes there is a loggia round this, a loggia into which all the rooms open (there being no " upstairs "), and where the household lives in warm weather, cooled by the plash and tinkle of a fountain in the centre. Or else the ground floor may be given up to offices or stabling, and, mounting a stairway, you come to a broad balcony screened from the sun by thick trails of flowering creeper. Delicious to wake up at half-past seven of a November morning and luxuriate in hot sunshine as you go across the patio or round the balcony to your bath.

Most hotels are built more or less on this plan, which almost makes up for the hardness of their pillows. The Mexican idea of a pillow is that it should by its extreme discomfort prevent you for as long as possible from falling asleep. Otherwise hotels are tolerable. The food is usually pleasant enough. Mexican dishes are always highly seasoned, sometimes painfully " hot i' the mouth." But a " molé," which is a fowl or a turkey served with a thick, dark-brown, slightly sweet sauce all over it, is as good as any curry. They have attractive modes of cooking pork, for those who are hardy enough to eat it in Mexico. There is always fruit and always drinkable coffee. This is the land of coffee, and I was told how it " really ought to be made." A small quantity of coffee, very, very strong, should be prepared (of course, from berries freshly roasted and ground), and in each cup a little of this should be poured; the cup should then be filled

up with hot water. The same method is followed with tea in Russia; equally good results follow.

The hotels are not cheap. From ten to twelve shillings is the usual charge for a room. But they are clean, as a rule, even those in small places, and in towns of any importance sanitation is now looked after, which removes the worst horror of travel in years gone by.

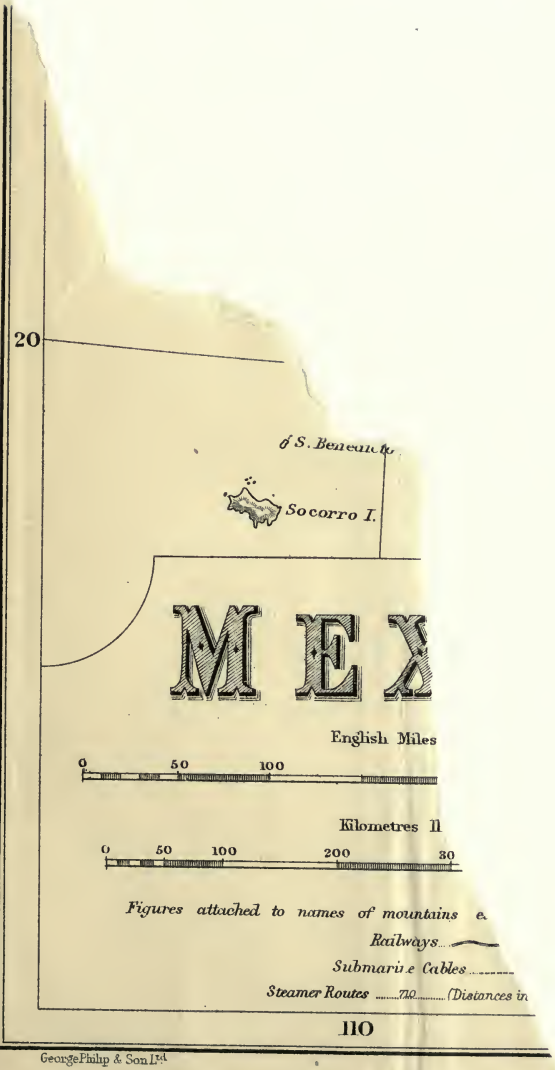
Mexican kitchens, being open to the air, like the other rooms, are fresh and light and appetizing. (I speak of those I have seen.) Cooking is done on a "brasero," a charcoal stove in the centre of the kitchen with several glowing nests in it, on which several pots or pans can simmer or fizzle at the same time. The stove is on one side hollowed into a semi-circle; the cook stands inside this, and is able to look after all the operations at once. The cook is frequently a "Chino" (Chinaman). Possibly his knowledge of Spanish is limited to a few words, yet somehow "with nods and becks and wreathèd smiles"—no smile ever deserved Milton's epithet so thoroughly as a Chinaman's smile—a system of communication is established. A friend of mine has a capital "Chino," who for a long time could only say, "I do' know." This was his reply to everything that was said to him. It was necessary to discover from the way in which he said it whether he understood or not. One day his mistress gave him long instructions as to getting his master up very early the next morning, and giving him his breakfast so that he might catch a train at dawn. When she had finished the Chinaman said, "Good-night, lady." That was all. But he carried out her instructions exactly.

Woman servants are called "criadas" and wear

their hair down, either in tails or falling loose around their shoulders. They can be trained into clever cooks, neat waitresses, and careful housemaids, but it is not often that they are so trained. Much patience is needed. It is useless to expect too much of them. If they are scolded or worried, they simply leave without warning. They must be allowed to do their work more or less in their own way. Certain habits have to be checked. I suppose nearly all cooks use their fingers to test the temperature of soup. Mexican servants practise even more unpleasant tricks until they are taken in hand.

They are sometimes inclined to pilfer, more from curiosity, I believe, than from a thieving propensity. But it is a libel to call them all dishonest, as many people in Mexico do. They have odd ideas which may make them appear dishonest when they are not so. For instance, a woman who washed for an acquaintance of mine in Mexico City told him one day she was going to live in Toluca. He paid her and said good-bye. A little later he discovered that his linen-press was short of several sheets, pillow-cases, etc.; he also missed some shirts. Naturally he concluded that the washerwoman had stolen them. Three months afterwards she called at his office and said that she had left the missing articles at his rooms and would he please pay her? She had taken them to Toluca, washed them, and kept them until she had an opportunity to bring them back. Time meant nothing to her. Besides, "he had so many."

That is the kind of mentality one is frequently "up against" in Mexico. It is useless to argue. It is worse than useless to be angry, for the poor Mexican is simply bewildered. The only thing to do is to see



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the humour of it and smile. Smile when you are told of some valued piece of china that " at dawn it found itself broken." Smile, although you know for certain that your coffee and sugar are supplied regularly to your " criada's " relations. Even when you are sued for defamation of character by a servant whom you have had convicted by the courts of theft (this actually happened), smile.

At the same time, however, look out for negro servants. As cooks they are far better than Chinamen, and they keep a house cleaner than Mexicans ever will. They are faithful, and you do not have to wonder always what they are thinking about, for they have not the duplex Asiatic mind. They have to be paid more. " Criadas " seldom earn more than £24 a year, and sometimes as little as £10. But the change will be worth the money.

On the whole, wages are moderate. A chauffeur, if he is a Mexican, can be hired for £8 to £10 a month. A Japanese gardener costs about half that, and in this land of gardens a gardener you must have. Rents are high in the cities, but the cost of living is less than in the United States. Many Americans used to winter in Mexico, partly for the sake of the golden warmth, partly to save money. On the top of all her other losses, the country is suffering from the stoppage of its yearly stream of visitors. Civil war is draining away all its resources, ruining Mexicans and foreigners alike.

THE END

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